

Peer Review

Review of: "Improving Counselor Supervision and Documentation Through the Integrated Supervision Casenote"

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This article addresses a significant gap in counselor supervision practice. While documentation of supervision is ethically required and best practice models recommend integrating psychotherapy-based, developmental, and process supervision models, few practical tools exist to guide supervisors in this comprehensive documentation. The authors argue that supervision is most effective when it draws from all three model categories rather than focusing on just one, as supervisors naturally work across categories. However, supervision casenotes in the literature have not provided examples that systematically integrate all three model types while also facilitating supervisor self-reflection.

The authors present the Integrated Supervision Casenote (ISC), a comprehensive documentation tool originally developed by Massengale. The ISC is structured to capture three key dimensions: (1) developmental aspects using Hogan's four-level model to assess supervisee characteristics and needs, (2) process elements using Bernard's Discrimination Model to track focus areas, supervisor roles, and session purposes, and (3) psychotherapy components using Person-Centered principles to evaluate the working alliance and both supervisor and supervisee characteristics. The methodology involves demonstrating the ISC's application through a detailed hypothetical case study following Holly, a doctoral student supervisor, and Joaquin, a master's-level practicum student, throughout an academic semester.

The case example illustrates how the ISC functions as both a documentation and self-reflection tool. Through systematic documentation, Holly identified her tendency to overuse the teacher role and recognized this stemmed from her own insecurity rather than Joaquin's developmental needs. The ISC successfully tracked Joaquin's progression from Level 1 (Dependence) toward Level 2 (Conditional Dependence), documented the shifting supervision foci from basic skill-building to ethical decision-making, and captured the strengthening supervisory alliance. The authors conclude that the ISC provides

a practical framework for implementing best practices in supervision documentation while promoting supervisor self-awareness. They note that future research is needed to assess the ISC'S impact on supervisory relationships and supervisee development.

The manuscript presents a conceptually rich and thoughtfully constructed documentation tool. The ISC clearly aligns with best-practice recommendations that supervision integrate developmental, process, and psychotherapy-based models. The authors convincingly demonstrate, through the extended case example, how the ISC operationalizes this integration in a way that promotes supervisor intentionality and self-reflection. Conceptually, the manuscript is strong.

The manuscript would benefit from explicitly situating the ISC against alternative documentation practices. At present, it is positioned as filling a gap, but the comparative standard remains underdeveloped. Possible contrasts include:

A. Standard Casenote Documentation

Typical supervision documentation often consists of brief narrative summaries focused on logistics, supervisee performance, and risk management. These notes rarely systematically integrate developmental stage, supervisory role, and alliance quality. A direct comparison between ISC-based documentation and standard narrative supervision notes would help clarify incremental benefit.

B. Model-Specific Documentation Approaches

The ISC integrates:

- Hogan's developmental model
- Bernard's Discrimination Model
- Person-Centered supervisory principles rooted in Carl Rogers

An important empirical contrast would be ISC (integrative model documentation) vs. documentation based solely on a single model (e.g., developmental-only or discrimination-only frameworks). This would clarify whether integration produces additive or synergistic effects.

A central concern is implementation burden. The ISC requires supervisors to:

- Assess developmental level
- Identify supervision focus and role
- Evaluate alliance and relational dynamics
- Engage in structured self-reflection

This raises several empirical and practical questions:

- How long does completion of one ISC casenote take?
- Does time decrease with familiarity?
- Is the cognitive load sustainable in high-volume supervision settings?
- Would supervisors perceive it as enhancing or detracting from presence during sessions?

Parsimony is not a strength of this model. The field may require evidence that the benefits outweigh the administrative demands. Without such data, adoption may be limited to highly motivated or academically affiliated supervisors.

A pilot feasibility study measuring completion time, supervisor satisfaction, and perceived utility would significantly strengthen the manuscript's applied claims. If the ISC were tested empirically, what outcomes should reasonably be predicted? One might hypothesize that ISC use would lead to:

- Greater supervisee developmental progression (e.g., faster movement through Hogan's stages)
- Improved conceptualization skills
- Greater metacognitive awareness
- Stronger supervisory alliance

More ambitiously, could ISC use influence:

- Client outcomes?
- Treatment fidelity?
- Ethical decision-making?

The manuscript currently implies benefit but does not specify mechanisms of change. For example, is the ISC effective because it increases supervisor intentionality, strengthens alliance monitoring, or reduces supervisor role rigidity? Clarifying mediators would sharpen its research agenda.

If the ISC emphasizes alliance monitoring and relational process, should supervisors formally incorporate validated measures such as the Working Alliance Inventory into supervision? This opens several possibilities:

- Supervisors could periodically administer alliance measures within supervision.
- Supervisees could be trained to use alliance assessment with their own clients.

- ISC documentation could integrate standardized alliance scores rather than relying solely on supervisor perception.

This would strengthen the model's empirical grounding and align it with evidence-based supervision practices.

The manuscript assumes that integration of developmental, process, and psychotherapy models is superior to single-model approaches. While this aligns with best-practice recommendations, it remains an empirical question. It is plausible that:

- For novice supervisors, structured single-model approaches may be more manageable.
- For experienced supervisors, integrative frameworks may enhance nuance.
- Complexity may not uniformly benefit supervisees at early developmental stages.

A staged implementation model (e.g., single model → integrative documentation) might be more practical and researchable.

A strengthened evaluation section could propose:

1. Feasibility Study

Time burden, usability, supervisor satisfaction.

2. Quasi-Experimental Study

ISC vs. standard documentation on:

- Supervisory alliance
- Supervisee developmental level progression
- Self-efficacy

3. Mechanism Study

Does increased supervisor self-reflection mediate supervisee growth?

4. Client-Level Outcomes

Do supervisees trained under ISC-informed supervision demonstrate better client alliance or symptom change?

5. Assessment Integration Study

Does pairing ISC with alliance measurement (e.g., Working Alliance Inventory) enhance supervision?

Overall, this manuscript presents an intellectually rigorous and conceptually integrative documentation tool. Its primary strengths lie in theoretical synthesis and illustrative clarity. Its primary limitations concern feasibility, parsimony, and lack of empirical contrast conditions. The next step for the authors is not further conceptual elaboration but empirical differentiation.

Declarations

Potential competing interests: No potential competing interests to declare.