A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MASTER’S LEVEL COUNSELING SUPERVISORS
WHO WERE TRAINED IN THE FIELD

A Dissertation

Presented to

The Graduate Faculty of The University of Akron

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

Suzanne Gibson Semivan

May, 2012
A PHENOMENOLOGICAL EXPLORATION OF THE DEVELOPMENT OF
MASTER’S LEVEL COUNSELING SUPERVISORS
WHO WERE TRAINED IN THE FIELD

Suzanne Gibson Semivan

Dissertation

Approved:                           Accepted:

Advisor                              Department Chair
Dr. Sandra L. Perosa                 Dr. Karin Jordan

Committee Member
Dr. Cynthia Reynolds

Committee Member
Dr. Linda Perosa

Committee Member
Dr. Suzanne MacDonald

Committee Member
Dr. Robert Schwartz
ABSTRACT

This qualitative study explored the experience of eight Master’s level supervisors who received their counselor supervision training within the field. The research focused on the lived experiences of becoming a supervisor and strived to understand meaningful and formative influences, as well as the technical and supportive nature of those forces to determine the extent or manner participants grew in their knowledge and skill. The methodology employed was qualitative, from a phenomenological perspective, which employed a pilot study, audits with outside reviews, triangulation and analysis of reported experiences using Moustakas’ (1994) inductive analysis for coding and identification of themes.

Results revealed two core themes that emerged from participant narratives. The first core theme, evolution, included two subthemes (a) vicarious learning and (b) previous experience. The second core theme, transformation, included two subthemes (a) professional self-efficacy and (b) change. In addition to identifying potential areas for future research, implications for counselor education and supervision preparatory practices were discussed that align with trends within the field as well as regulatory, professional and programmatic mandates.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband, Jerry Semivan, who without his love, sacrifice, and support the completion of my doctoral studies would not have been possible. In this dedication’s simplicity, the wealth of his wisdom, steadfastness, and humor that have sustained me through the pinnacles of success and challenge cannot be articulated. I look forward to the next chapter of this journey with him and know that I can meet it with the grace, integrity, and humility that I have developed and nurtured because of him and this experience.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Writing an acknowledgement seems insignificant to the contributions I received throughout this journey. However, I offer the following credits in recognition of each person’s remarkable willingness and generosity.

When the trials of completing a doctoral program came to bear upon me, Department of Counseling faculty guided and encouraged the knowledge, skills, and values necessary for an effective and ethical practice. To my advisor Dr. Sandra Perosa and committee members Dr. MacDonald, Dr. Reynolds, Dr. Linda Perosa, and Dr. Schwartz, thank you for your guidance. A special thanks to Janice Vaughn and Darlene Buza, (UA Counseling Department Administrative Assistants) for their acceptance and humor, which enriched my assistantship experience.

To my sister, Jeanine, who lovingly encouraged my resolution and to my twin, Scott, who offered his own understanding of pursuing a doctoral degree. Thank you to family members Deb, Jim, Dan, Rhonda, Aaron, Jessica, Bobby, Steven, Steph, Vicci, Steve, Jeremy, and Petunia who all helped in my own experience of becoming.

A great debt of gratitude is also owed to my friends. To Dr. Jennifer Jordan, words cannot express how much you and your friendship have meant to me—you are like no other. To Dr. Tiffany Stewart, my cohort and friend—together we weathered our doctoral program, some storms, and learned the value of a forgiving heart. To Dr. Lisa Devore who provided tremendous support as she processed every phase of my research
with me. To Jennifer Malone, thank you for your constant enthusiasm and unfailing encouragement. To friends Kay King, Babs Quincy, Denise Cutrone, Amy Wood, and Teresa Mazzocco - thank you for your support and willingness to listen.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

## LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## CHAPTER

### I. THE PROBLEM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### II. LITERATURE REVIEW

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Developmental Models .................................................................37
Psychodynamic Model.................................................................43
Behavioral Model.........................................................................44
Models Directed at the the Supervisor ..........................................45
Movement Toward Competency in Supervision .........................48
Research on the Development of the Supervisee .........................49
Summary .......................................................................................59

III. METHODS ..................................................................................61
Research Design .............................................................................62
Research Questions .........................................................................64
Procedures .....................................................................................64
Settings .........................................................................................67
Interview Protocol ...........................................................................67
Researcher’s Journal .......................................................................71
Saturation of Sample ......................................................................72
Data Analysis ..................................................................................73
Trustworthiness .............................................................................76
Ethics .............................................................................................78
Summary .......................................................................................79

IV. RESULTS .....................................................................................80
Restatement of Research Questions .............................................80
Overview of Study Participants ...................................................81
Participant One: Sam .................................................................82
### LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Information Regarding Participant Location, How Contacted, and Interview Format</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Core Themes and Subthemes</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

“I think we are a product of all our experiences.” (Sanford Weill)

A major experience in the development of a supervisor is the opportunities provided to learn the knowledge base, skills, and competencies vital to the role of a supervisor. The counseling profession has provided alternative approaches to gain knowledge and skill training in supervision. Academic coursework in supervision was traditionally reserved for doctoral level students. However, since the majority of supervisors and counselors in the field are trained at the master’s level, other approaches to training in supervision was developed. Historically, there were two routes by which counselors could be trained in supervision: (a) academic training through doctoral level coursework and (b) field training gained after obtaining one’s master’s degree through seminars, conference or workshops.

Field training entails completing a required number of hours of counseling experience prior to being licensed as a supervisor. In addition, the supervisor-in-training must attend either workshops or seminars on supervision (or more recently web-based or distance learning programs) to accumulate the continuing education credits necessary for supervisory endorsement. Furthermore, some counselor education programs have offered instruction in supervision at the master’s level, which typically consists of a one-hour supervision course that covers both a didactic portion and an experiential component.
(e.g., the master’s supervision practicum student supervises another master’s student in a beginning counseling practicum).

Consequently, it is critical to understanding the practice of supervision and how individuals trained at the master’s level would explain the specifics of their practice, their viewpoints, expectations, and perceived benefits, as well as their relationship to the broader context of supervision training in the field, such as job satisfaction, perceived benefit to others, and the perception of themselves to the larger field of counseling supervision. In addition, it is important to understand (a) the experience of becoming a supervisor; (b) how early expectations of supervision training compare to the perceived outcomes; (c) what meaning was assigned; and (d) what specific programming, activities, or sequences of this experience were most supportive of their development as a supervisor or what disturbing aspects existed. Finally, understanding the impact of supervision training in the field upon an individual’s supervision practice along with gaining a perspective, in retrospect, of the remarkable influences, milestones, and shifts in conceptualization of supervision training and supervision competencies is critical to the livelihood of the profession of counselor supervision.

**Background of the Study**

A paradox confronting the field of counselor education is that most preparation in supervision occurs at the doctoral level in an academic setting, while most practicing supervisors are master’s level supervisors who receive their supervision training in the field. Influences within the counseling profession have brought about new training requirements which resulted in changes in counselor education programs. This is seen in
the impact that evidenced-based practices and competencies have had on the methods used to train counselors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs[CACREP], 2009; Falender & Shafranske, 2004).

Consequently, counselor educators and supervisors were challenged to evaluate their own preparatory practices. In responding to what was called into question, the challenges invited new intellectual thought and led to the creation of new approaches which then formed the thoughts and actions of supervision researchers, regulators, educators, and practitioners over time. This is evidenced by major shifts in thinking about supervision training, such as the measures taken by the CACREP (2009).

In response for the need to provide academic preparation in supervision for master’s level students, the 2009 CACREP standards contained new mandates that called for the inclusion of supervision training as part of counseling training program core curricular experiences and knowledge required at the master’s level (Section II, G.e). In addition, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES, 2005) and the Ohio Counselor, Social Worker, and Marriage and Family Therapist Board (OCSWMFT, 2008) instituted noteworthy changes, to offset any disparities in current preparatory practices brought about by advances in the field.

For example, the 2009 CACREP standards, effective July 1, 2009, specified revisions which were reflective of the advancements previously noted and stressed the refinement and the enhancement of core and specialty curricular areas (CACREP, 2009), with ambitions to strengthen professional identity and mastery of the knowledge and
skills needed for effective practice. The strategic changes in the 2009 CACREP standards core content areas emphasized the following:

- The reorganization of main content sections, which were condensed from six to three content areas: (a) learning environment, which focuses on where or the type of environment in which counselors learn; (b) professional identity, which focuses on what counselors learn; and (c) professional practice, which focuses on how counselors implement knowledge and skills into practice.

- A merger of Community Counseling and Mental Health Counseling under the new program title of Clinical Mental Health Counseling.

- CACREP (2009) stipulated that programs incorporate counseling supervision models, practices, and processes into curricula (Section II, G). The insertion of supervision training is subsumed under Professional Orientation and Ethical Practices section and it is implicit that CACREP (2009) views the inclusion of supervision as central to the knowledge base, professional identity and professional functioning of counselors at the master’s level (Section II.G.1).

ACES (2005) also responded to the call for action in supervision preparation. In the last several years two major gains were achieved. First, the 1991 *Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors* (ACES, 1991, 2005) were incorporated into the American Counseling Association *Code of Ethics* ([ACA], 2005) which communicates the degree of importance ACA and ACES believe the profession of counseling and counseling supervision should place on supervision training. The latest ACES reaction to changes in the field of counseling supervision was by the ACES Task Force on Best Practices in Supervision’s position statement on clinical supervision best practices (ACES, 2011). This policy statement outlines the most recent research, best practices, and advances in counselor supervision.

Lastly, the State of Ohio OCSWMFT (2008) also made substantive changes to the requirements for counselor supervisory endorsement. To provide a perspective, the
supervising counselor endorsement was initially added to the PC and PCC licensure in June, 2000; the latest modifications in the requirements for supervising counselors became effective August 31, 2008. The new requirements for supervision endorsement now include (a) a minimum of one year post PCC clinical experience (1,500 hours); (b) two years full-time documented counseling experience, under supervision; (c) 24 clock documented hours of academic or continuing education in clinical supervision; (d) one documented supervision of supervision experience, providing a minimum of 10 hours of supervision, with five hours of supervision received during that time (with the same PCC-S supervisor and the same supervisee); (e) compliance with current and future ACES (2005) and ACA (2005) ethical standards for supervision; and (f) documented familiarity with significant legal, ethical, and clinical issues relevant to the supervisory relationship. In the case where an individual holds a doctoral degree, a minimum of one year post-degree clinical experience is required (OCSWMFT, 2008). For renewal, supervising professional counselors must complete six continuing education units (CEU) in supervision, with three of the total 30 hours in ethics. It is noteworthy that PC level supervisors vastly outnumber PCC endorsed supervisors an obvious reason related to efforts to bolster competence and establish best practices in supervision, which also align with credentialing, state and professional reforms.

The new changes are decisive actions and represent the agreement among the OCSWMFT, ACA, and ACES of the unique needs of counseling supervisors who are responsible for shaping developing counselors and ultimately, the quality and direction of the field of counseling and counseling supervision.
The major shifts in education and training requirements in supervision parallel the competency and experience concerned gatekeepers in the field of counseling see as compulsory. For example, the specifics of OCSWMFT amendments show that OCSWMFT has completely eliminated the PC level supervision option, requiring supervising counselors to have at least one year post-PCC experience (4,500 hours clinical experience, 50% in diagnosis and treatment of mental and emotional disorders). Thus, effective August 2008, the OCSWMFT board offered supervisory endorsements only to those who are independently licensed (PCC level counselors). In addition, OCSWMFT has (a) increased the education requirement in clinical supervision from 10 hours to 24 clock hours; (b) added criteria requiring documentation by counseling supervisors of familiarity with current legal, ethical, and clinical issues relevant to the supervisory relationship; and (c) adjusted requirements for doctoral level counselors from two to one year post-degree, full-time experience, due to academic preparation in clinical supervision.

Therefore, regulatory changes have occurred at educational, professional, organizational, and state levels in response to critics who argued for needed changes in the field of supervision. Unfortunately, there is no current research on practicing supervisors trained at the master’s level that has assessed their competency levels, developmental experience, or how individuals trained under this approach appraise their experience of becoming a supervisor. Nelson, Oliver, and Capps (2006) confirmed that the different types of learning (i.e., academic, observational, combination), the review of tapes, and the receiving of feedback were important to the development of doctoral students’ supervisors. Are the same types of learning important for master’s level
supervisors trained in the field? To answer this question, research was needed that examined the experiences of practicing field supervisors currently training and practicing supervision in the field.

**Purpose of the Study**

Researchers have long been interested in the formative and developmental factors provided in supervision preparation since the 1980s (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Borders & Brown, 2005; Holloway, 1999; Ladany, Friedlander, & Nelson, 2005), with most scholarly investigations focusing on legal, ethical, theoretical, or administrative facets of supervision training (Nelson et al., 2006). As the field of counseling moves toward establishing best practices and competencies, leaders have responded to research findings which have provided the basis for programmatic (academic), licensure (state), and professional (ethical) reforms. This is exemplified by the recent changes by CACREP (2009), ACES (2005), and the State of Ohio (2008, 2009).

A glaring weakness in the profession is that we have not provided master’s level counseling supervisors in the field the opportunity to share their insights as to what was most significant in their training to be supervisors. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to give field supervisors a voice about those formative experiences and developmental influences that shaped their development as supervisors. Understanding how they are being trained, what their qualitative impressions are, and what meaning and relevance their training experiences have had, is an indispensible source of information, that will add to the existing knowledge base in counselor education and supervision. Furthermore, a comprehensive understanding of supervision preparation practices can
inform the profession of further professional and regulatory changes that will impact the
course and quality of training in supervision.

**Research Questions**

The research question used to guide this study was, “What is the experience of
master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” The subquestions were:

- How do supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a
  supervisor?
- How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional
  identity?

Asking questions such as these will lead to the revelations which are considered
necessary in understanding what the pertinent aspects of training were for master’s level
supervisors who were trained in the field. Recognizing and appreciating the internal
developmental influences (i.e., feelings, thoughts, self-awareness, perception, confidence,
professional identity) and the external influences (i.e., experiences which are either
growth-producing or not, meeting expectations, activities, or programming) will inform
the profession in a way that will add to the knowledge base of supervision and contribute
to the research on preparation in supervision.

**Philosophy Guiding the Present Research Study**

Creswell (2008) proposed qualitative inquiry as a mode of social and human
exploration that link philosophical issues to procedures. Creswell (1998) agreed with
others such as Moustakas (1994) and Berg (2007) that using a research design that has
contours and looks across many perspectives, fosters a multimethod approach that aids in
the interpretive process of qualitative study and helps the researcher to construct a “complex holistic picture” (Creswell, 2008, p. 13). Similar to Nelson et al. (2006) who explored the experience of doctoral students becoming a supervisor, this study examined master’s level supervisors practicing in the field and their experience of becoming a supervisor. A detailed picture of (a) the views of the participants; (b) their training experiences; (c) their developmental course; (d) their helpful and not helpful experiences; and (e) shifts in their perceptions, values, and beliefs they can identify helped to provide information about how supervisors in the field are being trained.

According to Creswell (2008), qualitative inquiry is a legitimate mode of exploration, and a study based in phenomenology will provide the framework to access the insights, transformations, viewpoints, and ideals of the participants. A phenomenological study of counseling supervision preparation will promote an understanding with texture and structure (Moustakas, 1994) and answer the questions of the how and what (Creswell, 1998) supervision training experiences are meaningful. Through the identification of themes and qualitative characteristics of current supervision training practices, gaps in our understanding, thought, and knowledge of this process can be suspended.

**Researcher Stance**

The researcher became interested in supervision during the latter portion of her program. This was partially attributed to (a) the fact that supervision training was not typically provided at the master’s level and (b) the program she attended provided a one credit hour didactic and practicum in supervision. Her interest grew out of the procedure
of becoming a counselor and by recognizing what was entailed in the supervision process. The researcher (a) became aware that supervisees were often the object of supervision rather than a participant in it and (b) believed that counselor supervisees needed to be informed of supervision. This, in turn, would lead to increased collaboration in the supervisory process and permit the counselor supervisees to have an impact on the content and outcomes of supervision.

Accordingly, if supervisees had knowledge of both the basic fundamentals of supervision and the responsibilities supervisors have toward supervisees, this would create a more functional, efficient working relationship wherein the supervisees could identify their needs more readily and move from being objects of supervision to consumers of supervision. This researcher, with 10 years of community agency experience and an appreciation of the realities within the field, believed that the more educated counseling supervisees were, the more fully they could participate in supervision upon entering the field.

After entering her doctoral program, the researcher furthered her interest through research, conference presentations, and academic doctoral level instruction in supervision. During that time, she experienced a shift in her beliefs about supervision from those held during her master’s program. The more informed she became of the regulatory aspects of supervision—which encompassed the ethical and regulatory realities of supervisors and supervisees, as well as the process of supervision—the more she realized those complexities necessitated education and training beyond a master’s level education.
Specifically, while she still held the belief that an educated supervisee has value and could add to the process of supervision because of that knowledge, she changed in her belief of the degree to which a supervisee could impact the process or course of supervision. Furthermore, she came to appreciate that long-term, intensive academic approaches such as viewing tapes and receiving feedback do to influence and promote one’s skill development and understanding of supervision.

A culminating event in the researcher’s education and research in supervision came when she became aware of a study of doctoral students and their development in becoming supervisors. The lack of research in the area of supervision training at the master’s level prompted her to embrace the opportunity to expand upon the Nelson et al. (2006) qualitative study for her own dissertation which examined master’s level supervision preparation and the developmental experiences of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field.

Some considerations and defining characteristics of her study were that qualitative research (a) provided views from multiple perspectives, (b) were interpretive, (c) were multi-method, and (d) created a narrative which took the reader through many dimensions of the phenomenon being studied (Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002). In this approach, the researcher was placed within the study as the instrument, thereby becoming part of the process of research making it an interactive, dynamic process between the researcher and the research context (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994).

However, because of the researcher’s position, the viability of the study was influenced by a researcher bias. This made it necessary for the researcher to provide
personal and professional details which biased or impacted the study procedures in areas such as data collection, analysis, or interpretation (Creswell, 2008; Morrow & Smith, 2002; Moustakas, 1994; Patton, 2002; Richards, 2005).

**Significance to Counseling**

The field of counseling is changing. Over the years, emphases of academic or other preparatory practices have had to allow for advances in counseling theory and practice. With the advent of competency-based practices, accreditation, licensure professional authorities have been obliged to generate policy changes and guidelines. Consistent with this trend are the observable changes in counselor supervision requirements. Modifications in guiding principles related to training supervisors are predicated upon gains in knowledge and skill borne out of scholarly research. Gaining research-based knowledge and understanding which contributes to the knowledge base will further inform practice of supervision.

**Summary**

The research focus of this study was to understand the formative and developmental influences that shaped and provided meaning for master’s level counselors gaining supervision knowledge and skills training within the field. An exploration into the technical, professional, interactive, and supportive nature of those forces was intended to determine the status, extent, quality, and manner study participants grow in their knowledge of supervision. The methodology employed was qualitative, from a phenomenological perspective, which examined influential processes, lived experiences,
views, perspectives, and conditions in the field training of master’s level counseling supervisors.
CHAPTER II
LITERATURE REVIEW

“Something somewhere is waiting to be known.” (Carl Sagan)

Counselor education, training practices, and clinical supervision are governed by the mandates of accrediting, licensure bodies, and national counseling organizations which are in place to ensure appropriate professional, ethical, academic policy, and procedure adherence. Academic accreditation bodies, which have devised standards for counselor education programs, grant the accreditation condition to academic institutions and review compliance of educational practices of counselor preparatory programs (CACREP, 2009).

CACREP has provided standards for training in supervision at the PhD level. A second pathway is available for gaining knowledge and skill in supervision provided by the state licensure boards. For example, the governing administrative body of the state (of Ohio) licensure board is responsible for the granting and monitoring professional licenses for practice or to train counselors seeking supervisory endorsements once such status is achieved by a professional counselor (OCSWMFT, 2009). Thus, supervision in Ohio is viewed as a type of sub-specialty area by state licensure standards and is an area that professionals work toward, subsequent to obtaining independent licensure. Up until August 31, 2008, an individual could meet eligibility for supervision status, or
endorsement in Ohio via two methods: (a) clinical supervisory practice along with supervision coursework (at the doctoral level) and (b) one year after obtaining licensure (PCC independent licensure) or two years after obtaining PC licensure level, along with having gained clinical experience, apply for supervisory endorsement and providing evidence of obtaining 10 continuing education units (CEUs) in supervision, obtained usually through attending workshops on supervision (OCSWMFT, 2009). The procedures advocated in Ohio were typical of those endorsed by many states. However, in 2009 the State of Ohio OCCSMFT altered their criteria for supervisory endorsement changing them to more stringent criteria. A discussion of this follows.

The state licensure boards have mandated guidelines for the training of supervisors because, as noted earlier, the national academic accreditation body (CACREP), which sets forth standards for university and college programs that train counselors, have historically only specified coursework related to counseling competencies, not supervision competencies at the master’s level. As a result, some master’s programs may offer coursework in supervision and some may not; yet, as of July 1, 2009, CACREP (2009) has included training in supervision.

Both state and academic governing bodies have striven to evaluate their requirements on a continual basis, in order to identify what is the most effective in preparing individuals for counseling and supervision. In addition, they hope to respond to the developing and current demands that assist in securing evidence-based best practices. Just as society holds counselors accountable for their interventions with clients, there is an increasing inclination by state and accrediting bodies to have research
driven, decision-making best practices for the training approaches in supervision (Ladany et al., 2005).

**CACREP Guidelines for Supervision**

As noted, CACREP (2009) provides program guidelines for professional counselors and counselor educators. The standards are developed to ensure student acquisition of knowledge and skills in areas upon which effective practices are based (2009). These standards are viewed as minimal criteria for counselor preparation programs that require master’s and doctoral curricula to contain in counseling theory, related curricular experiences and demonstrated knowledge as part of a pedagogical structure of master’s CACREP (2009) programs. Primarily, coursework expectations center on the eight core counseling areas of (a) professional identity, (b) social and cultural diversity, (c) human growth and development, (d) career, (e) helping relationships, (f) group work, (g) assessment, and (h) research and program development (CACREP, 2009).

The new CACREP standards, effective July 1, 2009, specify newly instituted guidelines including supervision as part of master’s counselor training. CACREP does not stipulate a stand alone course in supervision training or practicum as part of counselor training (CACREP, 2009). As a result, supervision training is not a mandated core counseling area and its integration into counseling training is at the discretion of master’s level counseling training programs. However, some programs that train counselors at the master’s level in supervision have developed specific coursework in supervision for their students. In these programs, students typically complete a one credit semester course on
supervision after the student has completed a counseling practicum and has completed minimum experience in clinical counseling. The coursework in supervision may be didactic or didactic and experiential.

Conversely, at the doctoral level, coursework in supervision is mandated by CACREP (2001, 2009) standards. The composition of doctoral instructional guidelines outlined by CACREP is based upon the philosophy that the acquisition of advanced skills is built upon the foundation of preparation at the master’s level. CACREP programs aspire to prepare individuals for the professional practice of counseling as counselor educators, supervisors, and/or advanced practitioners (CACREP, 2009). Further, doctoral programming emphases have as their primary obligation to prepare individuals to expand the knowledge base of the counseling profession through research and scholarly activity (CACREP, 2009). In addition, doctoral level program objectives provided by CACREP (2009) are also comprehensive with emphasis on leadership and related advanced level competencies. In this regard, the CACREP guidelines include the study of advanced supervision theory in addition to a supervision practicum.

Standards for preparation in supervision at the PhD level stated by CACREP (2009), therefore, have presumed a student’s mastery of counseling skills based on experience beyond the master’s counseling practicum and internship. Specifically, doctoral students are expected to build upon previously acquired graduate counseling skills and knowledge through supplementary doctoral level supervision instruction and experience. Thus, at the doctoral level, supervision coursework is advanced, both in didactic and the experiential portions, which include an in-depth understanding of both theories and the process of supervision, as well as supporting research.
Another way that the preparation of supervisors has been impacted has been through the ACA (2005), which provides ethical guidelines for the practice and training of both master’s and doctoral level students and practitioners in supervision. The ACA Code of Ethics (2005) stipulates that counseling professionals possess counseling knowledge based on ethical principles and responsibilities and be supportive of the mission of counseling profession as defined by ethical behavior and practices. The code serves as a guide for needed ethical professional courses of action and as a resource to review ethical complaints (ACA, 2005). The code inspires individual commitment which stems from values that promote professional and principled practice, which is not compulsory but viewed as a responsibility (ACA, 2005) and provides guidelines for client-based ethical issues relative to clinical, professional, collegial relationship and professional actions in teaching, education and training, research, supervision, and publication.

Supervision responsibilities outlined by the ethics code (2005) related to supervisory relationship responsibilities focus on the integrity of the developmental relationship between the supervisor and the supervisee, as well as those relationships between supervisees and clients. Several aspects of the supervisor-supervisee relationship outlined by the ethics code advise purposeful and reflective action by supervisors in their relationships with their supervisees. These actions include:

- supervisor does not promote services or products to supervisees who may be vulnerable (C.3.f);
- supervisor monitors client welfare and supervisee clinical and professional development (F.1.a);
supervisor ensures ethical boundaries of professional, personal, and social relationships, including a blend of clinical and administrative duties, so as to minimize potential conflicts (F.3.a);

supervisor refrains from any romantic or sexual relationships with current supervisees (F.3.b), not subject supervisees to any form of sexual harassment (F.3.c), nor enter into a counseling relationships with relatives or close friends (F.3.d);

supervisor maintains an awareness of the power differential existing between supervisor and supervisee and approaches potentially beneficial nonprofessional relationships with caution by defining the parameters, advantages, disadvantages, and limits of any additional role(s) (F.3.e);

supervisor identifies and processes the impact of interpersonal competencies upon the supervisory relationship, relationships with clients, and in professional performance (F.5.c);

supervisor knows ethical considerations and procedures for termination of the supervisory relationship by providing timely notice, reasons for withdrawal, and should cultural, clinical, or professional considerations vital to the supervisory relationship be present, seek resolution of those differences as well as provide resources for alternative supervision (F.4.d);

counselor educator supervisors are bound to ethical relationship limits relative to professional, social, and personal, the avoidance of nonprofessional relationships; should have role clarity when administrative and clinical supervisory relationships are combined, are to be cautious relative to potentially beneficial nonprofessional relationships (F.3.a), and are prohibited from any romantic or sexual involvement (F.3.b), sexual harassment (F.3.c) or the acceptance of relatives or close friends as supervisees (F.3.d); and

counselor educator supervisors have responsibilities and similar stipulations related to termination of the supervisory relationship for supervising counselors, such as providing timely notice, reasons for withdrawal if the presence of cultural, clinical, or professional concerns vital to the supervisory relationship are present, to seek resolution of those differences and provide resources for alternative supervision (F.4.d).

The above mandates of the ACA Code of Ethics (2005) are prescriptive and delineate the ethical actions of the supervisor, relative to the supervisee and the supervisee.
relationship, thus promoting the livelihood of the supervisor-supervisee relationship and preserving ethical practice in supervision.

Another focus of the *Code of Ethics* (2005) is the supervisor responsibilities associated with the supervisee-client relationship. The Code states:

- relationships are built upon a foundation of respect and protection of the rights, dignity, and welfare of clients (A.1.a);

- relationships are consensual and have been clearly communicated with regard to client rights and responsibilities and are viewed as an ongoing aspect of the therapeutic process (A.2.a);

- participant clients are provided disclosure of the nature, limits, purposes, risks, benefits, and techniques to be utilized as well as counselor qualifications and credentials, relevant experience, and optional services, in case of counselor death; further, counselors understand their responsibility to assist clients in understanding the implications of diagnosis, testing, reports, and practical aspects relative to billing and fees, (A.2.b) which also consider the developmental and cultural needs of clients (A.2.c);

- relationships are subject to the same role and relationship limits applicable to current counselor-client relationships in terms of sexual or romantic relationships (A.5.a) or former clients, once a 5-year period past the final professional contact has passed, and once considerable thought and documentation completed, so as to guard against any perceptions of the relationship interaction being exploitive (A.5.b) and the avoidance of nonprofessional platonic relationships, except when beneficial to the client (A.5.c), or are potentially beneficial nonprofessional interactions that are beneficial to the current or former client (A.5.d);

- all other ethical relationship duties to fully inform relationship changes, which center around informing clients of changes in treatment modality (i.e., individual to family counseling), move from a therapeutic role to an evaluative role, change from counselor role to researcher role, or counselor role to role of mediator (or any of these vice versa) are fully disclosed to the client in addition to financial, legal, personal, therapeutic consequences (A.5.e);

- are to address added considerations connected to counselor-client relationships surfacing as counselors advocate at the individual, institutional, or societal levels (A.6.a) placing responsibility for counselors to obtain consent when clients are identifiable during advocacy actions (A.6.b);
are obliged to delineate the nature of the professional relationships with each individual, when serving multiple clients (i.e., two or more individuals in a relationship), so that conflict is minimized (A.7.) or when performing group work counselors must protect clients from physical, emotional, or psychological trauma (A.8.b);

are to follow procedures for following a planned practice termination (C.2.h), treatment termination, illness or long-term vacations, as making referrals are ethical duties, which should avoid client abandonment, by securing alternative treatment options and transfer of records (C.2.h); A.11.a); or, in the event that counselors are unable to provide professional assistance, the supervisor is to identify culturally and clinically appropriate client services (A.11.b);

are to terminate services appropriately following natural therapeutic developments and moreover, are permitted to terminate services if the client is not likely to benefit or is being harmed (A.11.d);

are to disclose exceptions of maintaining confidentiality due to electronic transmission of information, as well as supervisors or informational technology administration personnel who might have (authorized or unauthorized) access (A.12.g), in addition to how confidentiality and the role records management (F.1.c), treatment teams (b.3.b) faculty, supervision, or observation of counseling sessions within the training environment occurs (B.6.c);

are to secure counselors not participate or condone any type of discrimination (i.e., age, culture, disability, ethnicity, race, religion/spirituality, gender/gender identity/sexual orientation, marital status/partnership, language preference, socioeconomic status, or any basis protected by law (C.5);

are to be aware of signs of counsel or impairment (i.e., physical, mental, emotional) and see to the abstinence from professional practice and seeking of assistance when likely to harm client (C.2.g); and

see that counselors imply and represent professional qualifications completely and correctly (C.4.a), with accurate claims of licensure (C.4.b), that credentials are in good standing (C.4.b), they differentiate between earned and honorary degrees (C.4.c) and refrain from implying doctoral-level competence (i.e., state highest earned degree in counseling or closely associated field; do not refer to themselves as “Dr.” when doctorate is not in counseling/related field).

In summary, the Code of Ethics (2005) stipulates here the ethical responsibility of the counseling supervisor relative to the relationship the supervisee has with his/her client.
Subject to the same ethical mandates as the supervisor, the code directives give emphasis to supervisee-client issues associated to clinical practice such as treatment protocols, discrimination, functioning, and scope of practice considerations.

A further focus of the *Code of Ethics* (2005) is related to competencies that dictate the minimum aptitude and skill levels for counseling supervisors. Competencies emphasized related to continuing education in the ethics codes are:

- supervising counselors be trained in supervision methods and supervision techniques (F.2.a); and

- counseling supervisors be aware of and attend to the role of diversity or multiculturalism within the supervisory relationship (F.2.b).

An additional requirement of the ACA *Code of Ethics* (2005) is for supervisors to pursue continuing education activity in counseling in addition to participation in supervision continuing education; board rules provide:

- supervising counselors obtain counseling continuing education activity (F.2.a);

- supervisors recognize the inevitability of continuing education needed to acquire and maintain a suitable level of awareness of current scientific and professional knowledge as well as to strive to maintain an acquired level of competence, while remaining open to new procedures, inclusive of current demands and diversity needs with whom they specialize (C.2.f.); and

- counseling supervisors present accurately professional qualifications, including accurate representation of continuing education and specialized endeavors designed to prepare (C.4.a.).

In summary, competencies for counseling supervisors are delineated with focus on (a) adequate and appropriate training, (b) responsibilities of continued education, (c) areas of specialization, and (d) issues related to multiculturalism. Those areas can be
identified as reflective of recent advances and emphases within the field of counselor supervision.

Finally, an area related to practice within the bounds of competence in the ethics code (ACA, Section C.2.a., 2005) cites that supervisors are to base supervisory practices upon acquired academic preparation, training, and experience. Finally, the Code of Ethics (2005) states supervisors must remain current in the latest knowledge within the field.

The ACA Code of Ethics (2005) puts forth the expectation that counselor education and supervision professionals are to be skilled in teaching and practice, as well as possess knowledge of ethical, legal, and regulatory aspects of supervisory functions (F.6.a.). In this manner, the Code of Ethics (2005) provides guidelines embedded in ethically-based client care, while encompassing the provisions of superseding state mandates.

In summary, as Glasoff and Kocet (2005) noted, the ethics are designed to support, unify, and standardize the profession with a guiding moral code that can be utilized to assist in defining ethical and best practice responsibilities. Furthermore, the code functions as a source for ethical decision making that is consistent with the values of the field of counseling (Glasoff & Kocet, 2005). Consequently, it is not the purpose of the ACA Code of Ethics (2005) to set forward academic preparatory guidelines in supervision but to influence the moral principles under which guide the conduct of counseling professionals in the performance of their counseling or supervision duties.
ACES Guidelines for Supervision

Whereas the ACA Code of Ethics and organization address a broad range of professional concerns, ACES (1993, 2005) was established explicitly to promote the practice of supervision. Therefore, this organization limits its focus to the preparation of professionals in supervisory roles.

One major way in which ACES influences and promotes preparation of supervisors is through its Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors (2005). Within the context of broad applied clinical settings, the ACES guidelines (2005) outline directives for supervision practices that pertain to supervisors who provide supervision of cases, as well as to supervisors who engage in administrative supervision. While the ACES guidelines are supplementary to the general purposes of the ACA Code of Ethics (2005), they address ethical and legal client and supervisee rights, as well as support the education and training of supervisors. They also act as a forum to address professional policy, procedure, and program standards needs (2005).

Compared to the ACA Code of Ethics (2005), the ACES guidelines (a) are attenuated in their emphases on the behavioral and relational aspects of supervision, (b) are related dimensions of professional integrity, and (c) are intensified in their focus on advancing the skill development of the supervisee. Thus, their efforts target the education and training of counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators, as well as promote the delivery of education and supervision in applied settings.

The ACES guidelines are more explicit in terms of the nature of the expectations of supervisors, supervisory roles, and role responsibilities. However, they are not prescriptive in setting timelines fundamental to supervision training or expertise. The
ACES guidelines are intended to help professionals meet the developmental needs of supervisees in a manner that is compatible with the best interest of clients and mandates of preparatory programs. Therefore, the ACES *Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors* (2005) specify:

- supervisors should receive training prior to the onset of a supervisory role (2.01, 2005);
- supervisors should participate in ongoing peer supervision and peer review procedures in order to sustain quality in training and supervision (3.03, 2005);
- supervisors who are participating in training programs should communicate with site supervisors (used for practicum or internship) on a regular basis regarding current professional practices, expectations of students, and models and preferred modalities of supervision (3.13, 2005); and
- supervisors in training programs that primarily utilize personal growth or individual counseling should be on a voluntary basis and should not serve as supervisor for supervisees in this type of training to regulate and minimize any role conflict that may arise (3.17, 3.19; 2005).

In addition to the ACES guidelines (2005), the organization sponsors seminars and workshops at regional and national ACES conferences. The workshops include training in supervision techniques, models, and methods. ACES efforts target the education of counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators as well as promote the delivery of education and supervision in applied settings (ACES, 2005). Another purpose of ACES is to promote a counseling professional identity that is collectively shared, as well as to encourage and publish scholarly research. The ACES mission is to respond to the emerging needs of the profession and promote training so that counselors and supervisors can meet the changing demands of a mounting diverse culture (ACES, 2005). ACES efforts are centered on advancing change in the profession by disseminating print and web-based information as well as cutting edge research, knowledge, and preparatory
experiences through opportunities for counseling professionals to attend and present at ACES sponsored regional and national professional conferences (ACES, 2005).

**Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS)**

Another trend at the national level is the Approved Clinical Supervisor ([ACS], 2009) certification, a credential that is granted by the Center for Credentialing and Education, a corporate affiliate of the National Board for Certified Counselors (NBCC).

Requirements for Standard Entry to ACS are:

- current status as one of the following: (a) National Board Certified Counselor (NBCC), (b) licensed or certified mental health provider, or (c) licensed or certified clinical supervisor;

- master’s degree or higher in a mental health field;

- documentation of the completion of specialized training in either of the following: (a) a graduate course in clinical supervision; (b) a total of 30 contact hours of workshop training in clinical supervision; or (c) either a or b above must include, but is not limited to, each of the following content areas: roles and functions of clinical supervisor; models of clinical supervision; mental health-related professional development; methods and techniques in clinical supervision; supervisory relationship issues; cultural issues in clinical supervision; group supervision; legal and ethical issues in clinical supervision; evaluation of supervisee competence and the supervision process; mental health-related experience;

- minimum of three years of post-master’s experience in mental health services which must include at least 1,500 hours of direct service with clients is required; or (a) doctoral-level practitioners/professionals can substitute one year of postmaster’s work experience in mental health or mental health-related education for 300 hours of direct service with clients, up to a maximum of 900 hours; (b) doctoral-level internship(s) in mental health may also be used toward this requirement, and provide official transcripts verifying doctoral program internship, and experience may take place in any setting where direct clinical/mental health services are provided;

- supervision experience/endorsement: (a) a minimum of 100 hours of clinical supervision of mental health services with supervisees along with or, (b) a minimum of 20 hours of supervision of supervision, or (c) an endorsement
from a mental health professional attesting to the applicant’s supervisory activity;

- candidates must submit a professional disclosure statement which assesses the understanding of multiple responsibilities of clinical supervision and disclosure statements must include the following 11 required areas (if the applicant is not currently employed in a supervisory capacity, the disclosure statement should be written as if the applicant is employed as a supervisor): (a) business address and telephone number of the applicant pursuing the ACS credential; (b) the listing of degrees, credentials, and licenses held by the applicant for the ACS; (c) general areas of competence in mental health practice for which the applicant can provide supervision (e.g., addictions counseling, career counseling); (d) a statement documenting applicant’s training in supervision and experience in providing supervision; (e) a general statement addressing the applicant’s model of or approach to supervision, including role of the supervisor, objectives, and goals of supervision, and modalities (e.g., tape review, live observation; (f) a description of the evaluation procedures the applicant uses in the supervisory relationship; (g) a statement defining the limits and scope of confidentiality and privileged communication within the supervisory relationship; (h) a release, when applicable, indicating that the applicant is under supervision and that the supervisee may be discussed with the applicant’s supervisor; (i) a fee schedule, if applicable; (j) applicant’s emergency contact information; (k) a statement indicating that the applicant follows the relevant credentialing body’s Code of Ethics and the ACS Code of Ethics;

- all candidates must hold a master’s degree (or higher) in a mental health field in order to be considered for the ACS certification;

- experienced supervisors may apply under the alternate requirements if they prepare and submit a professional disclosure statement (see ACS requirements for standard entry, section 6);

- applicants must currently be either an NBCC, a licensed or certified mental health provider, or a licensed or certified clinical supervisor and also be one of the following: (a) a mental health professional who can document at least three years of experience as a clinical supervisor and at least 500 hours; (b) providing clinical supervision to individuals and/or groups: (1) an educator who is a mental health professional and can document at least two semesters of full time teaching in a mental health-related program at a regionally-accredited institution and teaching assignments must include practicum/internship, supervision courses, or related courses that require the educator to function as a clinical supervisor (prior clinical supervision experience may be combined with current employment to meet this requirement); (2) a doctoral candidate in a CACREP accredited program, who holds a master’s degree in a
mental health field and is in the final semester of doctoral studies, and who can document a minimum of two semesters of teaching assignments in practicum or internshipsupervision (prior clinical supervision may be combined with current teaching assignments to meet this requirement); (3) doctoral candidates must provide a transcript documenting successful completion of a clinical supervision graduate course; and

- a mental health professional who possesses a recognized national or state credential in clinical supervision must include a copy of the active and current national or state supervision credential: American Association for Marriage and Family Therapy; American Association of Pastoral Counselors; British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy; former clinical supervisors currently licensed or certified by the Academy of Mental Health Counselors; or counselors who are currently licensed or certified as clinical supervisors by a state counselor credentialing board.

The Center for Credentialing and Education (CCE) has developed *The Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS) Code of Ethics* (2009) which represents the minimal standards of conduct for ACS credentialed professionals. The ethics code is also designed to assist supervisors with decision making and to provide confidence to consumers of ethical practice of their CCE/ACS providers. The CCE ethics office is responsible for overseeing complaints of violations, in contrast to the state governing bodies who oversee legislated and adopted licensure laws. The *ACS Code of Ethics* (2009) is applicable to CCE/ACS, in addition to a practitioner’s governing mental health credentialing body, and stipulate that an ACS shall:

- ensure that supervisees inform clients of their professional status (e.g., intern) and of all conditions of supervision; an ACS shall ensure that supervisees inform their clients of any status other than being fully qualified for independent practice or licensed (for example, an ACS shall ensure that supervisees inform clients if they are students, interns, trainees or, if licensed with restrictions, and the nature of those restrictions (e.g., associate or conditional); an ACS shall ensure that supervisees inform clients of the requirements of supervision (e.g., the audio taping of all clinical sessions for purposes of supervision);
■ ensure that supervisees inform clients of clients’ rights to confidentiality and privileged communication when applicable, as well as the limits of confidentiality and privileged communication; general limits of confidentiality are when harm to self or others is threatened, when the abuse of children, elders, or disabled persons is suspected, and in cases when the court compels the mental health professional to testify and break confidentiality. These are generally accepted limits to confidentiality and privileged communication, but they may be modified by state or federal statute;

■ inform supervisees about the process of supervision, including supervision goals, case management procedures, evaluation processes, and the ACS’s preferred supervisionmodel(s); an Approved Clinical Supervisor also shall inform supervisees of the Approved Clinical Supervisors’ credentials, areas of expertise, and training in supervision;

■ keep and secure supervision records and consider all information gained in supervision as confidential;

■ avoid all dual relationships with supervisees that may interfere with the ACS’s professional judgment or exploit the supervisee; sexual, romantic, or intimate relationships between an ACS and supervisees shall not occur; ACS shall not engage in sexual harassment or sexual bias towards supervisees; ACS shall not supervise relatives;

■ establish procedures with supervisees for handling crisis situations;

■ provide supervisees with adequate and timely feedback as part of an established evaluation plan;

■ render assistance to any supervisee who is unable to provide competent clinical services to clients;

■ intervene in any situation where the supervisee is impaired and clients may be at risk;

■ refrain from endorsing an impaired supervisee when such impairment deems it unlikely that the supervisee can provide adequate clinical services;

■ offer only supervision for professional services for which they are trained or have supervised experience;

■ an ACS shall not assist in diagnosis, assessment, or treatment without prior training or supervision; an Approved Clinical Supervisor shall correct any misrepresentations of his or her qualifications by others;
ensure that supervisees are aware of the current ethical standards related to the supervisees’ professional practice, as well as legal standards that regulate the supervisee’s professional practice;

ensure that both supervisees and clients are aware of their rights and of due process procedures; an ACS shall be ultimately responsible for the welfare of supervisees’ clients; and

engage supervisees in an examination of cultural issues that might affect the supervision process and/or supervisees’ clinical practice.

The Approved Clinical Supervisor Code of Ethics (2009) is produced by the CCE, a private entity in association with the NBCC and is secondary to state regulated codes of ethics, (e.g., Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia). The ACS can be sought by supervising professionals, and while the ACS credential is not mandated by any counseling profession governing body, it is gaining popular support and recognition.

Counseling Guidelines for Supervision: State of Ohio

The State of Ohio licensure board for counselors has mandated rules for preparing supervisors. The OCSWMFT (2009) has set forth laws and rules that pertain to supervisory responsibilities. These laws reflect expectations that a supervisor demonstrates competence in the area in which they are supervising. Thus, they expect that a supervisor has been trained in the theory and practice of supervision, as well as the legal, ethical, and multicultural competencies or issues relevant to counseling supervision (OCSWMFT, 2009).

The OCSWMFT (2009) laws and rules explicitly detail the minimum standards for supervision endorsement. As stated previously, the State of Ohio embraces procedures that are generally practiced by most states. Although the OCSWMFT (2009) rules outline minimum training requirements for supervisory endorsement, they do not
outline supervision preparatory content. The rules identify the following expectations for supervising counselor designation:

- individuals hold a PC for two years or a PCC for one year; after 8/31/08 at least two years post-PCC experience for applicants; other requirements follow;

- two years documented full time direct counseling experience under supervision and documentation of two quarter hours of academic work or 10 clock hours of CEUs in clinical supervision (this became 24 hours after 8/31/08);

- at least one supervision of supervision experience providing at least 10 hours of supervision and five hours of supervision with the same supervisee and PCC-S supervisor (effective 8/31/08);

- compliance with ACES and ACA ethical and clinical issues relevant to the supervisory relationship; and

- document familiarity with significant legal, ethical, and clinical issues relevant to the supervisory relationship (effective 8/31/08).

The OCSWMFT (2008) rules set forth the expectations with regard to the training time requirement (i.e., CEUs), not the substantive dimensions inherent in the instructional experience. It is noteworthy that the OCSWMFT (2009) board grants the supervisory or endorsement; however, it specifies some aspects of supervision preparation, as six of the 24 hours need to be in the areas of assessment/evaluation, counsel or development/models of supervision, management/administration and professional relationships. As a result, the types of training that a supervisor in training receives are left to those in the field.

In 2008, the OCSWMFT board voted to restructure the supervising counselor designation and the changes necessary to meet the requirements are:

- a minimum of one year post PCC experience;
■ documentation of full-time, direct counseling services under supervision;

■ the documentation of 24 hours of academic coursework or continuing education hours in clinical supervision;

■ the documentation of at least one supervision of supervision, providing at least 10 hours of supervision and receipt of five hours of supervision;

■ the compliance with current and future ACES and ACA ethical standards for supervision;

■ documentation of familiarity with significant legal, ethical, and clinical issues relevant to the supervisory relationship; and

■ the completion and submission of a Supervision Designation Application.

In summary, the OCSWMFT board is also responding to advances within the field of counseling supervision that motivate policy change and training expectations. In addition, those fundamental changes promote movement in other segments of the profession, such as education and instruction in supervision.

Thus, no matter which credentialing body is consulted regarding supervision, it is concurred that there are certain competencies that supervisors must meet:

■ knowledge of how to foster skill development;

■ understanding models of supervision;

■ keep abreast of latest knowledge of best practices;

■ possess multicultural competencies; and

■ experience in supervision—which encompasses a certain level of practical experience as a counselor.

Therefore, counseling supervisors need a certain level of practical experience as counselor prior to learning how to supervise. As a consequence, the profession assumes counseling
skills are fundamentally different than supervisory skills and further, that supervision skills are built upon counseling skills.

**Models or Approaches of Supervision Training**

As previously noted, two routes or approaches of supervision training exist at this time. On the academic level, doctoral students receive supervision advanced course instruction and complete an advanced practicum experience. According to CACREP (2009), Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral counseling programs should delineate instructional protocols that expand the counseling field and are based on scholarly inquiry. These protocols should also develop leaders who will be advocates of change and which consider the contemporary needs of the 21st century.

CACREP curricular mandates (2009) encompass specifics aimed (a) at leadership development in counselor education, (b) at fostering skills in supervision and advanced counseling, and (c) at enhancing research competencies that extend beyond entry-levels (Section II, A). Particularly, knowledge regarding the principles and practice of counseling, career development, group work, systems, and consultation are viewed by CACREP as critical to training leaders in the field. Theories and practices of counselor supervision, instructional theory, and methods relevant to counselor education, pedagogy germane to current sociocultural influences, including social change theory, advocacy action planning, as well as ethical and legal considerations in counselor education and supervision are also stressed (e.g., the *ACA Code of Ethics*, Section II, C; CACREP, 2009).
The assumption of supervision preparatory approaches recommended by CACREP (2009) is that at the doctoral level students have adequate counseling training, practice, and clinical experience. As a result, it is assumed that the education, practice, and clinical experiences of doctoral level students are sufficient so that supervision training is meaningful. As they gain their knowledge and experience in supervision, doctoral students build on the strong base of counseling skills they possess and their understanding of (a) theory, (b) human growth and development, and (c) how clients change over time; they also have integrated an understanding of the process of therapy over time.

The second route of supervision training that has existed is at the master’s level where two approaches exist to obtaining knowledge and skill in supervision. The two methods to obtaining training are (a) at the field or practitioner level where individuals have graduated with a master’s degree and possess a PCC licensure or (b) at the master’s level where individuals receive supervision training as part of their master’s counseling program. Thus, the first method is within the field or practice setting, for those practitioners who want to gain their supervision credentials and the other is within the academic setting when students are obtaining their master’s degree.

At the field, or practitioner level, individuals have customarily gained continuing education units (CEUs) in supervision through instruction provided via workshops, seminars, and professional conferences. Therefore, emphases at the field or practitioner level support the notion that supervision training at seminars, workshops, or other options such as web-based instruction is adequate.
Conversely, for some students, their master’s program offered supervision preparation at the master’s level and often it was integrated into the curriculum as part of a two credit supervision course. The students were exposed to the theoretical and philosophical nature of supervision as part of the didactic (one credit hour) portion of the course and applied their learning as part of a separate practicum (one credit hour). This type of program is considered a specialists program, in that training extended beyond the standards usually found in CACREP accredited programs. For example, the typical program consists of 60 total credit hours whereas the specialists program is 62 credit hours. Specialist programs assume that at the field level or post master’s level basic instruction and a practicum in supervision are useful. Therefore, proponents of this approach to supervision assume that training in supervision is best acquired by counseling professionals subsequent to gaining clinical experience at the master’s level.

In 2009, CACREP guidelines changed and now reflect a requirement for preparation in supervision to be absorbed in the curriculum as a requirement for a master’s degree. Counseling master’s programs offering supervision at the master’s level assume that having completed the majority of a counseling program is sufficient exposure and experience to qualify a student to learn and practice supervision skills. Another assumption is that there is much merit in providing an accelerated counselor training experience and the infusion of supervision adds value to the entire learning experience.

**Theories of Supervision**

No matter which route the trainees follow to acquire expertise in supervision, a basic understanding of supervision theory is essential. All of the aforementioned training
approaches offer knowledge about models of supervision (although the knowledge covered is at a greater depth and breadth at the doctoral level) and the models guide the supervisor on how to address the development of the supervisee in acquiring the knowledge and skills to function as a supervisor (Baker, Exum, & Tyler, 2002).

The different supervision models focus on different aspects of supervision. The developmental models of supervision are based on understanding and promoting the development of the supervisee and the supervisor (Hess, 1986; Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987; Stoltenberg & McNeill, 1997) and provide insight on the actions of the supervisor that will enhance the supervisee’s growth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Other models of supervision are based on therapeutic models such as solution focused, cognitive, or psychodynamic. These supervision models emphasize the techniques that are associated with each approach. Thus, solution-focused supervisors have their supervisees do more of what has been used and are egalitarian, while cognitive model supervisors focus on the supervisees’ cognitions that are dysfunctional.

However, no matter what model supervisors follow, a core belief is that the content and process that guides all supervisors is based upon both the developmental stage of the supervisee and the particular task the supervisee is confronting. Consequently, the goal of the supervision models is to assist supervisors in facilitating supervisee growth. Another emphasis cutting across models is that supervisors enhance the training experience of the supervisee by promoting their skill development as well as their professional identity (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

It is noteworthy that the development of supervision as a discipline was built upon the research by leaders in the field of counseling, such as Rogers (1961), Carkhuff.
(1969), Ivy (1971, 2005), Egan (2001), and Hill (1998, 2004, 2009), who have conducted investigations and documented the process of skill development in trainees. They confirmed that counseling skills can be taught and can be learned and that they support the view that counseling is both an art and a science. Furthermore, their research documented that the lack of a certain level of skill acquisition can negatively impact client outcomes (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Neufeldt, 2007). Therefore, the early researchers argued for the need to train supervisors to help develop beginning counselors.

During the past two decades, supervision has emerged as an important area of specialization. Numerous models have been put forth to guide the supervisor and promote research in this area. An overview of the supervision models revealed that they can be categorized in terms of (a) those models directed at the development of both the supervisee and function of the supervisor, (b) those models directed at the development and function of the supervisee, and (c) those models designed for the development of the supervisor only. Examples of each of the supervision approaches follow to illustrate each type of approach to supervision, which offers the skills and tasks that inform our practice of supervision.

**Developmental Models**

There are two significant developmental models that have influenced the counseling profession.

**Integrative Developmental Model.** The most researched model that illustrates how supervisees develop is the Integrative Developmental Model (IDM; Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). It identifies four levels, the fourth being the most advanced
or master stage, through which supervisees progress. Each level is characterized by three markers or structures from which the supervisor can assess supervisee growth.

According to Stoltenberg et al. (1998), the three markers are

- self-other awareness, which reflects “where the person is in terms of self-preoccupation, awareness of the client’s world, and enlightened self-awareness” (p. 16);
- degree of motivation which “reflects the supervisee’s interest, investment, and effort expended in clinical training and practice” (p. 16); and
- level of autonomy, which reflects the degree of independence apparent in the supervisee. (Stoltenberg et al., 1998)

Guided by these three markers, the supervisor can identify from which level of development the supervisee is operating. For example, at Level 1 (of four levels, four being most advanced), the supervisee is highly motivated and experiences high levels of anxiety. S/he is dependent on the supervisor (i.e., exhibits low autonomy) and needs higher degrees of structure and feedback from the supervisor. In addition, the supervisee is highly self-focused but has developed little self-awareness.

The Level 2 supervisee vacillates between being very confident to being confused (i.e., low motivation). Hence, although s/he functions more independently, the supervisee experiences conflicts between autonomy and dependency, and at times, may be highly resistant to the supervisor. At this level, the supervisee may focus on the client, but at times, may be overly enmeshed with the client (i.e., low awareness).

A Level 3 supervisee has developed both the concept of self in therapy and a personalized approach to his/her practice. For example, the Level 3 supervisee is consistent in his/her view of his/her clinical effectiveness and professional judgment and features a qualitatively different self-awareness which is more reflective of personal
reactions, while remaining focused on client. A Level 4 supervisee is advanced in his/her clinical practice and has achieved Level 3 tasks across multiple domains (e.g., treatment, assessment, conceptualization) (Stoltenberg et al., 1998).

Stoltenberg et al. (1998) also specified eight domains of professional functioning that are the focus of supervision and that provide markers for assessing supervisee development. These domains are

- intervention skills competence or the confidence to perform therapeutic interventions;
- assessment techniques or the confidence and ability to conduct psychological assessments;
- interpersonal assessment or the ability to employ use of self in conceptualizing client problems; this aspect of functioning goes beyond the formal assessment period in clinical work and is impacted by theoretical orientation;
- client conceptualization or considers the dialectic of client history, background, environment, and individual characteristics affecting the client;
- individual differences or understanding of the impact of cultural and ethnic variables upon client;
- theoretical orientation or the degree of or level of sophistication of a counselor’s understanding of theory;
- treatment plans and goals or an ability to organize their work with clients; and
- professional ethics or the blend or interaction of personal ethics with professional ethics (Stoltenberg et al., 1998).

A major strength of the Stoltenberg et al. (1998) model is that it describes the type of environment the supervisor should provide to promote supervisee development, depending on the level from which the supervisee is functioning. For example, for the Level 1 supervisee, the supervisor should be (a) supportive, creating a safe environment
to provide feedback and evaluative comments and (b) structured, using role-play and direct observation to promote growth.

The supervisor of a Level 2 supervisee should create an environment that encourages the supervisee autonomy with support and structure, while expanding the focus of supervision to encompass areas and considerations such as countertransference, challenging interventions with the motive of increasing the use of self and theory in the supervisee’s practice. At Level 3, the supervisor should promote an integrative approach for the supervisee, by encouraging consistency across domains (e.g., treatment, assessment, conceptualization) with an emphasis on autonomy and independence while encouraging experimentation. The supervisor should also foster the supervisee’s uniqueness as a practitioner, promote self-revelation, and always continue to provide careful monitoring.

In spite of their popularity, there is limited research support for developmental approaches (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). In a seminal article critiquing the research on these models, Ellis and Ladany (1997) noted that only a small proportion of the studies on these models met criteria for being methodologically sound. They often had shortcomings that included (a) small sample size, (b) redundancy of supervisory ratings, (c) exclusive reliance upon self-reports, and (d) use of statistical irregularities in their methodology. This led to accusations of substandard research on the developmental approaches over the past decade or two and leaves the “theories and central premises of these developmental models untested” (Ellis & Ladany, 1997; Falender & Shafranske, 2004, p. 493). Falender and Shafranske (2004) also noted other criticisms of developmental approaches that limit their practical application in clinical settings. These
criticisms included (a) a lack of uniformity within and across preparatory levels, (b) differences in theoretical orientation, (c) experience, (d) use of metaphor, (e) processing, (f) nonverbal communication, and (g) a deficiency of empirical research in treatment planning and development of assessment policy.

However, in spite of their limitations research reveals that there are significant correlations between supervisor behavior and supervisee development (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). For example, Falender and Shafranske (2004) concluded that the type of supervisor behaviors and conceptual planning increases with supervisor experience and development. In other words, supervision correlates positively with better client outcomes and the development of the trainee-client working alliance (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). Thus, the quality of supervision is impacted by the developmental level of the supervisor which in turn influences the developmental level and skills of the supervisee. Considerations such as the following moderate the impact of what critical views are held about developmental approaches and thereby lay the groundwork for further research and empirical study on developmental approaches.

Ronnestad and Skovholt Model. Another seminal developmental model was put forth by Ronnestad and Skovholt (2003). This model was based on interviews of 100 therapists and counselors from which they identified how the therapists and counselors developed across the life-span (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). In 2003, Ronnestad and Skovholt refined their model and developed a more concise model by identifying six phases or stages and 14 themes of development. The six phases are:

- The lay helper phase which depicts the novice as a helper, who demonstrates basic skills in helping, identifies the problem quickly, shows sympathy rather than empathy and problem solves.
■ The beginning student phase centers on students who are dependent, anxious, and vulnerable with a fragile self-confidence. They depend upon supervisor support and praise; they experience criticism harshly and injurious to their morale and look to emulate models and experts.

■ The advanced student phase focuses on students at an internship stage, where the central task is establishing a basic professional practice; they continue to want to do it ‘the right way’ and have a style that is cautious and thorough, they are able to apply and integrate knowledge.

■ The novice professional phase describes students who are faced with the realities and conflicts between what they thought they have learned and what they know; they integrate their personality into their work and utilize this time to seek compatible professional roles and environments.

■ The experienced professional phase in which the task is for individuals to claim their own style that is congruent with their own personal values, beliefs, and worldview. These supervisors understand the central role that the therapeutic relationship plays in client change. Furthermore, in this stage the professional maintains the ability to regulate the degree of involvement with clients so that the path of the therapeutic relationship accommodates change and termination. In this stage, the professional enters into mentoring relationships with less senior staff and looks into other areas to draw from to enrich his/her practice (e.g., art, religion, literature).

■ The senior professional phase, in which the professional has a developed, personalized approach, that reflects their own uniqueness, has humility about his/her impact on clients and their accomplishments, and they are entrenched in their personal approaches. They meet new trends with skepticism (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

The 14 themes that Ronnestad and Skovholt (2003) identified include three themes concerning self-reflection which have implications for both supervisee and supervisor growth (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). These three themes involve (a) reflectivity or self-reflection which is the foundation that optimizes learning, (b) reflectivity which spans one’s professional life, and (c) reflection that when used continuously leads to self-supervision and growth. When united with the six phases,
The three themes provide a conceptual map of counselor-therapist development (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

**Psychodynamic Model**

In addition to the developmental models, other approaches to supervision have been identified for training counselors. Falender and Shafranske (2004) noted that from its inception, clinical supervision has incorporated theory-specific clinical techniques and approaches. One of the earliest approaches that influenced the development of all models of supervision was the psychoanalytic tradition instituted at the Berlin Institute of Psychoanalysis in the 1920s.

This perspective portrays psychodynamic supervision as a teaching and learning process, in which the emphasis is on conflict in the relationship that exists between the patient and therapist, as well as between the supervisor and the supervisee, which are used as learning processes in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Thus, the focus of the psychodynamic approach is geared toward helping supervisees in the resolution of relational conflicts or impasses. These impasses are the result of anxiety, parallel process, and isomorphism that need to be resolved to maintain the supervisor/supervisee relationship (Mueller & Kell, 1972). For example, anxiety in the patient creates anxiety in the counselor.

To reduce anxiety in the client, the supervisor in supervision focuses on and reduces the anxiety that the supervisee is experiencing in his/her relationship with the supervisor. Once this anxiety is reduced, the supervisee can relate in a new way with his/her client and therapy can proceed. Thus, psychodynamic supervision uses the
supervisory relationship, including psychodynamic processes, as the learning environment through which the supervisee gains knowledge which can be used to help clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Mueller & Kell, 1972). For that reason, psychodynamic models of supervision focus on the skills, interventions, and processes from a psychotherapy-based approach that emphasizes relationship skills (Falender & Shafranske, 2004).

**Behavioral Model**

Another approach to training counselors based on behavioral models emphasizes skill development. Several behavioral models developed independently, including those by Carkhuff (1969), Ivey (1971, 2005), and Hill (1998, 2004, 2009). The basic assumption underlying these models is that adaptive and maladaptive behaviors are learned and are maintained (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, 2009). Typical methods of supervision of behavioral supervisors focus on (a) establishing the supervisory relationship, (b) skills analysis and assessment, (c) goal setting, (d) identifying subsets of strategies to achieve each goal, (e) performing the skill, and (f) providing feedback on the performance (Bradley & Whiting, 1989). Each of the aforementioned authors developed intervention programs to teach skill development in counselors that supervisors use with their supervisees.

One of the most widely used models of intervention used by supervisors to foster skill development is interpersonal process recall (IPR; Kagan, 1976, 1980; Kagan & Krathwohl, 1967). The IPR approach to supervision instruction assumes that weak or ineffective forms of communication act as barriers to fully communicate within the...
therapy context (Kagan, 1980). To overcome barriers in communication between the supervisee and the client, the supervisor typically stops the tape of supervisee’s session and asks critical questions that are meant to heighten a supervisee’s awareness of his/her underlying thoughts and feelings at crucial points in the session. The goal is to increase awareness of the supervisee’s feelings or thoughts that hinder the counseling process. Here the supervisee learns to reflect on his/her interaction and gain greater self-understanding, motivation, and the interpersonal aspects of thoughts and feelings.

The fundamental attributes of the human condition (e.g., fear of being hurt, hurting others, losing oneself, overpowering others) symbolize basic fears of being hurt, being rejected, and abandonment which offer potential for increased insight and awareness of the interpersonal process with a client. Proponents of IPR view supervises as their own experts of their own dynamics and the expert judge of their own experience. The goal of supervision is to identify aspects or issues that have not been identified in session. Thus, IPR provides the psychological space for supervisees to examine possible responses that were perhaps avoided because of social convention, in order to promote affective or cognitive exploration, mutual perceptions, or assist in seeking supervisee in session expectations (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

Models Directed at the the Supervisor

In addition to models of supervision that focus on the supervisee, models have also been put forth that focus on the supervisor.

Discrimination Model. The discrimination model (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009) outlines a process of supervision through which the function of
supervisors can be understood. Originally developed as a teaching tool for supervisors in training, this model serves as a map to assist supervisors in conceptualizing supervisory interventions as they navigate supervisory tasks. The model helps students organize supervisory activities and goals accomplished through three foci for supervision as well as supervisor roles (Bernard, 1979). The three foci are

- intervention skills that describes the supervisor’s focus on supervisee observable actions in session;

- conceptualization skills that focus on how the supervisee conceptualizes and understands what is happening in the session, in terms of patterns, and what interventions are chosen because of what is understood; and

- personalization skills that focus on the supervisee’s personal style and also that therapy or counseling be kept untainted (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

Bernard (1974, 1979) also identified three roles that a supervisor must choose, based upon the supervisee activities in session. They are (a) teacher, (b) counselor, and (c) consultant which therefore dictates the role by which the supervisor will address his/her needs with nine possible supervisory interventions in total. Furthermore, supervisory actions are based upon the supervisee’s developmental progression and are linked to the supervisee’s need (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Viewed as a model of technical eclecticism, the assumption of this model is, as supervisees develop, the degree of supervisor action and the extent of the supervisory role are dictated by supervisee’s intervention, conceptualization, or personalization needs (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

**Complexity Model.** One of the few models that describe how a supervisor develops over time was put forth by Watkins (1994). Watkins modified the supervisee development model identified by Stoltenberg et al. (1998). The complexity model
(Watkins, 1994) conceptualizes growth that is manifested in response to challenges that occur throughout the supervision preparation process. Watkins (1994) identified four developmental issues central to his model. They are (a) competency versus incompetency, (b) autonomy versus dependence, (c) identity versus identify diffusion, and (d) self-awareness versus unawareness. The four stages of supervisor development (i.e., role shock, recovery and transition, role consolidation, role mastery) are related to boundaries and defining qualities of the supervisor role.

Role shock (Stage 1) is characterized by role confusion, an awareness of weaknesses, feeling overwhelmed, and a sensitivity to feedback. In this stage, supervisors have high levels of internal conflict due to feelings of being a fraud or of playing a role and are challenged by integrating new aspects of this role into their predominant way of understanding and experiencing supervision.

Recovery and transition (Stage 2) features a move toward a more secure identity as a supervisor. It is characterized by an ability to recognize strengths and a more realistic self-appraisal. In this stage, a supervisory identity is emerging, while vacillating exists in how they perceive their performance and the challenge in development is in fully embracing the role of supervisor as well as developing a secure identity as a supervisor.

Role consolidation (Stage 3) is where observable levels of self-confidence are apparent, as well as a more developed sense of a supervisor identity and an ability to identify countertransference. At this stage, supervisors are consistent in their role as a supervisor and have moved away from controlling or anxious approaches to supervising by exhibiting a level of comfort and ease with supervisees and the challenge is
development of a forward vision of their role as supervisor as one that focuses on the supervisee versus on themselves.

Role mastery (Stage 4) is where there is a consistent, clear identity that is integrated and extensive. The challenge is on developing a forward vision of their role as supervisor which is more directed at trends in the field and ensuing training needs of supervisees. At this stage the supervisor possesses a secure level of confidence in the supervisory role across situations (Watkins, 1994). Unfortunately, there is a paucity of research on this model.

**Movement Toward Competency in Supervision**

The cutting edge in the field of supervision today has been the articulation of competencies needed by a supervisor in guiding supervisee development. Spearheading this movement is the competency model put forth by Falender and Shafranske (2004). They identified supervision competencies which expand the capacity of supervisors in the areas of

- good supervision which focuses on areas of enhancing trainee self-confidence and the ability to provide feedback and dispense constructive criticism;

- building technical competence which is the ability to envision and establish competencies aimed at unique need of the setting and based upon training sequence;

- addressing personal factors in supervision which focus on the value-based nature of counseling and supervision and supervisory practice, the supervisee-supervisor alliance, issues of countertransference, interpersonal qualities (e.g., integrity, sensitivity relative to diversity, empathy), and behaviors such as insight, self-awareness, and influences that may threaten open-minded inquiry;

- therapeutic and supervisory alliance relationships which examine the importance of interpersonal skills in understanding the self and the ability to
take perspective, recognizing alliance strain or disruption, ethics in value-based supervision, awareness of current literature in supervision;

- building diversity competence in supervision which examines the need to hold a good working knowledge of influences upon worldview (e.g., values of tradition, nature or views of optimism or pessimism), the knowledge based to conduct multimodal or multicultural assessment of competence in trainees, and knowledge of models of diversity or multicultural supervision processes (see also Ancis & Ladany, 2010; Pope-Davis, Liu, Toporek, & Brittan-Powell, 2001);

- ethical and legal perspectives which pose considerations such as practicing supervision within areas of competence, knowledge and training in ethics, ethical functioning inclusive of boundary clarity, knowledge of regulatory laws and rules, use of consultation and use of supervision contracts; and

- evaluation of the supervision process which highlights competencies that provide for intentional assessment of incoming supervisees which includes identifying strengths and goals for training agenda, construction and implementation to develop supervision contracts and performance markers in the supervisee, skills assessment in supervisee which promote self-assessment, and skills to elicit feedback from the supervisee (Falender & Shafranske, 2004, 2008).

Their text elaborates on how to apply these competencies in supervision (Falender & Shafranske, 2004); therefore, their work represents a major advance in the profession and parts the way for researchers to assess whether trainees can perform the competencies required to carry through each supervision task.

Research on the Development of the Supervisee

Neufeldt (2009) summarized the research and identified the qualities in the supervisee that promote development. Neufeldt (2009) noted how challenge fosters supervisee development because when the supervisee is faced with cognitive and emotional challenges, the supervisee experiences cognitive dissonance. Challenges arise when the counselor/therapist is “stuck” which occurs when a counselor encounters a
problem in counseling that does not fit their current cognitive structure and they experience tension between their internal organizational system and their external experience. Neufeldt (2009) cited that this is based upon Piaget’s notion of assimilation-accommodation process. The resolution of the tension experienced occurs through the process of assimilation within the counselor, in which the trainee must change their internal model of helping by integrating a new skill into their pre-existing model of helping skills set (e.g., basic responding skills; Neufeldt, 2009).

Neufeldt (2009) also described the processes in supervision that fosters assimilation and accommodation such as reflectivity, which is accomplished, according to Skovholt and Ronnestad (1995), within an environment that is supportive yet challenging. Skovholt and Ronnestad (1995) observed that continuous reflection by the professional counselor is critical to development. In their study of 100 therapists, they concluded that growth occurred as a result of their (a) continuous ongoing professional experiences, (b) exploratory practices, accomplished with others in a safe and supportive environment, and (c) ongoing and dynamic reflection of one’s experiences. Neufeldt (2009) likened this process to those of scientific inquiry, in which the reflective practitioner seeks solutions to problems and challenges they face with their clients. Neufeldt (2009) also elaborated on the qualities in trainees that foster growth. These include a willingness to tolerate confusion and be vulnerable, which are seen equally as important to development of reflectivity.

Researchers studying the development of a supervisee over time focused on two central questions, “What is the process that underlies the development of a supervisee?” and “What supervisory environment best fosters supervisee development?” As earlier
noted, Skovholt and Ronnestad (1995) identified the six stages of counselor development as (a) lay helper, (b) beginning student, (c) advanced student, (d) novice professional, (e) experienced professional, and (f) senior professional. According to Orlinsky and Ronnestad (2004), the factors that related to both the positive and negative development of therapists are

- healing involvement (e.g., personal investment, effective, constructive, relationships);
- stressful involvement (e.g., difficult with treatment, avoidant coping, anxiety or boredom); and
- controlling involvement (the relational manner with patients such as dominant, reserved, or engaging).

Depending upon the stage of professional development, one or more of these factors may be activated and interplay with one another (Orlinsky & Ronnestad, 2004) resulting in either positive or negative growth. Above all, they concluded that providing an environment (i.e., relational elements) that is growth producing in a way that will reinforce the healing involvement and minimize the stressful involvement domains (Orlinsky & Ronnestad, 2004).

Two recent research studies examined doctoral counselor education and psychology students’ experience of becoming a supervisor (Crook-Lyon, Silva, Suyama, & Stickney, 2011; Nelson et al., 2006). The study by Crook-Lyon et al. (2011) focused on a comparison of supervisory training experiences of psychology interns placed counseling centers and non-counseling centers. They found that the role of the supervisor surfaced as the primary influence and central to the instructional experience of students, despite their placement.
The Nelson et al. (2006) study was an example for this research study. It was a qualitative study that gave a voice to students learning to become supervisors. The study, designed to address a gap in supervision literature, was conducted during the practicum and internship of 13 doctoral students in which they described the experiences that were meaningful in becoming a supervisor. The study was conducted over three semesters and led by a research team of two faculty and one research assistant who gathered data using individual interviews and focus groups.

To begin the study, the research assistant individually interviewed the doctoral students regarding their experience becoming a supervisor. The interviews began with main questions:

1. When you started the semester, how did you conceptualize supervision training?
2. What was this experience like for you?
3. How did the process unfold for you?
4. How has your conceptualization changed over the semester?
5. What shifts or turning points in your understanding of the supervision process can you identify?
6. Thinking in the broadest terms possible, how did this supervision experience affect your awareness of diversity?
7. How did this process help you develop supervisory skills?
8. Looking back over the semester, what was most helpful to you in developing as a supervisor? (p.20)
A research assistant conducted a follow-up (audiotaped) meeting with each student for the purpose of clarification and verification of data. The research assistant also obtained any post-interview observations and thoughts from the participants.

Overall, the focus groups were aimed at providing an opportunity for participants to interact and share their experiences. The goal of the session was to have participants discuss themes the research had identified, clarify data, and address questions (Nelson et al., 2006). Thus the information gleaned from the individual interviews and focus groups provided a multimethod approach to research inquiry and advanced the rich and descriptive detail of the data (Fontana & Frey, 1998; Nelson et al., 2006).

Six months later in order to verify the results of the first phase of the project, researchers met with a succeeding doctoral cohort in their first semester of internship. In this second phase of the study, researchers used a semi-structured, audiotaped focus group (i.e., 2.50 hours). The participants in this focus group commented on the accuracy of the themes gained from the first phase interviews to verify whether they were consistent with their own experience in becoming a supervisor. Therefore, the focus group with the cohort generated comments and observations that embellished the earlier findings.

Data analysis was accomplished using constant comparison methods (Glaser, 1978; Nelson et al., 2006) of (a) transcriptions, (b) the individual interviews, (c) focus groups, (d) researcher notes, (e) researcher memos, and (f) researcher assistant notes. Using open coding, researchers individually coded the transcripts and faculty researchers read and reviewed the transcripts, coding data independently. This was followed by selective coding, in which researchers collaboratively rechecked all data. As a result six
major themes emerged from the data of student supervisors, as well as the factors that had formed and influenced the student’s development as supervisors. They were (a) learning, (b) supervisee growth, (c) individual uniqueness, (d) reflection, (e) connections, and (f) putting it together (Nelson et al., 2006).

Researchers expanded upon each theme that influenced students’ development in becoming a supervisor, providing a rich description of the qualitative aspects of each theme. The first theme (learning) described the various types of learning they had experienced aside from academic instruction. The three types of learning Nelson et al. (2006) identified were (a) experiential (categorized as experience); (b) observational (categorized as watching); and (c) the use all types of learning (categorized as combination).

One factor supervisors in training (SITs; Nelson et al., 2006) reported as central to learning were those interventions that guided their actions, that alleviated anxiety, as to providing a resource for them to refer to when they planned their supervisory actions. In one student’s words, this guide (e.g., the guidelines that supervision provided) had an anchoring and stabilizing effect, giving her “something to hold on to” (p. 22). Some students valued experiential learning (i.e., active practice of supervision and observing others) and cited the experimental and real application of supervising as most meaningful to them.

One student noted that seeing others perform supervision provided “those aha moments of watching” (p.23). This identified the importance of role plays and viewing tapes as an important dimension of learning and as a critical source to gain skills. Another student identified the integrated nature of supervision as being helpful to her.
She felt “understanding the theoretical models, the different ways in which one applies skills, and also the different ways in which one evaluates the supervisee” was important. She stated that, “I would not separate it as experience or studying . . . they were dovetailed” (p. 24). This highlighted the role of experience and knowledge of models in the activity and the complexities of supervision.

The second identified theme was supervisee growth. This theme focused on the supervision of the supervisee and the supervisors’ awareness of their supervisee. Nelson et al. (2006) pointed out that a “parallel process became evident as we considered the emphasis SITs placed on growth of their supervisees” (p. 24). Some of the students showed indications of parallel process, as they focused on hope and the “desire to facilitate the personal and professional growth of the supervisee” (p. 24), where as SITs, the researchers had the same goal for the SITs.

Other students recognized that personal wellness and coping with influences of stress were viewed as important. One student stated that “the importance of taking care of yourself and realizing when it starts to seep into your counseling” (p. 24). Within this theme, student supervisors realized the impact counselors have on their clients. As one supervisor noted, “What’s going on with them affects their relationship with their client” (p. 24) and further, with them as a supervisor. Comments such as these demonstrated the supervisor’s grasp of roles and responsibilities, and shaping influences impacting the growth of the supervisee’s as well as their own development as a supervisor.

The third theme identified by researchers was individual uniqueness. It was the theme which supervisors emphasized individuality and uniqueness of individuals (i.e., of themselves and supervisees) that transcended group, race, or ethnicity. A student
supervisor noted that it was necessary to “look at the individual and the individual’s experiences” (p. 25). Another student mentioned the importance that supervisors help their supervisees “become more aware of another’s worldview” and “identify what is unique about this child or situation” (p. 25). Being able to appreciate what was remarkable in a client situation or client circumstance was a priority held by student supervisors, as it increased their understanding of their client. Identifying the complexity in diversity issues, one insightful student noted that “there is such diversity even within the minority experience” (p. 25).

The fourth theme that emerged from the study was reflection. This theme was generated as the result of student supervisors’ thoughts about introspection of the experience leading to a greater understanding of the experience. Researchers cited the process of “the tone of internal attunement, of listening to one’s voice” as what is clearly identifiable in supervisees. Reflective theme processes produced sub-themes of (a) specific aspects of self, (b) awareness about the process, and (c) clarification.

Specific aspects of self are revealed in supervisor self-awareness and insight of personal preferences and are seen in comments that reveal those preferences, “I just realized I like structure” (p. 25). Another student struggled when she realized clients in situations “who had childhood or family-of-origin issues that are very hard to contemplate, especially some cultural type things” (p. 25). The theme of awareness about the process refers to the understanding of the process of supervision that became clearer. For example, one student stated, “It made me realize my supervisor can only supervise me about what I tell her about” (p. 26). An example of the theme of clarification is exemplified by an SIT who became accustomed to a new personal identity and stated s/he
was “helped . . . to clarify my own positions in life, my own worldview” and “able to see very different worldviews . . . and understanding others yet maintain my own identity” (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 25). The course of development involved in clarification leads to gaining self-understanding of one’s core values and beliefs, as well as understanding of how those influences inform one’s styles of relating, working, and communicating.

The fifth identified theme was connections. It includes the subthemes of (a) professional organizations, (b) professors and supervisors, (c) peers, and (d) supervisees. These subthemes indicate the importance that connectedness plays in becoming a supervisor. Connective experiences are characterized by lasting memberships in professional organizations, connectivity among the supervisor cohort, and relationships shared with professors and other peers.

An example of the professional organizations subtheme was noted in comments by a supervisor who stated that s/he was inspired to “be in professional organizations, to publish, to do things that normally I had no time to do” (p. 26). The professors and supervisors subtheme became apparent when a student identified his/her association with professors and supervisors by stating that they “pushed me into another level of expertise . . . I wouldn’t have done it without that push and support . . . this pushed me into a new level of growth and expansion that is good for my job, my career, professionally . . . personally” (p. 27). The peers’ subtheme cites the worth an SIT placed on this relationship, referring to it as his/her “peer connection” (p. 27). Collective experiences or group practices such as these were outlined in the theme connections. It involved the support provided by the development of professional and collegial relationships, which
also served as personal and professional resources for student supervisors (Nelson et al., 2006).

The sixth theme, putting it together, revealed the general understanding and meaning the experience held for trainees. Meaning was gained from (a) the realization of the complexities involved in becoming a supervisor, (b) the awareness of the components involved in the process of learning supervision, (c) the degree of expertise necessary to be a supervisor, and (d) the level of experience needed to be an effective supervisor. Finally, this refers to the meaningful integration of the total experience for supervisor trainees in this study.

Under this theme, the guiding principles necessary for effective supervision are acknowledged, and along with personal factors, are put into action. One study participant declared that, “It feels like something I can do with more practice . . . with more experience” (p. 28). One other student noted that supervision was “not just an extension of therapy and uses a different combination of skills” (p. 28). As a final point, the transformative essence and intensity of the experience was affirmed by another student when h/she stated, “It transformed the way we see things. You can’t get this going to a workshop” (Nelson et al., 2006, p. 28).

The persuasive forces that became influential and formative dynamics are evidenced by the aforementioned themes and are critical in bringing about the development of knowledge and skill in supervision. Ladany and Muse-Burkes’ (2001) study supported research as a forum to understanding supervision. This was vital to an evolving field such as counseling supervision. The themes identified by Nelson et al.
(2006) confirmed pertinent questions and provided relevant information from which further gains in the field of counselor supervision can be accomplished.

Consequently, seeking answers about the status of field training through conferences, seminars, or workshops at the master’s level is within the scope of identified needs in the field of counselor supervision. Hence, the intention of this study was to give voice to master’s level supervisors trained in the field through their answersto the following three questions. The main question was, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” The two research sub-questions were:

■ Howdo supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?

■ How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?

Summary

The purpose of this literature review was to present the counseling profession’s regulatory and governing bodies’ relationships to supervision preparation as a basis for examining the historical policy and programmatic trends that had decisive impact on supervision preparatory practices. This was followed by a review of models of supervision, and research on the development of the supervisee, with central concepts of this study correlated to effective instruction and practice of supervision. Finally, the chapter examined (a) the role of advancements within the field of counseling and (b) the influences of competency based and best practices which framed the conceptual nature
and rationale of approaching a qualitative study which examined the salient question, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?”
CHAPTER III

METHODS

"Awareness is prerequisite to all acceptable changes.” (Kuhn)

Over the last two decades, the fields of counseling and counselor supervision saw substantial growth. Advances in the field of counseling revealed changes in theory and practice, which necessitated the governing accreditation, professional, licensing, and preparatory program bodies to enact changes in the rules, laws, and guidelines to minimize existing disparities (ACES, 2009; CACREP, 2009; OCSWMFT, 2008). Concurrently, the field of counselor supervision was punctuated by the establishment of counselor supervision as a distinct profession, in addition to significant restructuring, brought about by the influences of best practices, at the accrediting, professional, state, and program levels of mandates and guidelines that are specific to counselor supervision (Ladany et al., 2005).

During this time, contributions to the knowledge base through research addressed trends and needs in both counseling and counselor supervision. However, in the field of counselor supervision, most research endeavors focused on the legal, theoretical, and administrative aspects of supervision (Nelson et al, 2006). Therefore, while contemporary demands have delivered research results, they could be considered narrow and incomplete, as the fundamental components of counselor supervision preparation have been overlooked. Specifically, while research gains have been made, there is little
qualitative research that explored the developmental experiences of supervision training. Consequently, a study that qualitatively examined the phenomenological experience of supervision training at the master’s level by obtaining CEUs, or attending conferences, seminars, or academic coursework was necessary to illuminate and give voice to supervisor’s experiences by asking, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?”

**Research Design**

The rationale of this study was to gain insight into the influential experiences of field trained, master’s level supervisors by allowing their voices to describe, detail, and inform this research inquiry. Clinical supervisors, counselor educators, and researchers can gain from a study which reveals the meaningful, contextual aspects that master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field have experienced. Previous research examined doctoral students’ experiences of supervision training, as opposed to experiences of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field by attending conferences or seminars. This study expanded that research by focusing on the education of master’s level counseling supervisors trained in the field.

The main thrust of this study was to understand the qualitative, phenomenological experience of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field. Giving master’s level supervisors a right to be heard will lead to an understanding of this experience and how they have experienced this phenomenon. This is important to the next generation of supervision research. To be precise, the field of counseling supervision needs to recognize the important and influential experiences that had
meaning and consequence in the development of a supervisor. This study was exploratory and sought to gather an understanding of their development.

Deriving science-based evidence requires planful and systematic methods (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2009; Moustakas, 1994). Proponents of qualitative methodology argue that reliance upon multiple perspectives improves objectivity by overriding biases in the researcher’s observations which may be influenced by theory-laden perspectives (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Creswell, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2007). Creswell (2008) outlined considerations fundamental to qualitative research that included (a) the underlying philosophical assumptions guiding research; (b) the strategy of inquiry; and (c) the methods of data collection, analysis, and reporting that thoroughly outline the structure and elements of the research design. In addition, phenomenology supplied theoretical, conceptual, and methodological guidelines for analysis that aided the researcher in understanding the individual’s world through the meaning it is given by the individual (Clandinin & Connelly, 1994; Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994). The meaning of the experience is determined from descriptions of those who have had the experience and from those descriptions universal or general meanings are identified (Merriam, 1998; Moustakas, 1994).

This study employed a phenomenological, qualitative research design to analyze the experience of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field. Phenomenological research envisions the data to show emergent patterns, focuses on the lived experiences, and highlights the textural and structural dimensions of the experience, as well as individuals’ own perceptions of their experience (Moustakas, 1994). This study sought to determine the internal, subjective experience of supervisors trained in the
field as well as the influence of prominent, contextual factors such as the situational and circumstantial facets of this experience and their assigned meanings. The design emphasis created researcher-participant collaboration where the participants, through narrative and conversation, elicited the central aspects of their experience.

**Research Questions**

The formal research question was, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” The sub-questions were:

- How do supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?
- How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?

**Procedures**

An overview of the data collection procedures reflected the primary activities used in collecting research data. This included (a) generating an open-ended interview protocol, (b) developing a demographic questionnaire, (c) conducting role plays, (d) conducting a pilot study using the interview protocol, (e) accessing and identifying participants, (f) conducting open-ended interviews, (g) ensuring participants rights, (h) protecting data, and (i) maintaining a research journal.

The interview was supplemented with a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix H). Essentially, the questionnaire provided participant profile information such as who the participants are, where they are from, and background information regarding their education, age, gender, and ethnicity. Such demographic information
may be needed to furnish explanations for individual underlying perceptions, or data (e.g., age) that may explain certain emergent findings of the study. The interview protocol (see Appendix F) was designed to glean from participants the essential features of their experience, including what meanings they assigned to their experiences and the developmental aspects of becoming a supervisor. The aim of the interview protocol was to promote an interactive and shared interview climate.

As advanced by Creswell (2009) and Saumure and Given (2008), 10-15 participants is characteristic of a small sample used in qualitative research. This study originated with 10 participants, with eight completing both interviews, due to attrition. Participants were recruited through the state licensure board website, Counselor Education and Supervision (CES-net) listserv, the American of College Counseling Association (ACCA) listserv, and announcement letters sent to local counseling agencies (see Appendix A). The announcement letters were accompanied by an advertisement flier (see Appendix B); the letter explained the intent of the study and flier provided methods for potential participants to contact the researcher through a confidential voicemail. The participants who contacted the researcher were given a phone interview, during which the Participant Eligibility Questionnaire (see Appendix C) was completed. The criteria outlined in the Eligibility Questionnaire included

- a master’s degree in counseling;
- counselor supervisory endorsement and supervising for a maximum of 2-3 years;
- a willingness to sign an Informed Consent to Act as a Research Participant (see Appendix D) wherein participants agreed to be audio recorded; and
agree to have the interviews transcribed by the researcher and the same reviewed by researcher dissertation advisor and methodologist committee members.

Qualifying participants were mailed a Research Participant Orientation Letter (see Appendix E) which outlined the study more fully, confirmed the individual’s agreement to participate in the study, and the study interview time and date. An Informed Consent to Act as a Research Participant (see Appendix D) was also enclosed with the Research Participant Orientation Letter which provided information to prospective participants regarding the (a) purpose, (b) procedures, (c) risks, (d) benefits, (e) costs, (f) payments, (g) right to end participation, (h) confidentiality of data and records, (i) voluntary consent for two interviews, and (j) consent to be audio recorded. The Research Participant Orientation Letter provided notice to potential participants that the Informed Consent would be collected at the time of the first interview.

A final condition necessary to identify is that due to efforts to expand the sample, interviewees from other parts of the country were recruited; in those circumstances, the informed consent and participant orientation letter were sent via mail. The following table details the participants, geographical region, and source of original contact as well as by which format the interview was conducted (see Table 1).
Table 1

Information Regarding Participant Location, How Contacted, and Interview Format

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Geographic Region</th>
<th>Contact Source</th>
<th>Interview Format</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>State Board</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>CES-net listserv</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Agency Letter/Flier</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>Agency Letter/Flier</td>
<td>Face-to-face</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>CES-net listserv</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Midwest</td>
<td>CES-net listserv</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>South</td>
<td>ACCA listserv</td>
<td>Skype</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>East</td>
<td>ACCA listserv</td>
<td>Phone</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Settings

A research interview setting should provide a secure, convenient, and confidential setting for study participants (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Thus, for this study, participants were interviewed at a mutually agreed upon time and location that were suitable to the study participant.

Interview Protocol

The interview process encompassed a series of two interviews. Both interviews were predicated upon the research question and sub-questions which were developed to gather information related to the phenomenon of supervision preparatory practices at the master’s level. The questions elicited the individual’s qualitative impressions resulting from this experience. Thus, the underlying theme of the interview process was, “What is
the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” “How do supervisors gather and assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?” and finally, “How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?”

An interview protocol (see Appendix F) was employed to facilitate gathering systematic and comprehensive information from the participants (Patton, 2002). The interview protocol consisted of the main inquiries and probes that were developed to more fully explore the phenomenological and experiential processes of the master’s level supervisors participating in the study (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2008; Moustakas, 1994).

The interview protocol concentrated on the following prompts:

- Describe for me your practice as a counselor supervisor.
- Describe your experience of becoming a counselor supervisor.
- How did you integrate this new knowledge and experience that you gained as part of your identity as a counselor?

In developing the interview protocol (see Appendix F) a list of questions was generated. They were refined as a result of a role play followed by conducting a pilot study. The role play was completed with the dissertation faculty advisor and methodologist committee members. The outcome of the role play (a) established the appropriateness of the protocol and (b) identified the need to expand upon each of the three main interview protocol statements with prompts and topical items that would assist the researcher in gathering comprehensive answers from the participants.

The addition of the protocol prompts provided depth and clarity to the interview process. For example, the first prompt, “Describe for me your practice as a counselor
supervisor,” sought to expand upon the actual parameters of the participant’s practice, leading to essential details (i.e., how, what, where). It also aided the participant in considering other aspects of their practice such as the outcomes of their practice (i.e., perceived benefits to others, perceived level of success or degree of job satisfaction, and their view of themselves in the broader context of the field). In another example, the prompt, “Describe your experience of becoming a counselor supervisor,” led the participants to discuss the process by which they became a supervisor. It also led them to discuss the developmental factors (i.e., workshop attended); formative environmental influences (i.e., prior supervision, previous supervisors, current supervision opportunities that might impact one’s growth in knowledge and skill); and the extent that their professional roots have been established (i.e., membership in professional organizations, attendance at professional conferences, subscribing to a professional journal). Both of the above examples advanced the interview protocol by preparing the researcher to be aware of the conceptual, experiential, and practical dimensions of the phenomenon, as well as the interview process which hinges upon the worth and inclusiveness of the interview protocol.

A pilot study of the interview protocol was completed with two nonparticipating counseling supervisors. As a result, the interview skills of the researcher were further expanded and refined. For example, in using the expanded version of the interview protocol the researcher gained a clearer understanding of how the interview process would unfold. Therefore, the researcher could abstract the differing directions the interview protocol could guide the study participant.
Furthermore, the interview protocol piloting process reassured the researcher that the protocol and potential probes were appropriate to support the research question, sub-questions, and overall purpose of the research study. This was ascertained by commonalities in both pilot interviews in which the participants’ responses followed paths that (a) examined the past influences on supervisors and the quality of their seminars, conferences or supervision and (b) identified what may have been more helpful (i.e., regret over having a supervisor who was less experienced, the role that day-to-day demands had upon the amount and quality of supervision they received).

**Interviews: iterative procedure.** As noted, the purpose of the first interview was to gather the demographic information as well as information related to the formative, influential elements that impacted their development, perspective, or functioning of becoming a supervisor. This phase of the investigation sought to capture the interviewee’s internal, subjective experiences as well as their textural and contextual experiences (Creswell 2008; Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005). The interview protocol was evaluated at the end of the first round of interviews and revised to enable the researcher to gather additional information to better understand the subjects’ experiences.

The second interview was designed to be conducted approximately two weeks after the first interview; if the second interview took place outside of the two week time period, the decision was made with the direction and consent of the dissertation advisor and dissertation methodologist. This interview differed in intent from the first interview, as the second interview sought to embellish data gleaned from the first interview. Thus, it was an opportunity to delve more deeply into the research data and identified themes with study participants, seeking to generate further data regarding the retrospective
impressions, recollections, and insights of the participants. The second interview sought to gain thick, rich descriptions contributing substantive material, which would add relevance to the research study. In addition, the second interview served as a member check which verified that the perception of the researcher regarding the data from the first interview was consistent with the intent of the interviewee (Creswell, 2009). Questions used in the second interview are found in Appendix G.

**Researcher’s Journal**

The researcher’s journal or field notes are considered essential to any qualitative study, despite the techniques utilized for data collection (Fetterman, 2008). The notes detail the researcher’s experience and provide insight into the research process. Thus, the purpose of the journal is to record the course or development of the research process and to note the reflective impressions and observations of the researcher (Berg, 2007; Creswell, 2009). A journal can evidence features of the interview that cannot be recorded (i.e., gestures, appearance, demeanor, prerecorded comments, environmental characteristics) or reflexive responses or thoughts of the researcher (Fetterman, 2008). Thus, on one level the journal is a location where the researcher’s objective account of the research process is recorded and also a location which could reveal the researcher’s subjective reactions.

For example, opportunities to collect impactful and meaningful information (of the participant and also the researcher) occur through differing modes of communication. During these points, the researcher may record something that happens (i.e., nonverbal communication such as gesture of the participant) before or during recording, which has
impact on data interpretation. The journal also functions as an immediate form of analysis and plays a role in the larger process of analysis by providing a place to record a wide range of attitude, consciousness, reactions, and biases of the researcher, in addition to verbal and nonverbal responses of the research participant.

The structure of the journal followed the recommended standards (Fetterman, 2008). It utilized a two section format to distinguish researcher observations from tentative personal reflections. It contained the research participant’s name and the date, time, and place of the interview. Journal entries occurred during the interview (i.e., impression, perception, observation) by memo or note format. An expanded version was immediately created following the interview, so that recollections were not weakened by time or interaction with another person in a spontaneous and fluid manner. Excerpts of the research journal which reflect the researcher’s process during the interview phases of this study are found in Appendix I and Appendix J.

**Saturation of Sample**

Qualitative researchers seek to clarify a phenomenon and then construct theoretical suppositions from their gathered data. Saumure and Given (2008) identified how theory development was a parallel process and coincides with the course of data collection. Saturation is the point of data collection where no new or relevant data can be identified or generated. It is noteworthy, however, that saturation is viewed as relative among many researchers because as the researcher seeks more data, new and pertinent data will consistently emerge (Saumure & Given, 2008).
However, among qualitative researchers, a sample size of 10-15 individuals is considered appropriate for achieving saturation of a sample. Saumere and Given (2008) proposed the four strategies for achieving saturation that guided this study:

- Use a cohesive sample (i.e., participants from the same demographic group);
- Use theoretical sampling saturation (i.e., participants are selected based upon their ability to create and validate emerging theory);
- The researcher is involved in the research (which ensures the researcher is versed in the nuances and challenges of the research settings); and
- Include negative cases (which provide supporting and salient evidence of gaps in theory, illustrating whether saturation is achieved or not).

In this study, saturation occurred when no new information emerged.

**Data Analysis**

Data analysis constitutes a pivotal point in qualitative research where gathered data links one’s findings to perceptions or theory (van den Hoonoard & van den Hoonoard, 2008). Some common traits of this progression are (a) simultaneous processes of data collection and analysis, (b) journaling during data collection, (c) coding, and (d) the use of tools for analysis and making connections between analysis and literature in the field (van den Hoonoard & van den Hoonoard, 2008).

This study used Moustakas’ phenomenological inductive analysis to identify textural and structural descriptive patterns (Moustakas, 1994; Wertz, 2005) representing significant themes. Moustakas (1994) envisioned the phenomenological inductive analytic process as critical to allowing data to show emergent patterns without presupposing its important dimensions. Phenomenological research focuses on the lived experience and an individual’s own perceptions of their experience; inductive analysis
provides the structure for the researcher to highlight a variety of aspects of their experience (Moustakas, 1994).

In this study, the data exemplified how master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field made sense of their experience. It focused on uncovering the pertinent and meaningful developmental aspects of supervision field preparation using Moustakas’ (1994) four steps (i.e., epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, synthesis of texture, and structure) for inductive analysis.

Epoche is essentially the process that allows the researcher freedom from presupposed ideas about the research process. In this study, the researcher adopted this perspective to minimize any preconceptions that could bias descriptions, or not permit the process to flow without personal opinion or judgment (Patton, 2002; Wertz, 2005).

This study engaged in the task of phenomenological reduction. It involved examining and describing data with emphasis on the spatial qualities (i.e., shape, size, noisy, small) with reference to the textural qualities (Moustakas, 1994) of what was experienced (Creswell, 1998). Emphasis upon each angle of perception added to knowing and understanding the horizons of the phenomenon, which further refined the understanding of the textural aspects of phenomenon supervision training at the master’s level (Moustakas, 1994).

In this study, a main task was to describe the essential features of structure of a phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994) by examining the structure, or how a phenomenon was experienced (Creswell, 2008). To this end, the researcher examined data using the process of varying the frames of reference, employing reversals and polarities in order to approach the phenomenon from divergent perspectives (Moustakas, 1994). In this
manner, the researcher attempted to identify underlying, potent factors, contextual or thematic frameworks that could account for what was experienced by master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field. For instance, employing a polarity was illustrated by examining different types of preparatory practices in supervision (i.e., weekly face to face, seminar, workshop, distance learning). A polarity in seminar instruction was shown by examining lecture alone format against a lecture and experiential format which led the researcher to examine significant components of each experience (i.e., passive versus active) and derive themes from those important contrasts.

The use of synthesis of texture and structure in this study involved a synthesis and integration of the textual and structural descriptions into an inclusive integrated account (essence) of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). Thus, the essence is the defining quality of what something is (Moustakas, 1994). Therefore, this study examined the data (a) to identify clusters so as to propose supervisor’s perspectives, (b) to produce and identify themes, and (c) to later introduce those with structure to assist in gaining insight into the meaning assigned by supervisors who were trained in the field.

The data sources of this study were (a) interview transcripts, (b) participant demographic information, and (c) the researcher’s journal. The analysis of data involved the process of coding the data manually. At this portion of data analysis, the researcher interacted with the data (Patton, 2002) and used all sources of data to identify patterns and themes, clustering and linking shared themes and patterns, while searching for conceivable or plausible consistencies (Huberman & Miles, 1998; Richards, 2005) from which interpretive and conclusive positions were established.
Trustworthiness

Establishing trustworthiness required the researcher to maintain strategies that ensured both the soundness and validity of the study (Berg, 2007; Denzin & Lincoln, 2005). This study utilized triangulation and reflectivity to illustrate the lived experience and perspective of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field. Triangulation and reflectivity are facets of qualitative phenomenological inductive analysis (Moustakas, 1994) and are defined as using multiple lines of sight which reveal differing facets of the same symbolic reality (Creswell, 2003).

In this study, three methods of sight were used by the researcher. They were (a) variety of data (i.e., demographic information, researcher’s journal), (b) research qualitative phenomenological inductive analysis (i.e., epoche, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation, synthesis of texture and structure), and (c) theory (Denzin, 1978). Each served to verify information and provide a more substantive understanding of the research situation (Denzin & Lincoln, 1998). In simple terms, this study utilized triangulation to increase the potential understanding of this subject and the meaning intrinsic of the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field.

Also, the use of reflectivity (i.e., the attitudinal characteristic of the researcher and their approach toward the research setting) afforded the researcher a neutral posture and allowed an aptitude to understand the nature, purpose, or conditions (i.e., what is going on) versus becoming a proponent or critic of the situation (Berg, 2007). It further implied an ongoing internal dialogue the researcher had which questioned what the researcher knew and how the researcher came to know it, thus promoting clarity and deeper
understanding of insight relative to the situation and of how the insight or information came about (Berg, 2007).

Some examples of triangulation and reflectivity that foster a multi-method approach and aided in the interpretive process of this study were

- multiple levels of participant interviews (two), which added to the girth and value of the database, in addition to the potential that could be derived from it;

- participant demographic information, which could enhance the comprehension of incongruent or noticeably different information that explains a finding that surfaces;

- the researcher’s journal, which reflected another line of perception or provided insight leading to discernable conclusions;

- member checks at the second interview, which promoted further access and exploration into the research topic; and

- the coding of themes and overall analytic processes.

Further measures of soundness used to heighten credibility involved the preparatory actions taken to ensure the thoroughness of the interview protocol. This entailed (a) the role play which assisted in the development of the interview protocol by expanding the protocol; (b) the pilot study, completed with two nonparticipating subjects, which assisted in the refinement of the interview protocol; and (c) the interview skills of the researcher.

Finally, a subjectivity statement was provided in which the researcher identified any possible bias or partialities that could interfere in the process of data collection or data analysis (Moustakas, 1998; Patton, 2002).
Ethics

Warren (2002) cited that participation in a research study is not without risk and can lead to anxiety for some subjects, and is a consideration when a study involves the prospect of being an identifiable subject. In this study, steps were taken to minimize concerns of study participants with regard to the protection of information. This was accomplished by

- establishing clear boundaries so that study participants were assured of the role of the research, despite the researcher’s role as a supervisor;
- providing an informed consent prior to the interview for participant review;
- discussing the informed consent at the interview(s);
- emphasizing their rights as a participant (i.e., anonymity, confidentiality, right to refusal);
- reviewing the informed consent at the time of the second interview;
- providing the opportunity to study participants to ask questions related to any aspect of the research study at all points of the study; and
- the continuous assessment by the dissertation chairperson and methodology committee member of every aspect of the study (i.e., additional required interviews beyond the second interview; revising interview protocols, the role of subjectivity).

Other measures taken in the preparation of this study included the role plays and pilot study which led to refined interview protocols and procedures and a furthered integrated perspective and conceptual understanding of the research topic.

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) of The University of Akron granted permission to conduct this research study. According to the guidelines of the IRB, participants were informed of the purposes of the study, the interview procedures, and explained their rights and protections under the jurisdiction of the IRB of The University
of Akron regarding research involving human subjects. An Informed Consent to Participate was completed by study participants (see Appendix D). The Informed Consent explained their participation as voluntary and identified what risks and/or benefits existed. Further procedural information with regard to the measures taken to insure participants’ privacy was explained, with particular attention to (a) how the audio recordings of the interviews and the research data would be protected and stored, (b) how the anonymity of participants would be preserved by assigning participant codes for audio recordings, (c) how all identifying and research information would be accessed exclusively by the researcher, and (d) how, after the completion of this study and the acceptance of the study by the Graduate school, all the research study data would be destroyed.

**Summary**

The purpose of this chapter was to address the philosophical underpinnings of qualitative research, strategies of inquiry, and approaches to analysis used in this study that examined master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field. Strategies of inquiry focusing on phenomenological open-ended interview research approaches used in the current research were proposed. Consideration of the ethical responsibilities of the researcher and in this research study relative to trustworthiness and IRB protection of participants was also presented.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

“All great truths are simple in final analysis, and easily understood; if they are not, they are not great truths.” (Napoleon Hill)

The focus of this chapter is (a) to reintroduce the research questions, (b) to offer a detailed profile of the study participants, and (c) to provide an overview of the core themes. Accordingly, participant descriptive comments and perspectives gathered from their narratives are provided to promote an understanding of the application of the research methodology and to illustrate the distinctive qualities of participants and their experiences.

Restatement of Research Questions

The main research question of this study was, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” The research sub-questions were:

■ “How do supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?”

■ “How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?”

By examining the experiences of master’s level counselors becoming supervisors, the meaningful and significant growth-producing characteristics of their preparation were identified. The analysis of the data examined the distinctive structural and influential
processes that shaped the supervisor’s development as well as the interviewees’ perceptions, which were considered their own entities (Moustakas, 1994).

In order to understand the phenomenological experience of becoming a supervisor, it was essential to understand what informed their supervision and how their growth and development impacted their professional identity. Therefore, this study was organized according to the research sub-questions which supported and illuminated the overarching research question, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” Core themes related to “How do supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?” and “How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?” were gathered from participants’ descriptions and give voice to participants’ experiences.

**Overview of Study Participants**

There were 10 counseling supervisors that participated in the first round of interviews with eight participants returning for the second round of interviews. The sample was predominantly Euro American, with one African-American participant. Real names were not represented and pseudonyms were used to protect confidentiality. The interviewees came from geographical areas in the Midwest, East, and the South; they ranged in age from 27-54 years. While all participants held master’s degrees in Counseling, they varied in their counseling concentration and in their pre-master’s training. The 10 participating interviewees in the initial round interviews held Bachelor degrees in Psychology (6), Sociology (2), Accounting (1), and a double major in Psychology and Business Administration (1).
The eight participants who returned for the second round interviews held Master’s degrees with concentrations in the areas of Mental Health Counseling (2), Master’s of Science in Education in Counseling (4), Master’s of Arts in Counseling Psychology (1) and Master’s of Science in Education with a concentration in Counseling and Higher Education (1). There were two participants that did not respond to attempts to schedule a second interview and they were removed from the sample.

**Participant One: Sam**

Sam is a 30-year-old counselor supervisor from the Midwest who holds a Master’s degree in Clinical Counseling. She is employed in a community mental health facility that primarily serves seriously mentally ill clients; a majority of them are either indigent or on Medicaid. At the time of the first interview, Sam’s supervision duties included supervision of one professional counselor with three years of experience and six case managers with between 5 and 15 years of experience.

**Education and training history.** Sam earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology in addition to her master’s degree. She immediately pursued her master’s degree after completing her bachelor’s degree and had no work experience prior to graduate school. Sam’s master’s program provided her with opportunities to gain knowledge and skill through courses such as methods of counseling, a counseling practicum held onsite at the university, and an internship site at an independent agency.

Sam’s employment history reflects positions she held as a counseling intern at an inpatient, psychiatric hospital’s child and adolescent treatment unit and in an outpatient, community mental health agency position for children and adolescents. She has been
counseling for 6-7 years and has been supervising for 2-3 of those. Sam reported that she used group and individual formats in providing supervision.

**Early development.** Sam found that community mental health resounded with her professional identity. She stated, “I love it more than any other type of work. I cannot see myself in private practice.” Sam went on to say that she enjoyed the challenges:

> because it is such a difficult place to work. You have to have a tough personality and the population is so unique. You have to have a thick skin and be able to think on your feet to work in a place like that. (personal communication, April 29, 2010)

She sees herself in the field as satisfied, “able to make an impact,” and strives to “be an advocate.” An influential decision for Sam to become a counselor supervisor grew from her development as a counselor. She related that her initial plans were to pursue a doctoral degree in counselor education and cited changes in her plans as the result of increased self-understanding. According to Sam, “[she] always wanted to teach, but was not one of those up in the front of the room and teach person” and felt through involvement in supervisory roles she would be able to “give back and push the field forward in a more personal, hands-on and experiential way” thus steering her decision away from her original career plans.

Sam cited dissatisfaction with early preparatory experiences and aimed criticism at the perception of others (i.e., other professionals, academia). She stated, “it is really important for the counselors and the interns to get a picture of community mental health” and further identified her view of the disconnect between academia and community mental health “just sitting in your office is not the way to get that idea.” According to
Sam, “academia” faculty does not “understand what community mental health really is” and how to meet the needs of “the underbelly of society—it’s a big eye opener.”

During the early experiences of her training, Sam “learned so much more” in her internship “than what [she] learned at the university.” She stated that her academic, training experiences gave her “a lot of good book stuff—but [she] really learned counseling once [she] got into the field.” According to Sam, her development as a counselor supervisor was facilitated by a supportive work environment and encouragement by supervisors. For example, prior supervisors recommended that she attend learning activities in areas she did not “know a lot about and to just open up [her] mind.” Another example she provided was attendance at substance abuse seminar “because there wasn’t a lot of coursework at the time at the university.” Sam’s early supervision goal was to be able “at the end of supervision to recommend [her] supervisee as an entry-level therapist.” Therefore, the supervisee would be competent in counseling skills, diagnosis, and treatment planning.

Sam’s practice as a supervisor was most influenced by her internship and early career supervisors where she learned to supervise by “observation.” She stated she found supervision trainings to be “theoretical,” did “not teach you how to be a supervisor,” and cited the primary role of a supervisor to teach the supervisee to “be a good clinician.” Because of the quality and the amount that she learned about counseling and clinical treatment issues during her internship placement and early career supervisory experiences, Sam concluded, “it is less about being a supervisor and more about being a good clinician and teaching someone to be a good counselor.” Sam related her early supervisory experiences such as being supervised by “genuinely good people who were
great counselors” and were seen by her as “more valuable than any training experiences than workshops or seminars.” She stated:

The reality is that my first couple of years I belonged to ACA and the state counseling organization and got my NCE and all those things that you are encouraged to do at the university level and then got into the community and realized none of that does anything for me except take money out of my pocket. (personal communication, April 29, 2010)

This statement reflected her attitude and value of belonging to a professional organization and explained how these expectations departed from the norm in community mental health, “this is something you don’t see in community mental health.”

What guided Sam’s supervision career were those early supervisory experiences which influenced her own approach. “Training in supervision is really rooted in how I was trained to become a counselor and in trying to emulate my supervisors” and being able to “see what works, what doesn’t” were important outcomes of the modeling and guidance Sam received from her supervisors. She described them as “honest, genuinely caring people” who were “caring, compassionate, quick-thinking, hardworking, huge advocates for staff.” Sam stated she did not use a particular framework or models that informed her supervision practice. She cited that:

Theories and models of supervision are interesting and good to learn about and I think you take them with you to a certain degree once you are in the field because you have to so you can be a supervisor [but] once you are in the field it becomes about everyday logistics. How do I balance my caseload, work supervision, and clinical supervision, and make sure I am on top of what I need to? (personal communication, April 29, 2010)

Sam also relayed how her early expectations “came crumbling down very quickly when the reality of community mental health hit,” citing budget cutbacks and the unpredictable nature of the daily demands which resulted in her not having a lot of expectations.
Shifts or turning points for Sam centered on her attendance at a few helpful workshops that emphasized appropriate and responsible supervision documentation and the use of supervision contracts. She also stated that “it was always helpful to hear different experiences or ways of doing things” from other workshop attendees. Other gains from her supervision instruction Sam identified related to preparedness as she stated an ability to be more “flexible” and “think on my feet,” as well as an increased awareness of legal and ethical issues in counselor supervision. However, Sam reported that she does “not read a lot of books on supervision” as supplemental resources.

**Development over time.** At the one year mark from the first interview and time of the second interview, Sam remained at the same agency and remained supervising one clinical staff, six mental health case managers and four new clinical counseling staff who were obtaining their independent licensure requirements. The new supervisees all were practicing for 2-3 years before seeking their independent licensure status. Sam described the difference between supervising the new supervisees as “helps me take a step back and evaluate my own clinical skills because I feel like I have a lot of roles, but it is a nice refresher of my own clinical work and my own viewpoints on things” versus her supervision with case managers where she reported that they “don’t talk about clinical issues” but instead focus on systemic concerns.

Experiences that shaped her development were those experiences in supervising others where the weight of the responsibility caused her to evaluate her skills and those that caused her to focus on what guidance she was imparting to the supervisees. Thus, her approach as well as those issues and skills that were visited in the process of supervision acted as a “refresher” and allowed further evaluation of her “viewpoint on
things.” The impact of this understanding of her role, responsibility, and facilitation of supervision are seen in her comment where she identified the qualities of a supervisor. Sam stated, “I feel I need to be empathic and educational and if I think that something is going or that I don't agree with, in a much more real way I address the supervisee.”

Whereas, Sam differentiates communication styles in supervision and counseling, “as a counselor it is not that way” and explains because of her role as the supervisor and being ultimately responsible for herself and the supervisee, “and I hold the supervisee to a higher standard, yet I use my counseling skills in the process of the supervision.”

Meaningful growth experiences that shaped her development again identified the role of her internship and first employment supervisors. She described their qualities as “phenomenal . . . excellent counselors, always there, always willing to educate and to support and guide” and the impact of “just their presence you knew they were there and cared” and how “they were reliable, consistent, knowledgeable, and available.” She drew a contrast of two early experiences from an internship experience and an early professional experience by describing how in internship it was “very structured and [the supervisor] would write up a note—it was process oriented” which was helpful in the learning process.” Another formative growth experience Sam identified was during her internship where she was involved in a treatment team with the entire psychiatric and clinical mental health treatment staff where “just being there and being supervised by them” was an influential experience for her and which gave her an appreciation for group approaches to supervision, which she currently employs.

Sam’s perspective and understanding of supervision was fostered through reflection and was reaffirmed when she cited, “I’m happy with how I am interacting or
the advice that I am giving.” An example of the reflectivity she developed and used in her supervision work was the process making an assessment of her management of different situations. As an example, she described using “restraint” with a supervisee and the realization that how she manages less than desirable outcomes with a supervisee are important, as she added “the reality of the job is that someone can make mistakes and my response to that is important.”

Sam has integrated her experiences and draws from past supervisory experiences and “my own experience with my clients and my past and current supervisors” for feedback and guidance in supervision. She stated that “we should always be learning and open to new ideas or theories and if the right client presents the need, a change of perspective.” Sam described the fast pace of the work in community mental health and how it conflicted with attending conferences or reading a lot of literature and cited the lack of resources compared to those she had as a student as interfering with continuing education efforts.

**Goals for the future.** Sam’s goals were nonspecific and more related to maintenance. She identified the intention “to be mindful about the workshops and pick things that are relevant” as topics she wished to pursue in continuing education, workshop and conference training, and professional growth. Clinical experience and skill base were viewed by Sam as central in her supervisory role and in shaping her development. This was evident in her rationale that “if I am teaching you to be a good clinician I need to be good” and supported by her view of clinical skills as enhancing (a) the teaching process, (b) the malleability of supervisees, (c) the responsiveness of both the supervisee and supervisor, and (d) the gate-keeping roles and responsibilities which
are critical to the supervisory process and environment that she identified throughout her interview.

**Summary.** Sam was a participant who initially appeared superficial, lacked introspection, and seemed less oriented to supervision. For example, she quickly expressed distain toward those professionals outside of community mental health (i.e., private practice) and academia and struggled with what she perceived as the differences between what she learned as a student and what her real world experiences were in the field, identifying a detachment between the field and academia. This contributed to a degree of distractedness for her, which conflicted with a clear sense of what course to follow in her professional development.

The potency of the type of work that she has chosen helped in drawing a stark contrast from many other types of counseling and supervision professional practices, in that they may lack the urgency, disparity, or extreme conditions that are present in her current work. This may be reflective of her advocate spirit and her sense of justice that permeate much of her views toward the professions of counseling and supervision. As a consequence, she tended to dismiss the more traditional forms of approaching supervision (i.e., literature, affiliation with professional organizations). However, it was neither without conscience nor responsibility. In fact, in an odd way, this may have contributed to her empathic sense of judgment or arrogance—communicated much in the way an advocate would enact stewardship for the oppressed.

It is evident that what was most influential were her early supervisory experiences in internship or early career and a major appreciation of humans as resources for growth and yet she could not cite specifics from models or theory about the process of
development of a supervisee. It was her supervisors’ personal qualities and characteristics as counselors and supervisors, their knowledge base, and how those were imparted to her that shaped Sam’s experience and influenced her most. This is exemplified by how Sam views that one’s professional and personal evolution is rooted in the strengths of other clinicians and supervisors as she turned “to others for their expertise” such as “past supervisors, supervisors, and colleagues” or used group supervision formats “to promote learning,” but again she could give few specific examples of the type of feedback she received to inform her about her supervision.

**Participant Two: Elliot**

Elliot is a 54-year-old counselor supervisor from the Eastern United States who is employed as a clinical manager for a private practice. He is currently supervising 12 independently, licensed counselors with 8-20 years of experience while pursuing specialty and certification in EMDR and working with clients with trauma, anxiety, and/or depression issues.

**Education and training history.** Elliot earned his Bachelor’s degree in Business Administration and worked in the business and management profession for 25-30 years prior to pursuing his Master’s degrees in Clinical Counseling and Higher Education. Elliot’s received his counseling experience through his counselor preparatory program and it consisted of an on-site practicum and an internship at a local counseling agency serving children and adults. He received no specific training in supervision.

Elliot has been a counselor for 5-7 years and a counselor supervisor for 2-3 years. His employment history consisted of his business and management positions (25-30
years) where he provided a substantial amount of leadership and management education to the staff members he supervised and a counseling internship placement at a community counseling agency. After receiving his master’s degree, he became a counselor at a drug and alcohol treatment center where he became the supervisor of six counseling interns, four undergraduate students, and three graduate, social work interns.

**Early development.** In the first interview, Elliot reported being able to “contribute to the field, make an impact, train counselor interns,” as well as “be current to use best practices and help educate people to get to an adequate level.” As the discussion of early expectations ensued, it became clear how Elliot decided to become a counselor supervisor. He identified some areas of dissatisfaction and difficulties that occurred early in his counseling career which resulted in him being reported to and remediated by the state licensure board. Elliot provided examples such as “inadequate agency resources, logistical concerns, and insufficient supervision” which were a lack of an agency phone answering machine or system, client scheduling, and transportation difficulties, and a lack of supervisory involvement. Furthermore, Elliot described difficulties that related to conflicts with his business experience and ingrained attitudes and beliefs that differed both philosophically and professionally, leading him to misunderstand professional boundaries. Specifically, he described an orientation to counseling that was more related to his prior positions in business and how, in combination with insufficient supervision, contributed to his professional demise. According to Elliot, the boundary violation involved the transportation of a client for which he was reported to the licensure board and remediated. The impact of this professional milestone when combined with Elliot’s earlier intention to provide a different supervisory experience for counselors in training...
than what he received, resulted in the alignment of his professional values with those of an ethical counseling practice. Furthermore, when Elliot concluded that “reputation is everything” he indicated the importance of integrity in one’s professional actions and intentions.

Elliot’s experience of becoming a supervisor was influenced by his earlier expectations that resulted from his business and management experience and his view of both being based in “human development and developing that potential in people.” His goals for supervision were “to be able to develop a collegial relationship where supervisees have a certain amount of knowledge and can participate in supervision.” Important qualities of supervisors were seen as the need “for them to have a sense of themselves. . . a more balanced view of life” and that counselors need “a perspective on why you are there and what is important” because there is not just one way of doing things.

Elliot’s education and training experiences included (a) attendance at counseling workshops, (b) a journal subscription, and (c) plans to join a local counselor organization for continuing education opportunities. Relevant experiences that shaped Elliot as a supervisor were the absence of both instruction and supervision in his internship and early career experiences. Elliot stated, “I didn't get any supervision as an intern. The role models were not there. I was on autopilot.”

Furthermore, he believed this was the obvious beginning of his early career demise. He identified using case reviews with other supervisory staff and staff and described “hearing other people's stories about how they handled a certain situation or looking at it differently.” These combined experiences assisted in his development of
skills, conceptual abilities, and informed his practice in supervision. Yet, Elliot never received direct feedback on his actual skills because his sessions were not videotaped. Other meaningful experiences included attending a couple of seminars on “best practices” which involved a workshop given by an attorney who presented on the management of different legal and ethical situations and the use of supervision contracts.

Elliot’s developmental shifts and turning points centered on experiences of post-traumatic growth which led to his personal reflection and promoted his individual and professional development. According to Elliot, the impact of the ethics review committee and remediation by the licensure board were reflected in an increased humility and self-reflectiveness. Elliot stated that he has “learned to listen more than I talk now” and has an increased ability to come from a point of view that is based in counseling. This was confirmed when he said, “I made the transition from business to counseling.” Elliot’s approach to supervision was supported by (a) his use of professional publications, (b) his use of case summaries to develop case conceptualization in supervisees, and (c) his consultation with a supervisor he trusted.

**Development over time.** At the second interview, changes Elliot identified in his supervision practice were a move to a position of clinical manager with a staff of 12 clinical counselors in private practice and a specialization EMDR. Elliot reported he has:

grown and I am growing, both personally and professionally. . . .I read professional counseling and trauma journals and actively pursue continuing education both as a clinician and as a supervisor. . . .I am critical of what I do as a supervisor and try to create an environment that people will collaborate and be challenged to grow. (personal communication, July 16, 2010)

When asked about experiences that promoted his growth and development, Elliot mentioned journals such as ACA and trauma-specific articles. He also stated that
“a new supervisor came to my prior place of employment and he would describe the different roles of supervisors and this helped me understand supervision. . . . I liked the detail and it helped me conceptualize my role in supervision.” Elliot did not identify nor describe those roles.

However, he saw leadership in supervision and described it as “a skill of self-motivation and collaboration . . . meant to help a supervisee develop some expectations of the supervision . . . a more independent and collaborative association and way to develop potential in others.” Elliot went on to say that understanding supervisory roles was important because he “was always looking at how to transition from business to counseling. It’s in my foremost thought.” This statement illustrated how Elliot struggled with the conflict of his entrenched management orientation to his new role.

Elliot also described “learning about using the counselor as self” and how it could be used in supervision “to help supervisees examine their own needs, drives, motivations, and personal responses to clients” and as a way of “developing their internal supervisor and enhancing their use of self,” thus encouraging supervisees to “talk about their effectiveness” and enabling Elliot to “nurture them more” when he sees they are struggling. In addition, Elliot cited an “appreciation of individual differences” that fostered his encouragement of struggling staff to seek consultation from another staff, thereby “encouraging collaboration and acknowledging others strengths.”

Another development in his approach to supervision included “encouraging membership in ACA and the state level counseling organizations.” However, Elliot reiterated that he uses case studies as learning tools because they “set a framework for learning” and “good for input” from himself and the supervisee. Finally, Elliot revisited
his experience with post-traumatic growth and how that experience influenced his “path
to self-improvement and ethical, legal, and professional behavior.”

Furthermore, Elliot found a way to integrate his business expertise and his
counseling practice through his position as a clinical director. Elliot stated that because
of “some experience in the field” he is “more able to be more in tune with what other
counselors have to do.” He further identified that “it has given me more insight into their
work and things such as what is important to them.” Therefore, Elliot uses his skills from
business such as “measuring effectiveness and quality” to impact administrative
supervisory concerns. For example, Elliot described how “attendance rate is important as
this can impact their quality of life.”

Because of his experiences in self-exploration and the understanding gained
through a commitment to self-reflection and psychotherapy, Elliot has an appreciation of
the importance and impact of feedback from supervisees and his supervisor. For
example, Elliot identified that he had a “perspective change” and is inclined to be “more
global in [his] thought processes, less parochial, and make decisions in terms of how it
affects the broader arena.” In his interactions with his supervisees, Elliot stated he
“learned a lot in terms of their feedback and tracking what they say. . . . If I can’t get the
person to hear me, I try to say it differently.” With regards to his approach with clients,
Elliot stated, “I am intentional and learned a lot from the post-traumatic growth and know
how important feedback is because now what I do with feedback is different.” For
example, Elliot explained that:

before in a response to a compliment from a client, I would say ‘oh thank you’
and think I was a hot shit. But now, I help the client to see that they are the one
who has done all the hard work. (personal communication, July 16, 2010)
In his supervision, feedback takes a center role as he uses it (a) to understand where supervisors and supervisees are coming from, (b) to monitor communication, and (c) to contribute to a collaborative environment that promotes individual skills.

Elliot concluded:

I started from the ground floor up and business provided a basic framework for me. I learned counselor supervision from interacting with supervisors [and] university supervisors and I watched how they did things and handled things and I learned a lot from when I was remanded to the board. (personal communication, July 16, 2010)

Interactions with “supervisors and university supervisors” contributed to his growth as a counselor supervisor and were significant in shaping his development. “In the Navy we called it OJT (on the job training). . . . It was all the problem-solving, mediation, having things in perspective and relationship—the modeled behavior. That is the biggest thing I learned.”

**Goals for the future.** Elliot delineated the direction of his professional career by identifying plans for developing through (a) continuing education in counseling and supervision, (b) maintaining ethical and values, and (c) a commitment to self-improvement. As noted, Elliot will continue promoting his professional identity through national and state organization affiliation as well as encourage that in supervisees and colleagues. Finally, Elliot’s continues to uphold the objective and action toward the articulation of how his “business experience can fit into the counseling profession and to integrate those” into his professional identity.”

**Summary.** Elliot was a participant whose growth was formed by his experiences of post-failure growth and the challenges that accompanied that experience. While initially his responses seemed to lack substance, his development could be discerned as
the full impact of the post-failure growth could be observed between the first and second interviews. For example, Elliot’s perspective of himself and within the field became advanced as he was able to identify meaningful changes to his professional practice such as being more active in professional organizations and encouraging supervisees to do the same. This is exemplified in his early self-absorbed and deep-seated business values orientation that shifted to one of a global nature, which was manifested in his language and actions. For example, Elliot used metamorphic descriptors that became a testimony to his personal and professional compass, as vocabulary became representative of his contemplative attitudes, processes, actions such as “intentional” or “deliberate, or those that aligned his values such as “collaborative” and “interactive,” and those he believed to be paramount and devoted to the moral discourse of his professional practice, “ethical,” “legal” and “best practices.”

**Participant Three: Cameron**

Cameron is a 44-year-old counseling supervisor from the Midwest who holds a master’s degree in mental health counseling. She is employed in private practice and counsels court-appointed, incarcerated individuals. At the time of the first interview, Cameron had no supervisees but was considering taking on a counseling intern. However, her supervisory experience up to this point was unofficial.

**Education and training history.** Cameron holds a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology. She graduated in the mid-1980s with a master’s counseling degree. However, she did not graduate license eligible. At that time, those students interested in pursuing their licensure were required to return for a clinical portion which provided
coursework in diagnosis and treatment, psychopharmacology, supervision, and a counseling internship. After working for two years as a mental health case manager in a mental health clinic, she returned to complete the clinical portion of her degree and licensure. Cameron’s counseling program provided instruction in courses that promoted skill and knowledge attainment in counseling, thus she attended an on-site practicum and community-based internship. The clinical portion provided an on-site supervised practicum as part of the course.

Cameron’s work history consisted of a mental health, case management position that she held until she completed the additional clinical coursework portion of her master’s degree and sat for the licensure exam. After being licensed, she worked for two years at a community counseling agency for children and adolescents before taking a hiatus because she was “burned out.” She used this opportunity to raise her family. After six years, Cameron returned to work at an in-patient and partial adolescent hospitalization program where her first exposure to supervision was supervising two university counselor interns that were placed within her department. Because of this experience, Cameron developed an appreciation for supervision and identifies this experience as leading her to obtain her supervisory certification.

Early development. Cameron became a supervisor by default as she explained, “I thought I never wanted to do this” and attributed her decision to pursue her supervision practice because of her experience with interns who were placed in the program she ran. She was inspired by the interns to pursue supervision because “they brought so much energy and were so comfortable sharing new ideas. . . . They would bring in research and I loved that they had time to take them apart and analyze them and then bring back
information.” Cameron became more engaged in her profession as a result of this experience and stated it “motivate[d] me to go home and look things up even though I did that, I did it a lot more.”

Cameron described her experience of becoming a supervisor and early expectations of counselor supervision preparation as “very positive.” Of the supervision course she completed as part of the clinical portion of her master’s degree she related, “I loved my supervision training. . . . The instructor was able to bring so much besides the textbook.” When she reflected about the timing of the instruction in supervision, she thought it was important to have the training subsequent to being in the field of mental health. She stated, “All I can say is, I wouldn’t have known what to do with it before my internship.” She provided her rationale as, “I think we need a schema to put things into, so I don’t know what I would have done with it” referring to having had the supervision preparatory experiences after she had some idea or “schema” which was a frame of reference for her. She noted of her supervision academic training that she “learned some general guidelines,” however, identified that she “learned more about real supervision from my supervisors.” Cameron identified what aspects of the supervisory experience were helpful in learning to supervise as being able to “observe the supervisory interaction and was able to know what the expectations were” in addition to learning “and knowing their style and how supervision was documented.”

Cameron’s goals focused (a) on increasing knowledge of specific clinical issues as they related to “whatever new population” with whom she was working, (b) on best practices, and (c) on seeking journal articles to support her knowledge base. Other meaningful educational resources and experiences identified by Cameron were the
SAMSA website and various mental health-related seminars and workshops sponsored by pharmaceutical companies held at her agency of employment, which she stated were “really good.”

Additionally, her interactions with the university interns and the “information the interns brought back from conferences” were very stimulating and this course of events played a strong role in her decision to professionally move in the direction of supervision. Cameron cited workshops dealing with becoming a supervisor and those related to legal and ethical issues in supervision as significant in informing her supervision practice.

I think that one of the things you realize when you get education for supervision, you recognize dang I should do that, that's a really good idea. . . .One of the ideas about my goals (to use a supervision contract) for supervision actually came from a training. (personal communication, July 22, 2010)

Other developmental aspects of the supervision seminars Cameron attended dealt with “helping more with theoretical things,” specifically “with the ethical piece.” She described how “it does put more of a schema for me in that you better remember this and you better remember that,” For example, the use of supervision contracts and documentation. Cameron identified some important contributions her instructional experiences in supervision held for her and theorized “it's not a requirement to meet a need to get a license— that's part of the training and education you get—the whole point is to have them ready and able.”

What most impacted Cameron was the realization of how her current involvement in the field diverges from her experience as a student, where she was “very active . . . and involved in a number of groups” creating a sense of “boy, you better get busy” which reflected her sense of responsibility toward her supervisory duties. Nevertheless,
Cameron said her supervisory development “has been a wonderful experience.” Two outcomes of supervising counselors-in-training are her reconnection with both the university counseling department and the faculty who are now a resource to her.

According to Cameron, some important dimensions of being a supervisor centered on qualities such as:

- to be confident as a counselor and have the ability to nurture growth in someone else,
- to be healthy or you can be toxic,
- to be ethical and law abiding,
- and you need to have the interest and realization that this is a vulnerable person you are getting—vulnerable in their own growth. (personal communication, July 22, 2010)

The preceding qualities recognize Cameron’s understanding while also speak developmental as a supervisor. She identified taking a “holistic growth focus” and provided an example of how she would assess a supervisee for “what was in their “toolbox” to determine what needs existed for the supervisee. She further described the reciprocal nature of this assessment process, as she also gained knowledge and skills. For example, because the supervisee came with their own interests, knowledge, and skills which many times diverged from her own, Cameron had the opportunity to learn methods, skills, and information during the process of supervision.

What guided Cameron’s supervision were her “clinical skills, past experience in counseling and supervision,” and “the way I was managed.” She noted of her supervision class, “the class was great but I think what was most helpful was getting into the field after the class and learning from the experience of being supervised, then doing it.” In essence, Cameron described modeling the method and styles of her prior supervisors and stated how she felt “but I am still learning.”
Cameron also described what she has learned and how she has approached supervision. She stated, “I tailor my approach based on the situation or task. I use goals and try to help supervisees develop a toolbox and I am very encouraging and supportive.”

When asked what she got in supervision that guided her supervision, Cameron responded:

To discuss cases and the willingness of doctors and supervisors to let me read the charts to get a real understanding of cases and after doing that, talking to the psychologists who supervised me and see how they saw things or talking to the doctors was constructive. (personal communication, July 22, 2010)

Cameron provided an example of what she has done with supervisees that mimics her supervision experiences. She said, “I do the same thing. I have them read the file and discuss the case, problems, get their view of things, and use that as a teaching tool.”

When asked about supervision contracts, she stated, “I think using a contract prepares supervisees by helping them understand what is expected of them, what is going to happen, [and] what they can expect. All of that is outlined in the contract.” While Cameron has incorporated various ideas into her supervision repertoire, she does not remember supervision models nor does she employ a specific framework.

Shifts or turning points that Cameron communicated or displayed were related to growth, as evidenced by (a) technical, professional, and personal growth efforts she has accomplished to improve her knowledge base, (b) effectiveness as a supervisor, and (c) advancement as an individual. She stated that, “professionally I had a lot of growth” and her enthusiasm of her experiences in supervision confirm the transformation of her identity from that of a counselor to include that of a counselor supervisor.
Development over time. At the time of the second interview one year later, Cameron had moved to a large agency where she was supervising a staff of five counselors with 2-7 years’ experience. Cameron possessed a tone of accountability as she talked about changes she has undergone and the implications of those changes. She identified, “I am not only responsible for myself, I am responsible for the clients and in supervision it is layered” and how the supervision responsibilities “of teaching and learning, mentoring, and being tough to help the growth of the supervisee” were realized. For example, while being supportive and encouraging, the preceding comment identifies the necessity for Cameron to “be tough.”

Despite the gravity of her responsibilities, Cameron’s perspective of her practice was noted by her view of herself. She stated, “I am energized and enthusiastic and while it is challenging, I really enjoy it. . . .I think since I had the amount of experience I had before becoming a supervisor that was helpful.” Other formative experiences Cameron identified were “I have learned I need to be more patient and flexible” which acknowledges the idea that not one approach fits everyone and in supervision versatility is key. The impact of this has been, “I understand my supervision style” and for example, is something also applied to her, “I find that the things I struggle with are my own growth needs and I try to be open to that.”

Cameron also reported, “I consult with colleagues on a routine basis” in the form of support, information, or a check point. Furthermore, Cameron identified how the responsibility of being a supervisor fostered “the need to be more careful and methodical” and how she “learned to do things differently—approach things from a learning point of view.” To supplement the learning process she “asked supervisees to
bring in some article and help the supervisee to appreciate research” and believes “using a contract prepares supervisees by helping them understand what is expected of them, what is going to happen, and what they can expect.”

Meaningful experiences that shaped Cameron’s growth over time were related to (a) knowledge attainment, (b) early training and supervision experiences, and (c) changes in approaches to supervision. Cameron identified growing from, “doing some reading about supervision and going to some seminars on supervision” and “read the teacher, counselor, consultant model – it is helpful in understanding the process and the needs of the supervisee.”

She also restated the importance her work with her internship psychologist supervisors and cited the instructional experiences such as talking about “case reviews and treatment,” describing them as “very behavioral and (they) understood problems from that viewpoint – they knew their research and used tests” to make clinical decisions and that she draws upon that experience and “clinical skill, past experiences in counseling and supervision” in her own work. She continues to rely upon “my own experience of being supervised, my background . . . and from the supervision class” which was “a good starting point.

Reflectivity is seen in Cameron’s supervision practice by her realization and description of the importance of responsiveness to supervisory process interactions or in after-supervision reflection, which has changed her through awareness of:

an interaction or an insight, as a result of realizing something about myself or how I handled something, or based on some feedback, sometimes from the supervisee, but also from taking time to think about how the session is going. (personal communication, March 21, 2011)
For example, Cameron described doing “two different things” such as:

I think about it and look at the supervision notes and I think about the context and the process of supervision, identify problem areas or red flags or problems that may have surfaced within the supervision or our relationship, then I assess the need to improve anything. (personal communication, March 21, 2011)

citing “that is what makes a good supervisor and one of the ways your grow.” Another example provided by Cameron is, “I put a lot of effort into supervising and doing what my supervisors did. I plan for supervision and to meet the needs of the supervisee.”

Finally, Cameron stated, “I ask for feedback from supervisees” and has implemented necessary changes or requests accordingly, as noted above.

For Cameron, the growth-producing influences and formative experiences that promoted her growth as a supervisor are evident in the descriptions she provided of her early training and career or later career and supervisory endeavors and experiences. Of all of those, Cameron identified that the supervision course that she had as part of the clinical portion of her master’s degree was most significant in informing her supervision practice. She addressed that the timing of the instruction in supervision was at a phase of her growth and development that allowed her to integrate that information into the knowledge base that was present for her.

Goals for the future. Since the initiation of the interviews, Cameron has demonstrated a commitment to her professional development. She continues to grow through the use of literature and supervision specific seminars and workshops sessions. She identified continued plans to increase knowledge about models, growth focused for herself and for her supervisees, and her resources (i.e., colleagues, university professionals) had grown through her own pursuits.
Although Cameron did not identify specific supervision conferences or workshop topics she wished to attend, she did echo some of the challenges acknowledged by other study participants who are performing community agency work. She identified having struggled with the quality of supervision which may suffer “because of the workload or trying to multitask” and being able to supervise “without unnecessary distractions.” It may be fair to say that her growth edges and future training pursuits may emphasize some of those areas.

**Summary.** Cameron was an insightful participant. She had a different involvement in her supervision preparation experiences because she was required to return for a clinical portion of the master’s degree that would allow her to sit for the state licensure exam. Because of this experience, she had a perspective of the field and of supervision that other participants did not have. Specifically, having a foundation of understanding the administrative and organizational workings of an agency gave Cameron an advantage and supported her “schema” with which she could integrate that understanding and her new knowledge of supervision.

Furthermore, Cameron’s experience with those she worked with and was supervised by (i.e., psychologists at the hospital, doctors at inpatient unit) was influential in her appreciation of other’s approaches and views from which she learned a considerable amount. This is seen in the value of processing cases, approaches, and techniques her colleagues and supervisors utilized and which she routinely sought from them. While her growth is identifiable, there is a degree of consistency as a supervisor from the initial to the second interview. As such, she possessed an appreciation (a) of the role of research, (b) of affiliation with professional organizations and university experts,
and (c) of supervision training at a developmentally appropriate time, giving her a quality as a supervisor that was more informed and directed.

Cameron’s growth as a supervisor over time could be characterized as progressively more sober as she faced the realities of supervising a larger staff, yet more informed by the formative experiences from her past such as (a) experiencing burnout and taking time off, (b) close collaboration with those from other disciplines such as the psychologists and psychiatrists, and (c) returning to school for the clinical portion of her master’s degree. Each of these cumulatively promoted a depth to her understanding of the role of supervision and the supervisor.

**Participant Four: Rowan**

Rowan is a 37-year-old female from the Midwest. She has a Master’s degree in Community Counseling and is employed at a community counseling agency which services children and adolescents. At the initial interview, she was supervising six staff members (i.e., two LSWs, one counselor, one counselor-in-training, two mental health aids) and had a very active supervision schedule which included both individual and group sessions once per week with her staff.

**Education and training history.** Rowan earned a Bachelor’s degree in Social Work and worked in the field of geriatric social work for three years before returning to graduate school. Her master’s counseling program offered traditional forms of counselor training such as counseling methods, including onsite and offsite internship opportunities, and a class in supervision. Rowan’s history of employment consists of (a) her work as a social worker in an elder facility, (b) an internship in a counseling agency, (c) early

107
professional career positions at two counseling centers serving children and families, and (d) her current position.

**Early development.** It was a clear and distinct reply, “I truly enjoy clinical supervision,” Rowan’s commitment was evident and consistent throughout her interviews. She endeavored to impact the field of supervision by offering a “quality product” and to develop others by “helping supervisees improve their skills to go on to become supervisors.”

Rowan’s path to becoming a supervisor was not without apprehension because her early experiences in clinical supervision were “not helpful.” She explained her decision to pursue a supervisory role was despite of the inadequate supervision she received. She stated that she expected to have “more support or to be given challenges” by two of her three supervisors who were either “not present or unavailable” or with whom she experienced retribution for not observing the confidences of supervision. Therefore, Rowan’s early experiences formed her expectations of supervision. Her basic values of supervision are to “provide support for the supervisee, to observe that they are growing, and that no question is insignificant.”

Another observation that led to Rowan becoming a supervisor is what she believed were questionable practices. She went on to explain that “interns get into these agencies where there is a ‘supervisor of record’ but in actuality this is not the person who is supervising them.” Rowan reported she named this “it takes a village approach.” She explained that “the ‘village people’ are either other supervisors, colleagues, or program directors who provide supervision for the counselors-in-training,” or the staff under
whom interns are placed, who may not be a supervisor but serve as a supervisor while another staff member is the official, on-record supervisor.

An additional, frustrating early developmental and career experience was the “rose colored glasses” that interfered with her view and led to assumptions that those who possess a supervisory certificate “have done so because they put the extra effort to get it when that’s not always the case.” This was something for which Rowan related she was “not prepared for” and because of her experiences and her own development as a supervisor, she has adopted an activist attitude. This can be seen in one of her fundamental views towards establishing a supervision practice, “just because you can become a supervisor doesn’t mean you should.”

Despite negative experiences, Rowan has a beneficial estimation of those experiences upon her professional growth and can see constructive aspects. Therefore, many growth activities identified as important to Rowan are reflective of her insufficient supervisory experiences and one “amazing” supervision experience that was very influential. For example, Rowan identified activities such as belonging to professional organizations, attending professional conferences, and receiving the journals as significant. Also, Rowan cited the former supervisor from whom she learned how to be a supervisor treated her with respect and challenged her, all of which fostered her development as a counselor, and eventually as a counselor supervisor. Specifically, she identified being encouraged (a) to use research to understand client issues and appropriate procedures, (b) to use goals to structure growth, and (c) to understand dual relationships and boundaries.
Rowan cited that what guided her own supervision were her past supervision experiences, both satisfactory and dissatisfactory. She concluded that her ability to know how to proceed or how not to proceed in supervision was based upon (a) those experiences, (b) clinical skills, (c) trial and error, (d) didactic and experiential preparation in supervision, (e) information gained through workshops and seminars, (f) memberships in professional organizations, and (g) consulting with colleagues. In identifying training in supervision as significant, Rowan explained that one of the most fruitful outcomes was “learning how to give feedback—how to do it and how to provide it—was helpful.” For example, she related how she spent hours reflecting and planning to provide feedback in her counselor prep program, which was “more than expected, but I would want someone to do that for me.” Therefore, it can be recognized how collectively Rowan’s didactic and academic experiences in supervision, as well as her supervision experiences have formed the basis from which her identity and values of supervision have grown.

**Development over time.** At the time of the second interview one year later, Rowan had no changes in her employment. However, she had an additional counseling intern. Rowan identified some of the significant changes in her approach and practice in supervision. She integrated the information she gathered and developed a solid understanding of dual relationships and an appreciation of different perspectives in supervision, supervisees, and supervision models. Rowan explained she “integrated the information” that she gained which resulted in a “greater sense of confidence and competence.”

Rowan acknowledged how “being able to set good boundaries and truly understand what dual relationships are” as critical to her development as a supervisor
because she experienced “nonexistent supervision” and an “overly enmeshed supervisor” during her early professional years. This contributed to her level of awareness and the development of her own priorities. Examples related to an increased understanding of different perspectives was via the influence of a supervisor who had her refer to the supervision models and frameworks by directing her to “look this up and tell me what you think.” These examples contributed to Rowan’s growth because they “challenged” her and created a drive for involvement at the state or national professional level. Present activities included offering training at conferences, running for a local organization office, and promoting the same regularly with staff.

Rowan’s reflection of her prior experiences, continued education, and consultation informed her knowledge base, values, and beliefs. Her awareness expanded her understanding of and approach to supervision. This was reflected when she stated, “supervision takes some natural or innate skills and development of those skills such as being able to see things from multiple perspectives . . . to be non-judgmental nor cynical, to be human and approachable to staff.” An example of this is seen in how Rowan looks at supervision notes and reflects on the “context and process.” She identified “red flags that may have surfaced” in the supervisory relationship and “examines growth edges such as the need to improve or change something such as saying something from a different perspective.” With resolve, Rowan stated of this reflective process “that [it] is what makes you a good supervisor.” Of this example and Rowan’s commitment to examining her supervision, the role of relationship in the supervisory relationship, as well as the refinement of the relationship is highlighted.
The importance of the supervisory relationship is further supported by another example she related from her academic supervision training. Rowan felt it was wrong that a supervision model supported the position of the supervisor to be in an authority role. She took the position that while there is a differentiation between the supervisor and supervisor, power in the relationship should be “minimized.” Thus, the intersection of the value of equality, relationship, and continued self-examination can be observed.

In consideration of the gains in her growth and development, the role of feedback was central. Through examples Rowan provided, feedback was highly valued as she sought feedback and provided feedback and it is apparent that Rowan integrated it into her supervision practice. Some examples are (a) feedback that has been sought or rendered in consultation with other colleagues; (b) in using goals and feedback to promote supervisee growth; and (c) her deliberateness with which she has used feedback to structure, evaluate, and refine her supervision.

**Goals for the future.** Rowan explained of her professional growth, “I feel more comfortable and confident than I did a year ago” and described how she routinely consults with other colleagues from clinical and trauma specialty backgrounds because she is “open to their ideas” and plans to continue to do so. Other areas for growth that Rowan identified were (a) continued affiliation with national and state counseling organizations, (b) presentations at state and national conferences related to her specialty in trauma, and (c) the promotion of her area of specialization in order to increase her colleagues and supervisees understanding of how trauma may enter their work with clients. Rowan also stated that she will continue to seek counseling interns as a way of giving back to the community. Finally, on a personal level, Rowan’s goals for
supervision will center on the supervisory relationship and remaining “authentic and honest,” so that her supervisees can continue to find her accessible.

**Summary.** Rowan was an enthusiastic and insightful participant. Rowan’s experiences in being supervised as an intern and early in her professional career greatly influenced her development, views of priorities, and values of being a supervisor. While Rowan eventually was supervised by a knowledgeable and available supervisor, her assessment of those challenging experiences was optimistic and allowed her to develop a perspective and understanding based upon her unmet needs, frustrations, and uncertainty. This is a testament to her resiliency and commitment to growth as a professional counselor and supervisor. It also fostered her very strong opinions of whom and why other counselors should consider pursuing a supervisory endorsement.

Over time from the first interview to the second, Rowan’s engagement in the profession of supervision was identifiable. She articulated a commitment and did evidence some examples of an increased involvement at the state and national levels through participation in conference presentations and intentions to become an officer at the local level. Also, another observed aspect was Rowan’s level of comfort with her role as a supervisor which was shown through her discussion of supervision without the hesitation or doubt that was initially observed at the first interview. However, the area in which there was without abandonment was her attitude toward what professionals are appropriate for the role of a supervisor, as when concluding the second interview, her response to the question if she wanted to add anything to the interview was, “just because you can be a supervisor, doesn’t mean that you should.”
Participant Five: Dallas

Dallas is a 44-year-old female counselor supervisor from the Eastern United States who has been counseling for 10-15 years at counseling agencies which serviced adults and children. She has been a supervisor at her current place of employment for 2-3 years and also supervises two clinical counselors who have 3-4 years of experience.

Education and training history. Dallas earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology in the late 1980s and graduated with her Master’s in Mental Health Counseling in the mid-1990s. She was not employed after receiving her bachelor’s degree. Instead, she raised her children before entering her master’s counseling program. Dallas’ master’s program provided training in counseling methods and community internship placements. She did not receive academic instruction in supervision as part of her master’s program.

Dallas was employed as a counselor at a community agency and she primarily worked with adult clients. Her two previous employment positions were at a hospital mental health program for adults and at a drug and alcohol treatment facility doing outpatient counseling. Her outpatient counseling internship and subsequent employment occurred at the same facility.

Early development. At the initial interview, Dallas reported satisfaction with her supervision practice and described it as “successful.” She further stated that the teaching aspect is particularly rewarding for her because she feels she is providing “ethical and responsible supervision” and that she is “contributing something good offering supervision and consultation” to others such as students in training and professionals in the field. Dallas’ decision to become a supervisor is a consequence of her own
supervisory experiences which resulted in her having “some strong opinions about how it needs to be done.” When asked about her perceptions of preparatory experiences, Dallas provided her revelations of the realities of the supervision that is often practiced. According to her, there are “no guarantees that the supervision you get is going to be beneficial or valuable” and that “supervisory positions are many times advancements for people who are motivated by “salary increases or a promotion.”

Dallas’ expectations of the supervision provided early in her counselor preparation and early career were not met. She described it as “meager” and “a different experience than what I expected.” While the two supervisors following her initial experience were satisfactory, the first supervisory experience incited her attitudes about the process and content of supervision. Dallas related that her intern supervisor also served as her supervisor when she took an outpatient counseling position. According to Dallas, she had a lot of unmet needs since the focus of her supervision sessions was not clinical in nature but rather personal discussions about the supervisor and her family.

Consequently, Dallas “was motivated to provide a different experience” which was “more aligned with [her] two following supervisors.” Two influential experiences from her second and third supervisors included regular supervision with a clinical focus and supervision by a very knowledgeable consultant that was supplemented to an entire department. Dallas also identified five qualities from these supervisors that influenced her development. They were “respect, investment, the ability to share knowledge, the ability to encourage critical thinking, and professionalism.” Dallas’ supervision sessions included discussions on “ethics and risks” and instruction on “anticipating needs of clients” which she, in turn, “translated into supervision” with her supervisees.
Dallas’ early goals for supervision were “to remain current with trends in supervision” and to continue with the “activities [she was] involved [with] that . . . promoted [her] development” such as memberships in ACA, ACES, and use of their print and online resources and educational books. Other relevant experiences noted by Dallas were supervision seminars and workshops because they “were very helpful and influenced my understanding of the actual practice of supervision.” However, she noted that she did not attend the supervision seminars or workshops until she was actually practicing as a supervisor, which developmentally was “more meaningful and helpful.”

Shifts or turning points in her experience of becoming a supervisor were emphasized by her awareness that “even though supervision is considered a specialty,” the breadth of what is considered in supervision is great because you must “[know] about clinical, therapeutic, diagnostic, and evaluation” techniques. She further acknowledged that her development and passion for acquiring the necessary information to provide good supervision was frustrated during her early years of being supervised.

What guided Dallas’ supervision were her “own experiences of being supervised and [her] clinical knowledge.” She observed what her supervisors “saw as priorities in approaching a client, client needs, and the treatment process with a supervisee.” She stated that, “I use my clinical knowledge base because I am, in essence, training someone else to be a counselor.” Also impacting her supervision was the knowledge Dallas acquired from (a) early experiences that were not positive, (b) consultation with her current supervisor and “experienced colleagues,” and (c) books and articles. She also stated cited supervision “seminars and workshops have offered an application component” as “most beneficial.” However, in general, Dallas identified that supervision
workshops are mainly about “legal and ethical issues.” She explained the knowledge she gained through these experiences “strengthened my identity as a counselor” and because “supervision is based on counseling and who we are as a counselor is the foundation” of a counselor supervisor.

A final guiding force of Dallas’ supervision is the supervision model she employed. She related that she used the “teacher/counselor model” and described the flexibility it offered to supervisors as beneficial. For example, she stated, “if I have to challenge a supervisee, I can do it in the role of the counselor or teacher and get a different result from each.”

Dallas’ identity was impacted by new knowledge and experiences which she identified as “strengthening my identity as a counselor.” She concluded because one begins as a counselor, the progression to being a supervisor is an “expansion or added dimension of you as a counselor,” therefore, one’s identity “broadens, not changes.”

**Development over time.** At the second interview, Dallas described changes to her supervision practice which included three counselor trainees completing their internships and two staff members. She described changes related to being challenged by supervising interns and the level of awareness that is required in supervision. Examples Dallas provided were that work with interns is a challenge, as they are “more fragile and needy” thus requiring “more emotional energy, direction, guidance, and support.” According to Dallas, “supervision skills, clinical skills, and modeling of professional and ethical counseling practices” become critical “because what they learn will impact them for the remainder of their careers” and because her “reputation is on the line.”
She identified meeting those challenges by being “deliberate and with a rationale for what I am doing” which helps her to “consider every recommendation” she offers. She concluded that of her approach to supervision, the two values she embraced are of supervisory relationship skills. The first involved “listening, clarifying, questioning, empathy, and clear, direct communication. The second involved “education because everything I do can be observed, understood, and embraced by a supervisee through our conversations and what I model.”

Meaningful experiences that shaped Dallas’ development were identified as having had good supervision after having poor supervision. Through reflection she has seen the benefit of her experiences and reported that she has “taken from all of them.” Some examples she provided were the setting, the supplemental training that was provided, and the experience of participating in staff meetings. For example, the agency she worked at sponsored presentations on various mental health topics to promote knowledge in those areas. The agency also allowed supplemental supervision consultation where the supervisor and the staff were supervised and consulted with as a group. Also beneficial was the experience of attending staffing of clients where other members of the staff were present such as psychiatrists, nurses, psychologists, and colleagues with different specialties such as drug and alcohol.

Other meaningful supervision training experiences Dallas identified were (a) professional memberships at the national, state, and local levels; (b) continuing education through workshops and seminars, (c) journals, and (d) resources such as colleagues and web-based sites. The impact that these had upon her development as a supervisor are related to having “access to those who are advanced in the field” and knowledge gained
from that experience and the “commitment an agency has of the growth needs of the staff” which presented opportunities for development. These influences were identified in Dallas’ (a) commitment to education for herself and her staff, (b) her viewpoint, and (c) her approach to supervision which was supported by the use of a model and literature.

Feedback obtained from supervisors, supervisees, and colleagues was integrated into Dallas’ counseling and supervision practice. Formative and influential examples Dallas provided such as preparatory experiences, affiliation with professional associations, receiving professional journals, and attending seminars offered their own form of feedback. Because of her value of those experiences, she contended that the activities and attitudes of her supervisees are a result of feedback, as it was informative, educational, and growth promoting. According to Dallas, she has also integrated feedback from various sources into her skills and approaches and it has functioned to either broaden her knowledge base or was an experience which challenged her in a personal manner.

With regard to what Dallas concluded as being most significant in her growth and development, she identified two main sources. They were her educational experiences (i.e., training, professional seminars, literature) and her day-to-day professional experiences. For example, she identified being exposed to a variety of professionals from different disciplines such as psychologists, psychiatrists, psychiatric nurses, and seasoned, knowledgeable colleagues as contributing to her growth. Dallas provided examples of how she learned about clinical issues, treatment, and supervision from those experiences of participating in staffings and team meetings. Dallas further provided a specific example of how she was supervised and how that impacted her development.
She said that her supervisor used a methodical or “mechanical” approach to introducing a newly assigned client and the process of the case review, treatment planning, appropriate techniques, and weekly review. Her second most influential source was the educational component related to her growth. She identified examples such as (a) the independent reading she did, (b) the workshops and seminars she attended, (c) the supplemental supervision, (d) the in-agency continuing education opportunities, and (e) the literature from professional organizations.

**Goals for the future.** Dallas’ goals are related to refining her supervisory skills and to providing good supervision that is educational and meaningful. She described intentions of (a) “incorporating meaningful aspects of supervision,” (b) creating educational situations for trainees such as “challenging the supervisee,” (c) integrating “supplementary materials such as articles or journals,” (d) providing instruction on the “use of assessment checklists,” and (e) working on diagnostic skills” to benefit the supervisee. She sees her role as the “nurturer” of a trainee’s orientation to the knowledge base and professionalism of the field while being a gatekeeper who monitors the “fitness and wellness” of trainees. Dallas stated that one goal superseded the rest. It is “client needs” and being able “to help them be the best clinician they can be.”

**Summary.** Dallas was an insightful and committed supervising counselor. What greatly impacted Dallas’ growth and development as a supervisor was her reflectivity and awareness of her experiences as a counselor trainee, early professional and growing counselor supervisor. She took some challenging and disconcerting professional experiences of being supervised and used those as growth edges in her own development. For example, because she had insufficient, “meager” supervision as an early professional,
she was attuned to the needs of a supervisee and used that awareness to empower herself and inform her supervision practice. Furthermore, Dallas’ appreciation of growth and the knowledge opportunities that can be gained from other disciplines such as medicine, psychiatry, and psychology were evident.

In terms of changes from the first interview to the second, Dallas appeared more absorbed in supervision. This was evidenced by her deliberateness, genuineness, and reflectivity. Yet, she herself tended to be “mechanical,” as she once described a supervisor. Also, Dallas was a participant who could articulate various aspects of the supervisory process such as (a) the spoken and unspoken dimensions of supervision; (b) the steps of supervision in assigning a new case; and (c) the subsequent supervisory process of guiding, advising, and monitoring while promoting autonomy of the supervisee by encouraging research-based decisions and rationale. Finally, what was most poignant of Dallas’ supervision was her empathy for the vulnerability of the supervisee.

**Participant Six: Avery**

Avery is a 36-year-old African American female counseling supervisor from the Midwest with 2-3 years supervision experience and 10-15 years counseling experience. She received her undergraduate degree in Psychology in the mid-1990s and her Master’s degree in Counseling Psychology in the late 1990s. At the time of the first interview, she was employed in a community counseling practice mainly working with adults and supervising three graduate students from a local university.
Education and training history. Avery received her Bachelor’s degree in Psychology in the mid-1990s and immediately entered her Master’s degree program in Counseling Psychology. Her master’s program featured traditional counselor training experiences, including methods in counseling and internship opportunities on-site at the university and off-site at local community mental health, children and family, or drug and alcohol agencies.

Avery’s work history consisted of no counseling or professional experience prior to entering her master’s program and a master’s internship at a Catholic Charities counseling agency. She had two counseling positions at two agencies which serviced community children and families. One position she held for 4-5 years and the other she held for 3-5 years. She then moved into a counseling position at a university for 3-4 years. She became the director of the college counseling center and remained in that position for two years before resigning that position for the community counseling position she currently holds. Her practice as a counselor supervisor also reflected that she had taught and supervised at two different institutions over the last 2-3 years.

Early development. Avery described her experience of becoming a supervisor as “very successful.” She stated that it has been “rewarding working in the field of supervision.” Becoming a supervisor was a decision she “consciously” made because she saw that role “as a primary role of my professional practice” that “parallels my identity as a counselor.” She explained, “I find that teaching doesn’t quite get it and that it is really more being a part of developing an other’s professional identity” and that the creativity in supervising counselors trainees because they “are malleable, eager to learn, and contribute to the process of becoming a counselor.”
Avery described her experiences of becoming a supervisor and early expectations of counselor supervision as positive. She identified the function of “serving as a gatekeeper” and that occasionally when working with students, “there are some who have ended up not doing direct service and that is good for them.” She further identified not having expectations nor goals early on in her career and that she “intended to model [her]self after [the] good supervisors” she had.

She described some helpful influences upon her supervision practice. These were (a) a group of colleagues who meet annually to discuss supervisory issues, (b) membership in ACA and her state counseling association, (c) professional journals, (d) mentoring, and (e) discussions relating to legal and ethical issues with colleagues. She identified supervision seminars that were “not helpful or memorable” and stated, “I feel like I heard the same things over and over again.” When asked about supervision literature, she identified having read a book but was unable to name the title, stating she found it “too technical” and suggested that being a supervisor “requires more of knowledge of self and use of self that you can’t really get in that format.”

What guided Avery’s own supervision was her understanding of supervision, which she sees as a “developmental process of becoming a clinician,” and that “knowledge of theories of counselor development and training” were important. However, she noted that it was “mainly the practical knowledge I have gained from colleagues and mentors” that informed her. Avery gave the example of how she learned to supervise by her experience of mentoring by a prior supervisor who “told me that this is the way it goes and gave me some great resources—like a mini informed consent—where I review what the process is like, what my expectations were, and what you can
expect from me.” She further explained, “just setting the framework and the tools that she shared helped me put things together.” Avery stated, “using a contract is part of the process;” however, she does not use a specific model of supervision.

Avery provided another example of what guided her supervision. It was “being exposed to the good or bad supervisors; the people I worked with that have helped me to understand what one might need to develop competency in supervision.” She explained that it was “the absence or presence of things in situations where either needs have gone unmet or needs have been met. Those form one’s ideas about effective supervisory approaches.” She identified two examples which she had learned from and used in her own understanding of supervision.

One experience I had a personal issue that had nothing to do with my clinical work and I did not share that with my supervisor. When my supervisor found out about it she was very empathic, and that helped me to realize and emphasize to me that it is not just about supervision, but also about the individual. (personal communication, June 6, 2011)

In a second example, Avery stated, “in my next training experience I had a supervisor that would just be missing in action unexplainably. So I learned that making sure that you’re available and accessible for communication was important.”

According to Avery, qualities of past supervisors were “intelligence, flexibility,” and in early training supervision “supportiveness and willingness to mentor” as “very influential.” Avery does not ascribe to a supervision model that informs her supervision practice. However she cited, “students should be trained in supervision through their education.” She added:

I think you don’t have to have one particular clinical point of view and I don’t think it’s necessarily helpful for the supervisor to be eclectic all over the place. They need to be knowledgeable about a lot of interventions because when the
A trainee is developing their own sense of identity that it helps if the supervisor has a strongly adhered to, clear framework. (personal communication, September 22, 2010)

Shifts or turning points in Avery’s development were identified as her ability “to pour through a lot of details and bring clarity and to problem solve.” She added that “the most important thing is that I feel I am keeping up reading the journals.” Furthermore, Avery identified the “importance of having good supervision and the impact that it can have on the entire environment, especially when you are talking about a community counseling center.” Avery concluded, “good supervision can shape the outcome for employees, but also I think the atmosphere and the health and vitality of the services being provided.”

**Development over time.** At the time of the second interview one year later, Avery has remained at the same counseling agency and her supervision practice included three university counselor trainees. She explained that she is using a group format and individual supervision with the trainees, with individual supervision providing “deeper level processing” opportunities. Avery described the inspiring aspects of working with trainees such as when “you can see the students’ light bulbs going off” and their “ability to offer interpretation or support to the other members.”

She qualitatively differentiated the experience of supervising counselor trainees. First, there is “a lot more sharing, personal sharing because I bring up areas of learning that I had both as a trainee and early practitioner.” She went on to say that “there is a high level of gratification because you can see the progress in their growth by leaps and bounds” as opposed to the growth in supervisees who have practiced for a time or clients where you “don’t see rapid change.” Another aspect of supervising counselor trainees is
the amount of administrative supervision that is required, such as productivity concerns
which allows for more emphasis to be placed on knowledge and skills development.

Experiences that shaped Avery’s development were those that developed her
clinical and supervisory skills. She identified by her reliance upon her mentors in the
field that she has modeled herself after such as colleagues, prior supervisors, and others
with whom she has interacted within the field. Avery described other important
developmental opportunities she had in supervising trainees such as “meeting quarterly
and sharing ideas about how we are guiding the learning process or difficulties with
student progress, which helped in your development.” She also provided examples that
led to her development as a supervisor. Avery stated, “I think a lot of growth and
learning comes from difficult situations.” She then described working with a supervisor
to ensure she was handling an erotic transference a client, stating, “I use it as a teaching
tool on transference and countertransference.” Another “pivotal experience” she related
occurred at her counseling internship site where “some of the students were doing well
and some were not” which helped her to understand “a therapist’s effectiveness has a lot
to do with their personal qualities and characteristics rather than some particular
treatment strategy. . . .It has a lot to do with the helping style of the therapist.” How that
expressed in her supervision is that it “helped me to recognize, support, and guide my
students to find their own personal style.” As such, Avery continued explaining, “I tend
to be very supportive in helping students find and capitalize on their strengths; there is
not a cookie cutter solution, and supervision is not cookie cutter.” Avery related an
example of an experience where a counseling supervisee told her that a prior supervisor
told her she “was like a pit bull terrier because she would hang on to things and not let
go,” and handled it by attempting to help her reframe it as a skill, telling her “that is something that may not always be a good thing, but that a quality such as that would make you a good advocate.”

Meaningful and growth experiences which shaped her growth were identified as experiences she had in her own counselor preparation and which promoted insight and skill development. The examples she provided were (a) the group of supervisors from local agencies and colleges, (b) mentors, (c) affiliation with national and state counseling organizations and the literature they publish, (d) online mental health websites, and (e) other supportive activities such as email support between meetings to answer questions. One specific example Avery provided involved a supervisor who was mentoring her. “She told me ‘this is the way it goes’ and gave me some great resources like a mini informed consent” where in working with supervisees she uses the consent to “review what the process is like, what my expectations are, and what you can expect from me.” She further explained, “It just sets the framework and the tools that she shared to help me put things together.”

In thinking or reflecting about her interactions with her supervisees, Avery learned about her own supervision and realized she was “more focused on developing the students’ own internal process and drawing the connections, instead of telling them how to process or ask, did you do this or think about that.” She identified the importance of the supervisee being able to “draw the connections about how they came to a particular way of thinking about the client.” What insight this provided to Avery is related to supervision and its “impact and I realize the influence that I do have and am cautious.”
Avery concluded that what was most significant in shaping her developments were prior supervisors and the mentors after whom she modeled her actions. Avery provided a description of a supervisor who gave her the “informed consent” she used in supervision, which provided very specific procedural information about the process of supervision. This enlightened Avery by helping her to create a perspective and an understanding of supervision.

Avery was one of the few participants who responded at the conclusion of the interview when asked if she wished to add anything or comment on a particular issue. She reiterated from the first interview the importance of multiculturalism as a component of supervision because she feels it “doesn’t get the attention it should.” She relayed an example that occurred since her first interview where a supervisee, who was born in Mexico, had returned from practicing law to become a counselor with Latinos. In working with the supervisee, some priorities Avery identified for her supervision was to conduct a dialogue with her “on being a minority therapist, identity issues in working with a specific population and with majority clients.” Avery continued:

The supervisee related that one of her clients made a derogatory comment about Latinos in session and she was dumbfounded by the experience of her client not knowing who she really was, and even though I don’t know the experience of not being African American, I hope she would be able to process that with anyone. (personal communication, June 6, 2011)

This example highlighted the necessity of competency in multiculturalism for supervising counselors.

**Goals for the future.** Avery’s goals were nonspecific and were related to maintenance goals, as she identified a shift in her supervision which materialized due to an insight related to her tendency in supervision to provide opinions. As a result of the
insights, Avery described being “careful not to give too many opinions about the client” and in effect challenging the supervisee to develop their “internal process and draw the connections” themselves. Because of an increased level of understanding of specific actions that lead to a supervisee’s growth and development, Avery’s knowledge has deepened and brought about changes in her, which is an area she plans to continue to develop. Furthermore, as she noted, the role of literature in the sense of who she is as a supervisor and in terms of her acknowledgement of its importance, Avery will pursue her connections to national, state, and local counseling associations for growth and development opportunities.

**Summary.** Avery was an insightful participant. Her growth was evident in the deepening of her understanding of supervision and her ability to impart that knowledge to her supervisees. Because of these qualities, she was set apart from other respondents of the study. Avery had an ability to articulate the unspoken, growth promoting processes of therapy and counseling supervision. The reasons for this may lie in the role that knowledgeable mentors and seasoned colleagues upon whom she routinely identified as influential and supportive of her. Conversely, the reason may lie in her own personal qualities and therapeutic skills, as she identified counseling and supervision relied upon “the use of self,” of which has obviously been an area of her own growth.

**Participant Seven: Lee**

Lee is a 35-year-old female, counselor supervisor from the South who holds a Master’s degree in Mental Health Counseling and has 11 years of counseling experience. She is employed as a counselor in a college counseling center. At the time of the first
interview, her supervision responsibilities included the supervision of two counseling staff with 5-8 years of experience and one counseling intern.

**Education and training history.** Lee earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology prior to earning her Master’s degree in Mental Health Counseling. She entered her master’s program subsequent to completing her bachelor’s degree and has no prior work experience related to counseling. Lee’s master’s program provided traditional programming in counseling, including methods of counseling and opportunities for on-campus and off-campus internships at a variety of mental health counseling agencies.

Lee’s employment history began with her internship placement which was completed at a local counseling agency that serviced children and families. She has been employed at the counseling center since graduating with her master’s degree 11 years ago. She has been supervising for the last 3-4 years.

**Early development.** Lee identified counselor supervision as “one of the areas I have enjoyed most” because “the opportunity to mentor counselors and counselor interns, who are very eager and motivated makes for a great population to work with.” She delineated work with interns from supervision of staff as “working with interns keeps me fresh and helps me to be reminded of basic counseling theory, being intentional and being reflective; it encourages me to do those things.” Lee explained the impact of supervising interns upon her professional identity when she stated, “I have maintained my counselor identity through that.” Therefore, supervision of counseling interns is a qualitatively different experience for Lee.

The decision to become a supervisor was born out of her experience of being supervised by two influential internship supervisors, one who was a counselor educator
and later internship supervisor. In an example of their influence, one supervisor used group supervision and Lee reported that the peer-to-peer experience of “participating in one another’s supervision was rewarding.” She further noted, “I felt very fortunate to have had that experience and of being supervised by both supervisors.” Other meaningful and influential counseling and supervision experiences that influenced her supervision practice were (a) being encouraged to attend conferences, (b) membership in ACA and her state and local counseling associations, (c) opportunities to attend seminars at the local university for continuing education in supervision, and (d) her ability to remain “very connected with my graduate program.” These experiences instilled in her a value system based in skill and knowledge and marked by pro-activity.

Lee’s practice as a supervisor was most influenced by the experiences and the components of her training which were notably different. Such experiences influenced her by presenting (a) opportunities for session tape review or live supervision, (b) opportunities for peer-to-peer input and feedback in group supervision, (c) an emphasis on mentoring support and the role having an active counselor educator, (d) encouragement to pursue professional activities such as professional organization affiliation and conference participation, and (e) the development of networking skills that were stimulated through close involvement with the university and Lee’s graduate program.

Furthermore, Lee reported early career continuing education offered by the university on “a basic introduction to supervision models” that was made available and promoted her development. For example, she reported “reading about supervision and integrating it into what I do;” however, other sources of learning have been in her work
with counselor trainees, as she noted, “I have learned from each intern that I have supervised.” This signals potential growth opportunities that Lee has identified as useful and learned to become responsive.

Guiding Lee’s supervision have been the experiences of her training and early supervisory experiences. For example, she relied upon “ethics, basic counseling skills, to do no harm, and to know your limitations.” Furthermore, she identified the role of feedback from supervisors and supervisees that continues to “help me understand my actions and perspective.” She concluded with, “the supervision I received” and an “opportunity to supervise others prior to my involvement in clinical supervision” informed her supervision practice; thus, her counselor preparation and supervision as well as prior non-clinical management experiences informed her supervision.

Lee learned to supervise from prior supervisors. She stated, “I reflected on what previous supervisors did that worked, what did not work, and what they could do more of” in formulating her own ideas about supervision priorities and competencies. Reflectivity can be observed in what Lee referred to as the “process piece in supervision and with the supervisee” as she believes it has informed her own growth as she endeavors to be “intentional” in her actions.

Shifts in Lee’s development are related to her early prepartory and supervisory experiences which have encouraged her self-perception as a counseling supervisor. Her core identity is as “an educator and counselor,” as her experiences of counselor training and supervision promoted that in her. She described her supervision approach as “supervisee centered.” She stated that “there is a lot of teaching and instruction and
looking for teachable moments” in order to “develop their thoughts and help them to be more intentional.”

Furthermore, Lee stated one goal is to “develop the supervisee’s autonomy while there is still a sizeable amount of support” using a developmental approach, which compliments her value of empowering supervisees. In the close of her interview, Lee’s comments were reflective of how she has navigated her professional turning points. She noted that “being a gatekeeper—the role, responsibility, and identity” are what differentiated her current view of herself from that of earlier career or training periods.

**Development over time.** At the second interview one year later, Lee remained supervising two clinical staff with 5-8 years of experience and one counseling intern. She identified that when one is engaged in supervision “there is always an opportunity for growth.” However, she reported she has not attended any formal workshops or seminars in supervision since the last interview.

Experiences that shaped her development were identified by Lee as more related to “on the job training or learning as I go along.” She also identified key aspects of her experiences in early university supervision that contributed to her development, as well as new perspectives that she has developed during her tenure as a supervisor. For example, Lee revealed her practicum and internship supervisors were “experts in their areas” and she has remained in a consultative role to “tap into their strengths” for “ideas, insights, and guidance.” She reiterated counselor program and internship site strengths such as taping sessions, opportunities for live supervision, and group supervision as informing her clinical skills as well as eventual supervisory skills. A final example of what she has learned as a result of her own supervision, she explained:
Supervising others makes me think more about my own counseling and more than anything that is why I enjoy supervision. Because I feel it makes me a better counselor and I can’t help but examine my own skills and my work with clients; so on staff enrichment strategy I will ask my supervisees about feedback for my own clients, where appropriate, that I am working with in an effort for them to have the opportunity to give feedback. (personal communication, June 6, 2011)

Lee’s understanding of supervision was nurtured by her experiences and insights provided by her ability to remain reflective and attuned to her own interactions with her supervisees. She cited that she is satisfied with participating in her career as a supervisor which is measured by supervisees’ view of her as a potential support. She stated, “I count it a success when my supervisees utilize me as a resource not only through supervision but most importantly after supervision.” Another example Lee believed was central to her supervision and what promoted growth in her was helping trainees to develop critical thinking. She said that:

There is 50% in learning mode and the rest is what you need right now and it is important not just telling them what to do but helping them develop what they think about, what they need and helping them in how to be more intentional. (personal communication, June 6, 2011)

A final insight relates to a growth edge of the counseling field and in supervision. Lee identified the need for skills and knowledge in evaluation and noted, “when it comes time to do it, it is important to have whether it is for a program or an individual, you need to be able to give technical feedback.”

**Goals for the future.** Lee’s goals were specific and related to her own growth needs and also to trends in supervision certification in her state. She reported that “continuing education and conferences and workshops in supervision” were goals. Lee plans to access more training in supervision that is offered through the state because of new laws pertaining to supervisory certification. Also, due to the fact that Lee sees her
primary role as a “counselor and to educate,” the goals to seek to enhance her clinical skills remain.

**Summary.** Lee was a participant that had insight and a nature that was solid and deliberate. The role that progressive counselor educators played in Lee’s development is undeniable, because those influences shaped her values, behavior, and actions. As such, Lee had a perspective and understanding of the broad, overarching aims that counselor education seeks to accomplish. This was observed in her approach to supervision where there is a clear sense of direction and the activities, rationale, and process of supervision evidence aspects of how she was trained.

Over time, Lee developed an appreciation for continued education and conferences or seminars in supervision, especially since her state is moving in the direction of supervisory certification. Other areas in which her growth was observable were her reflectivity and awareness of the intangible components of supervision that are neither easily communicated nor accessible until one is in that role such as the personal intersection of the supervisee and supervisor or the supervisee, supervisor, and client.

**Participant Eight: Morgan**

Morgan is a 29-year-old counselor supervisor from the East who holds a Master’s Degree in Clinical Counseling. She is employed in a counseling agency that serves children, adolescents, and adults. At the time of the first interview, her supervision duties included supervision of two mental health counselors at two of the three sites.

**Education and training history.** Morgan earned a Bachelor’s degree in Psychology prior to earning her Master’s degree in Clinical Counseling. Morgan’s
master’s program provided opportunities to gain knowledge and skill through courses such as methods of counseling and counseling practicums that were offered at local community agencies.

Morgan’s employment history reflected her completed internship at a counseling agency that served an Appalachian clientele; many of whom were on Medicaid or lived in impoverished conditions. She primarily counseled adults with some requirements to do family interventions. She worked full-time as an EMT for 1-2 years after receiving her bachelor’s degree and part-time during the beginning stages of her master’s program. She has been counseling for 5-6 years and supervising for 2-3 years.

**Early development.** Morgan embraced counselor supervision. It quickly became part of her professional identity as she enjoyed being a supervisor and would seek out opportunities to supervise. Morgan described her approach to supervision as “eclectic” and that her focus was “more about whether the supervisee is getting what they need;” for example, “where they are in the process and how they grow or grapple with the process or journey.” She identified that she ascribed to a “developmental framework” which was similar to how she counsels by visiting theories of supervision on an informal basis. Supervision theories are viewed by Morgan to “support” her “developmental conceptualization of the supervisee.” She cited examples of using systemic and cognitive behavioral perspectives as well as remaining mindful of what she “learned from the lessons of being supervised” including the “needs that went unfulfilled.” Morgan employs a methodical approach to developing an “individualized supervisee plan that includes strengths, growth edges, goals, and self-care” areas upon which supervisory interventions are designed.
Morgan did not point to or provide reasons for becoming a supervisor. However, her preparation for the role was planful as she elected to take a course on supervision at a local university “in preparation for a supervisory position.” Morgan explained that her expectations of supervision “have evolved” and that she has become “more focused on the process of supervision and how supervisees relate” to her. Her desire to provide quality supervision is evident as she confirmed that supervision is “a permanent aspect” of her professional career.

Early experiences where her expectations were met were described as “I valued supervisors who challenged me in a nonthreatening manner and were encouraging and pointed out my strengths and assets.” She related that she was “held to a high standard” and stated an appreciation of being challenged by supervisors “who asked me to back up what I would say with research or articles.” She further identified how that was helpful as a supervisee “in how I was integrating my book knowledge into practice.”

The experiences that shaped Morgan’s skill and knowledge were identified as counselor preparation and early career experiences such as being encouraged to join ACA and her state counseling organizations and receiving the journals, which she identifies as having helped her “remain informed of new movements and thought in the field” and “good resources for continuing education.” However she stated, “I believe my best education was when I got into the field,” explaining that “until I got to participate in and applying the knowledge,” concepts did not come alive. Two relevant experiences in supervision that shaped her development were (a) how she was supervised such as being “challenged in a nonthreatening manner” and (b) supervisors who “were encouraging and positive in pointing out my assets.”
What guided Morgan’s supervision initially was how she was supervised, as she stated, “I based a lot of my development as a supervisor on what worked well for me as a supervisee and what did not work well for me.” Therefore, her early training and supervision experiences such as (a) being challenged, (b) being required to use literature to support therapeutic aims, (c) affiliation with professional organizations, and (d) the modeling of supervisors shaped her approach to supervision. Finally, Morgan cited the supervision course she took prior to pursuing a supervisory position. She said “that [it] was a great experience as it provided a solid foundation” for her and noted an important aspect of academic training in supervision was “the experience of supervising other students and being supervised live by the faculty instructor.”

Morgan’s developmental shifts are observed by her understanding of supervision that progressively broadened her perspective of her professional identity. She related turning points that were centered on her preparatory, early career experiences, and also in resources such as “literature, textbooks on supervision theory, and articles related to supervision theory.” Her understanding of supervision and process in supervision reveals that Morgan has a unique emphasis on personality and relational components that transpire within the supervisory relationship. For example, a description Morgan provided of a counselor prep experience illustrated the relational components and outcomes of a rigid supervisor. She stated that “if a supervisor is dictatorial or overly directive, it leaves no opportunity to interact in the supervisory relationship, therefore, growth and development of the supervisee is limited.” In a “very powerful” example of an intervention from literature that contributed to her as a counselor and supervisor, Morgan cited an article that “broached differences and discusses giving the supervisor
permission to raise similarities and differences with the supervisee thus encouraging the supervisee to broach those with clients” as an important initiation of the dialogue about diversity.

Morgan identified her experience of settling into the role of supervisor and explained:

When I stopped trying to be the perfect supervisor and follow everything to the letter of the law and just enjoy the process, that was a huge shift for me; and as I moved away from the rigidity of the theory, I believed I had enough confidence and knowledge to stand on my own as a beginning supervisor. (personal communication, September 30, 2010)

Morgan acknowledged the transformation in becoming a supervisor as an “identity crisis” and analogous to what one experiences as a beginning counselor and what one needs to usurp in order to function fully in the role of supervisor.

Development over time. At the second interview six months later, Morgan was still employed in the same counseling agency, supervising two counselor trainees with no clinical experience at two locations. Meaningful activities identified by Morgan revealed early supervisory experiences where she was required by her supervisor to “back up” planned clinical interventions “with research or articles.” She cited the impact of this was “helpful as a trainee in integrating my book-knowledge into my practice.” In another example, a supervisor Morgan named “the paperwork Nazi” helped her to “develop work habits of writing concise notes and have effective time management,” which she employs with the trainees she supervises. Conversely, dissatisfactory experiences occurred, yet they informed Morgan’s understanding of supervision and “what not to do.” She explained an insight she had as a result of unsatisfactory supervisory experiences; “my supervisor was rigid in her orientation and unable to conceptualize the case from only her
perspective and because of that disconnect, we were not speaking the same language” and as a result, Morgan felt she “did not get supervised.”

Consequently, those experiences helped her to establish priorities for her supervisory practices and develop competencies based in theory, research, and process of supervision, such as those offered by supervisors who “promoted use of research” or who “were able to help you through the process” of being supervised. Further impactful aspects of her early career promoted “knowledge and competency in supervision theories and skills” for Morgan, as she noted, “just because you are a good counselor does not mean you will be a good supervisor as the roles are different.” Finally, she noted the importance the role “relationship skills and a commitment to self-care” play in the health and vivacity of a supervisor.

Reflectivity was traced in Morgan’s development as a counselor supervisor, when she expressed instances that stemmed from her early counselor education and career experiences that instilled in her an appreciation of the use of research and literature as a basis for her counseling and supervision practices. Also, she described her procedures of how she evaluated her supervision by “rehashing things in my head, questioning whether I met the supervisee’s need” seeking to make sure she is “hitting those core ideas I find salient to supervision” such as “helping them move along that continuum and assisting them in reaching their own decisions.” Morgan cited using those contemplative activities or review of taped supervision sessions had an impact upon her perspective and understanding of supervision, adding other benefits are that “it also helps to point out areas that are challenges for you as a supervisor and as far as my actions, it forces me to take good supervision notes.” Finally, reflectivity is demonstrated by Morgan’s views of
the process components of supervision and how in her approach with supervisees she integrated activities or initiated dialogues that assisted in their gaining and increasing their insight of process components in counseling and supervision.

**Goals for the future.** The course of Morgan’s professional development was enhanced by early educational and career experiences that provided enriching activities that promoted her knowledge, skills, and growth. The skills and knowledge base informed and sustained Morgan’s early supervision career in that the modeling, instruction, challenges, and learning conditions arranged by supervisors contributed to her development. Therefore, the goals for supervision identified by Morgan were specific: (a) “to grow as a supervisor by remaining current of the issues in counseling,” (b) “to remain informed of new movements in the field,” (c) “to grow as a supervisor by remaining current of the issues and voices in counseling today,” and (d) “to seek an office in the local counseling organization.”

**Summary.** Morgan was an insightful participant who offered input that focused more on the process of supervision and process as it is experienced by supervisees. Her growth and self-understanding were rooted in her experiences of how she was supervised and trained. As a result, Morgan supervised similarly to how she counseled. Morgan also offered insight into the developmental advancement of one who was trained in supervision and the progression of how one initially depends upon theory until it is accommodated and is integrated into one’s approach. While what Morgan described as part of this process as feeling “rigid” or “theory bound,” it is more of a reflection of the desire to do what conscientiously an ethical professional would elect to do. Specifically, her comments can be interpreted as more akin to the frustrations and challenges that
accompany the mastery of a new skill versus viewing it as a dismissal of the role of theory in becoming a supervisor. Furthermore, her comments related to her experience of becoming a supervisor and are reflective of the course or evolution into a perfected supervising professional.

Because Morgan was a strong supervisor at the onset of the interviews, her growth and developmental change was less obvious than other participants. However, her contribution to this study was palpable because she articulated the importance and the benefits in supervision such as review of tapes and live supervision feedback as foundations for new and early career supervision practitioners. Finally, in her conclusion, she emphasized the significance that a supervisor can play in a supervisee’s growth. She concluded that, “the mark of a good supervisor is when you take them with you, the supervisors from prior supervisory experiences who sit on your shoulder and you can hear them.”

Overview of Core Themes

Two core themes became discernible that were central to understanding the phenomenological nature and process of a supervisor’s development. The themes and subthemes, where appropriate, are representative of participants’ (a) journeys, (b) views of what was impactful, and (c) which events supported their growth as a supervisor. The first core theme of evolution responded to the first research sub-question directed at the experience of becoming a supervisor. The second core theme of transformation answered the second research sub-question centered on how supervisors integrated this new knowledge into their identity as a counselor. Core themes, subthemes, and components
of subthemes addressed the research question of the qualitative phenomenological experience of master’s supervisors who were trained in the field. Understanding the thematic content assisted in defining and clarifying supervisors’ experiences and this knowledge became a catalyst in the exploration of participants’ experiences of becoming a supervisor and member of the larger profession as a whole.

**Overview of Core Evolution Themes**

Under the core theme evolution, the subthemes that emerged from the data were vicarious learning and previous experience. Components of the subtheme vicarious learning were also defined as (a) the role of the supervisor, (b) the role of colleagues, and (c) the role of training and literature (see Table 2).

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Core Themes and Subthemes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th><strong>Core Theme Evolution</strong></th>
<th>Subtheme</th>
<th><strong>Core Theme Transformation</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Vicarious Learning</td>
<td>Previous Experience</td>
<td>Professional Self-Efficacy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Supervisor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Colleagues</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role of Training &amp; Literature</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Evolution Subtheme One: Vicarious Learning

Vicarious learning is representative of the experiences that participants identified as most influential in their development as a supervisor. Vicarious learning is symbolic of those experiences upon which supervisors learned through and relied upon to function as a supervisor. Much credence was given to experiences where their insight and understanding of supervision were products of observation or guidance provided by supervisors, colleagues, as well as certain aspects of their training and those involving the use of literature.

In considering vicarious learning, it was essential to anticipate the effects of modeling, which inform a trainee or eventual supervisor. The transfer of knowledge is made possible through intentional and non-intentional modes of various forms of communication. As a result, the potency of modeling can be a substantial formative influence and exert determinative consequences, both positive and negative. As participants brought their experiences to life through their descriptions, modeling was the basis of vicarious learning and was easily identified in their experiences with supervisors and colleagues.

Evolution Subtheme Two: Previous Experience

The second evolution subtheme is previous experience. It represents the fund of knowledge and understanding that is gained through experience that can be generalized to other experiences in a productive manner. Previous experiences are those that help to decipher new encounters and assist in the processes that help one adapt to new or challenging situations. Specifically, previous experiences may provide social, emotional,
cultural, or professional information that support one’s functioning. It can be relied upon to moderate fear, anxiety, or worry and establish some sense of normalcy. Therefore, previous experience has an informative and adaptive purpose, as it can provide data based upon one’s experience that is pertinent in a new situation.

**Components of Vicarious Learning Subtheme**

The theme of vicarious learning reflected a proliferation of participant responses that identified the role of supervisors, colleagues, training, and literature as central to their development. Throughout participants’ accounts, modeling by supervisors or colleagues was credited as what guided participants in their understanding of the knowledge base, skills, behaviors, and attitudes of a supervisor. In order to gain a clearer understanding of the components, the vicarious learning themewas examined.

The first component of vicarious learning is the role of the supervisor. It was embedded in participants’ descriptions of their experiences as most influential and a sustaining force in their development as a counselor and eventual supervisor. The supervisors’ role was identified throughout participants’ descriptions of developmental experiences, which were led by the supervisor’s influential and growth-promoting actions, activities, and circumstances. Therefore, it became evident that participants’ counseling training was the bedrock upon which their approach to supervision rested.

This is highlighted by Sam’s reference to her experience with her supervisor:

I thought she was the awesomest counselor and supervisor ever. I learned so much more from working with her in internship than what I learned at the university. . . My training in supervision is really rooted in how I was trained to become a counselor and trying to emulate my supervisors. (personal communication, April 29, 2010)
Avery also described the process of her development in her work with her supervisor and what informed her approach to supervision. She stated that, “It was the developmental process of becoming a clinician and knowledge of theories of counselor development and training was important.” She further revealed a later supervisory experience as influential in her becoming a supervisor when she said, “My supervisor told me this is the way it goes and gave me the resources.”

Rowan echoed the role of her supervisor in promoting her understanding of supervision through modeling and educational activities. She stated:

Because of what I didn’t get earlier, I had a good idea of what I needed; I wanted to be challenged, given information or to do something. I really learned supervision with my last supervisor who respected me, challenged me, and provided feedback. (personal communication, July 27, 2010)

However, not all participants reported positive experiences in being supervised and none highlighted the devastating outcome of insufficient or absent supervision. According to Elliot, “The supervision was non-existent and I was on autopilot. I was reported to the state board and remediated.” Likewise, where Avery cited that her needs were not met, the ability to appreciate both experiences is important. She said that, “It is the absence or presence of things in situations where either needs have gone unmet or needs have been met—those form one’s ideas about effective supervision approaches.”

The second component of vicarious learning is the role of colleagues. This aspect of vicarious learning was identified by participants as influential and consisted of experiences with colleagues that promoted their growth and development. The general circumstance of the role and influence of colleagues occurred in conjunction with supervisory experiences. However, it is important to acknowledge that some participants
recognized colleagues as the only option for supervision. Finally, a consideration central
to the role of colleagues in one’s development as a supervisor is the developmental
scheme of eventual reliance upon support from colleagues. Therefore, the role of
colleagues, through their mentorship, support, and guidance are important to the growth
and vitality of a supervisor.

Avery’s comments highlight the role of colleagues in her descriptions about her
growth as a supervisor. She stated that, “The practical knowledge I gained was also from
colleagues and mentors.” Dallas identified how co-workers added value to her
experiences as a young professional and subsequently impacted her development as a
supervisor. She said, “I learned so much from staff psychologists, psychiatrists,
department heads, consultants, and colleagues about clinical issues; I saw how they
supervised in staffings, team meetings, or trainings.” According to Rowan, the beneficial
aspects of other colleagues as resources are growth promoting as they support and guide.
This was seen in Rowan’s sentiments:

I had an internship and early career supervisors that were not helpful. I found
knowing what was not good supervision helped me know what I needed and I
would seek people out people who provided that for me and don’t know what I
would have done without them. (personal communication, May 9, 2011)

Therefore, the insight and guidance of colleagues may enhance the supervision an
individual is getting by providing a perspective. Also, the ancillary support and
understanding by colleagues can function as protective factors in reducing isolation or
burnout, particularly in settings such as private practices.

The third component of vicarious learning is the role of training and literature in
the development of supervisors. Participants’ narratives cited the powerful and
constructive influence that academic and continuing educational experiences provided for them. Furthermore, how literature was integrated into counselor prep and supervision was identified. An important and lasting aspect of learning a profession and growing in that profession is the footing that preparatory exposure and lifelong learning can provide. This was exemplified in Sam’s, Cameron’s, Rowan’s, and Morgan’s accounts of their experience with training and literature.

Sam cited that, “A thing my supervisor did was to encourage me to attend seminars in areas I had not had at the university.” Cameron illustrated the importance and timing of supervision preparation: “I had supervision instruction after I had been in the field for a couple years. I don’t know what I would have done with it prior to that.” Rowan and Morgan noted experiences through supervision experiences that were one of the more informative aspects of their preparation. Rowan illustrated the importance of research in practice and lifelong learning:

I had a couple of bad supervision experiences and was frustrated because I was not challenged, but my last supervisor taught me was how to put research into practice . . . which I continue to use and use with my supervisees today. (personal communication, May 9, 2011)

Morgan’s response highlighted components of supervision that she found valuable. She stated that, “having a supervision course provided a solid foundation for me in addition to having supervision that helped me approach supervision such as being challenged to use literature to support my therapeutic goals.” She also related that turning points in her development were enhanced by “literature, textbooks on supervision theory, and articles related to supervision.
Vicarious learning encompasses how the role of supervisors, colleagues, training, and literature form the grounds from which the acquisition of essential knowledge and skill are gained through the processes of modeling. Highlighted across participant narratives were the conditions of vicarious learning, which demonstrated the significant apprising effect on participants’ orientation to their professional work.

**Evolution Subtheme Two: Previous Experience**

Previous experience is informative and adaptive in its function. It can mitigate anxiety caused by a lack of information, thus supports an individual’s functioning in new or unfamiliar situations. Throughout participant narratives, previous experience was shown to provide the necessary information and sustain functioning and adjustment. Comments by Lee illustrated the importance she placed on prior management and supervisory experiences that informed her supervision and assisted in preparing her for her new role as a supervisor. She stated that “the supervision I received and the opportunity to supervise others prior to my involvement in clinical supervision informed my supervision.”

Cameron was the participant that identified prior experience as central to the conceptual understanding of supervision. This illustrated how previous experiences of gaining knowledge and skills in supervision provided a position from which other skills can be built:

I learned how to supervise by the way I was managed . . . my supervision class was great but I think what was most helpful was getting into the field after the class and learning from the experience of being supervised, then doing it by modeling their styles and their methods of supervision. (personal communication, July 22, 2010)
Previous experience was illustrated as a formative and adaptive influence, as participants described the role of previous experience in the process of aligning their knowledge, skill, and ability with challenging situations. The participants universally identified in their narratives the positive influence of previous experience upon their orientation to uncommon situational experiences.

**Overview of Core Transformation Themes**

Two transformation subthemes surfaced from the participants’ narratives. They were professional self-efficacy and change. Professional self-efficacy is reflective of the quality of participants’ views and behaviors or conceptual orientations that function outside of supervision frameworks or theory. Professional self-efficacy was envisioned as a participant’s tendency toward rogue human agency or self-defined orientations to their supervision. Participant responses in the professional self-efficacy category did not strictly ascribe to the established practices and were those participants who loosely based their practices upon theory or defined supervision in their own terms. While the prominence of this theme was more identifiable in the early phases of the study and in the first interview portion, it was significant. Also, professional self-efficacy was connected to the theme of change, based upon the development of participants over time as their growth was facilitated by experience.

The second theme to emerge from participants’ interviews was that of change. Change was visible throughout participants’ descriptions and was a universally identified experience of participants. The sources of change were as unique as the individual.
Further, they changed from minor change to change that was fundamental to the individual and the result of post-traumatic growth.

**Transformation Subtheme One: Professional Self-Efficacy**

Professional-self efficacy describes how participants found their way in meeting the expectations of the profession of supervision. This involved their identity and the philosophical, theoretical, or functional ideas they held. Reflected in participant responses are uncharacteristic views, attitudes, and functional approaches to supervision as well as accounts of their challenge in meeting their professional responsibilities. Thus, the components of professional self-efficacy are the range of qualities and conditions that participants used to reconcile their own views with expectations that collided with daily routines, self-image, or personal philosophies.

Sam provided her views of supervision preparation, models, and the role of a supervisor:

I learned to supervise from my internship and my early career supervisors by observing them . . . supervision trainings are too technical and don’t teach you how to be a supervisor. The role of a supervisor is to teach the supervisee to be a good clinician. Models of supervision and theories of supervision are interesting and good to learn about. I think you take them with you to a certain degree once you are in the field for years because you have to so you can be a supervisor, but once you are in the field, it becomes about everyday logistics. (personal communication, April 29, 2010)

This attitude carried over and supported Sam’s views of professional membership affiliation:

The reality is that my first couple of years I belonged to ACA. I got my NCE and all of those things that you are encouraged to do at the university level and then got into the community and realized none of that does anything for me. . . this is something you don’t see in community mental health. (personal communication, March 12, 2011)
Avery described her experiences of attending supervision seminar and her use of supervision literature when she cited that “At the seminars, I feel like I heard the same things over and over again . . . I found supervision texts too technical. The practical knowledge I have gained about supervision has been from colleagues and mentors.”

Professional self-efficacy was identified through participant experiences. Morgan struggled over her use of theory in supervision. “Initially I was more concerned with am I following the book and doing it right—getting all the business/technical things done versus where are they in the process.” Yet, she managed the restrictiveness of theory and explained that “it was a huge shift for me when I moved away from the theory . . . I had enough confidence and knowledge to stand on my own.”

Finding their way through the challenges of becoming a supervisor, participant narratives identified professional self-efficacy as a means to support their course of development. For some participants, becoming a supervisor was overwhelming; for others it was minimally difficult. Participants used professional self-efficacy to resolve differences in perspective, to preserve autonomy, and to navigate the process of growth.

**Transformation Subtheme Two: Change**

The theme of change is reflected in participant responses that described the transformative effects of becoming a supervisor. Their responses alluded to the processes of development and conversion inherent in change. Participants identified the core aspects and their experiences with change.

Elliot described the nature of change as life altering. His experience in post-traumatic growth led to conceptual, professional, ethical, and personal growth. He stated
that it “was a learning experience and really served to set my track or path to self-improvement and ethical, legal, and professional behavior. I was arrogant. Reputation is everything.” Morgan described her experience of becoming a supervisor and her experience of change as follows:

It was like an identity crisis, like what one experiences as a beginning counselor. My growth and development have been through experience; when you struggle as a supervisor, it forces you to change how you are approaching the situation and forces you to think about your effectiveness. (personal communication, December 11, 2010)

Change was emphasized in the participant examples and showed the degree of change that is possible when gaining knowledge and skill for a profession. Their examples (a) highlighted the potential psychological, emotional, and philosophical impacts of change and (b) identified different degrees of change in their journey to becoming supervisors.

**Summary**

The participants responded to the research question that asked about their experiences of becoming a supervisor. In order to understand that experience, sub-questions examined how knowledge and skills were gathered and how supervisors integrated the role of supervisor into their professional identity.

A phenomenological study outlined the essence of the experiences provided by the study participants. Identification of the core themes from participant narratives provided the essence of the study and allowed for the identification of commonly held and distinctive descriptions of experiences. Moustakas’ (1994) method for phenomenological research allowed for the process of inquiry, inductive analysis, and the
illumination of the essence of master’s level supervisors’ experience of becoming a supervisor.

**Researcher’s Journal**

The researcher’s journal was an essential component of this qualitative study. In the course of this research study, the journal documented the researcher’s objective account of the research process, in addition to the tentative personal reflections of the research process. The journal traced the development and progression of the study and provided insight into the experiences and views of participants. Furthermore, the journal was one of the principal forms of data upon which the phenomenological inductive analytical process rested and through which the fidelity of the study was safeguarded. Through the maintenance of the journal, the researcher’s objectivity was nurtured, thus promoting adherence to the phenomenological research methods.

This researcher’s experience was found throughout the journal. The journal was a tangible resource because it contained a bastion of the researcher’s thoughtful comments, personal reactions, objective accounts, and reflections. The element of journaling led the researcher to core insights and a quality of understanding of the meaning master’s level counselors experienced in becoming a supervisor and therefore, upon which interpretation and impressions were established.

**Chapter Summary**

This chapter examined the research process by providing an overview of the study participants and an overview of the core themes of transformation and evolution. In
addition, the philosophical underpinnings, using Moustakas’ (1994) standards for inductive analysis and role of the researcher’s journal was presented.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

“I’m quite sure that all true professional artists, of every description, in all walks of life, whether their craft is painting, music, sculpture or medicine, have one primary concern—mankind.” (Chico Hamilton)

This study explored the developmental experiences of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field. Particularly, this study sought to identify the events that were meaningful and influential in their professional development and highlight how they processed and integrated these experiences to promote their growth.

In this chapter, the findings are summarized and compared to existing themes in literature. After an analytic examination of the findings, valuable insights, impressions, and recommendations for further research are offered. A discussion of how the data were utilized for analysis provides an understanding of how the conclusions were arrived upon and how other relevant facts or evidence within the data were considered.

Analysis and Data Utilization

The research question, “What is the experience of master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field?” was assessed using a phenomenological approach described by Moustakas (1994). The eight participants were master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field. To generate information regarding their experiences, several research questions centered on the nature of their experience and how they integrated this new
knowledge into their professional identity. The questions, “How do supervisors gather or assimilate knowledge and skills needed to be a supervisor?” and “How do supervisors integrate the role of supervisor into their professional identity?” provided a framework to guide our understanding of the participants’ phenomenological experience. Their responses to these questions generated descriptions that pointed to what they identified as meaningful in their training that informed their supervision practice.

Discussion of Core Themes

In accordance with Moustakas’ phenomenological approach, the themes of evolution and transformation captured the “what” of their experience (i.e., what characterized it). The details in their descriptions explained the structural components of their experience and answered the “how” or by what means they experienced the process.

Core Theme One: Evolution

A major theme in this study was evolution. Two subthemes of evolution were 1) vicarious learning and 2) previous experience. The subthemes were derived from (a) participants’ accounts of how they came to understand the role of supervisor, (b) how their colleagues influenced them, (c) their major training experiences, and (d) the literature that informed them. The core theme of evolution identified in this study was consistent with Nelson et al.’s (2006) study of doctoral students training in supervision. Their core themes of learning (i.e., observational, academic, experiential, receiving feedback) were key in the development of the doctoral student supervisors in their study. This study revealed that the same types of learning are also important for master’s level supervisors trained in the field. The participants in this study emphasized the modeling,
guidance, instruction, and influence that their supervisors had upon their views, behaviors, and the development of their values about counseling and counselor supervision.

Nelson et al. (2006) identified additional subthemes in their study. Under their theme labeled connections, there were two subthemes related to the mentoring provided by the supervisor and the supervisory relationship that were identified as critical in the trainees development. Although the descriptive terms differ between the two studies, similarities existed among the identified themes and subthemes. For example, the theme of previous experience was significant in both studies. A subject in Nelson et al.’s study highlighted how the experience of role play reinforced her sense of self as a supervisor and how it is now useful in their current supervision (Nelson et al., 2006).

Similarly, several participants in this study frequently cited that what was modeled by their supervisor was what they emulated in their own supervision. These two examples show how many developmental experiences are relegated to a previous experience status, as growth allows those experiences to become part of our personal knowledge base once the supervisor status is attained.

Furthermore, the Crook-Lyon et al. (2011) study also focused on psychology doctoral students and revealed the importance of the supervisor’s role and vicarious learning in their development. The doctoral students identified that the modeling provided by their internship supervisor played a critical role in shaping their development as supervisors by modeling for them how to behave and providing insight and understanding of the supervision process.
Another critical aspect in their development identified by participants in this study was vicarious learning which was included in the theme previous experience. The concept of vicarious learning is elusive because it can be interpreted and defined in innumerable ways. However, both in this and the Nelson et al. study, the participants’ accounts revealed the role of training in their development as supervisors.

The Nelson et al. (2006) study detailed the role of that experience through the themes of learning and putting it together. However, a noteworthy difference between this study and the Nelson et al. study is that under academic training, the doctoral students emphasized didactic, experiential, and observational experiences of being provided feedback from peers and supervisors. The doctoral students described gaining scholarship through the experience of processing supervision and through identifying supervisory roles at precise stages with faculty and peers, which increased their awareness and skill development. Nelson et al.’s themes of learning and putting it together provided descriptions of how the doctoral students organized and integrated what they learned into their supervision practice. In this study, the processes of structure and assimilation are described under the label of vicarious learning, which illuminated not only the dissimilarity of the role of feedback in skill development at the doctoral and master’s level, but in also the differences in preparatory practices.

**Core Theme Two: Transformation**

The second major theme identified in this study was transformation. It is concerned with how the developing supervisor integrates the role of supervisor into her/his professional identity. Two subthemes, professional self-efficacy and change were
revealed in the process of transformation. According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy is a sense of self that one is capable to complete an action, yet it does not guarantee competence. Bandura’s studies (1977, 1997) revealed that high self-efficacy correlates with high proficiency in completing the tasks. The findings of this study supported Bandura’s findings.

Similar to Bandura’s earlier research, the participants in this study stated their identity and confidence was enhanced as they negotiated and accomplished the multiple tasks required of a supervisor. While all the participants spoke of how their self-efficacy as a supervisor had grown, there was a range in their degree of self-efficacy. In particular, some study participants provided obvious and striking examples revealing difficulties reckoning their view of supervision with traditional expectations in the field. For example, some participants revealed how they struggled to resolve the expectations placed on them because of their expanding professional identity as a supervisor such as being expected to affiliate with professional organizations when they did not find it helpful to them to join, and so often they did not participate in them. Thus, they resolved this dilemma by maintaining their independence.

The subtheme of change was experienced by participants in unique ways and from different sources and to varied extents. Furthermore, change could be identified in participants as psychological, philosophical, and emotional and it involved the processes of integration, adjustment, and identity development. Change for participants was closely linked with meaning, as the interplay of contextual and developmental elements for each individual resulted in a variation of the experience of becoming a supervisor.
The participants in the Nelson et al. (2006) study similarly described the process of change through their descriptions of how their viewpoints shifted from an individual to a more global perspective or their understanding of and their practice of supervision. This was detailed under their three subthemes of (a) specific aspects of self, (b) awareness about the process, and (c) clarification. Their descriptions embellished the process of change they experienced in those three areas and the implications these changes had on their self-awareness, identity, and self-understanding. Becoming a supervisor by nature is the experience of being marked by change.

In summary, the core themes that emerged from this study are supported in many forms in others’ research. This study’s research question and sub-questions provided the framework to uncover the thematic meaning and have led to an understanding of the meaningful and influential development experiences of becoming a supervisor.

What Was Missing From Participant Narratives

In contrast, an examination of what was not reflected in the participants’ narratives is significant. It adds to our understanding because what was not represented provided a window into comprehending how different training experiences (i.e., academia versus the field) shaped the unique perspectives of the professional supervisors in this study and perhaps the gaps in their practice as supervisors. The areas which were not represented in this study and which are central components of the supervision process are (a) awareness of and the use of literature, (b) the use of models of supervision, (c) growth from feedback, (d) development of advanced supervision skills, and (e) awareness of multicultural issues in supervision.
First, participants did not discuss supervision literature in depth or at length. Their ability to cite literature was limited to references to their supervisors’ use of literature; the participants’ awareness of the current research literature was not evident. As a result, with a few exceptions, research literature was not sought out or relied upon by study participants. Furthermore, those participants who did reference research described interactions in which their supervisees brought research literature into the supervisory setting.

A second area missing from the narratives was the failure of participants to state a model of supervision that guided their practice. When asked, participants would make references to a model they had read but were unable to provide specifics about the model and provided descriptions that were loosely stated and superficial. For example, while a participant could describe the supervisor actions from a particular model (i.e., teacher, supervisor, consultant), they were unable to provide specifics of how to apply the model. Nor could they describe the process of supervisee development. Rather than be informed by reading the professional literature and research on supervision, the participants preferred to imitate their supervisors.

A third area not discussed by the participants was their use of feedback. Their narratives lacked overt descriptions of feedback they had provided to their supervisees or had received from supervisors. When feedback was described by participants, it was provided by colleagues who had not witnessed their supervision, thus raising concerns about the relevance of any feedback provided to them from their peers.

The fourth area that lacked participant descriptions was their use of advanced skills. They were not aware of supervision processes such as (a) how to work through
impasses in supervision or (b) how to utilize parallel process, transference, and counter-transference. The failure to understand these processes or how to work through them may limit their ability to provide expert or in-depth supervision when needed by a supervisee.

Finally, with the exception of one participant, little focus was given to responding to multicultural issues in supervision. Again, lack of awareness of how ethnicity, race, or gender impacts the supervision process can be detrimental to the supervision being provided to a supervisee.

**Implications for Counselor Education and Supervision**

Ladany and Muse-Burkes’ (2001) rationale for conducting supervision research was to increase our understanding of the process of supervision and how supervision was being provided within the profession. According to Nelson et al. (2006), understanding the meaningful experiences, the prevailing themes, and the process of doctoral students becoming supervisors is important to the field of supervision and addresses a gap in supervision research. As previously stated in this study, counselor supervision preparation was traditionally reserved for the academic doctoral level, yet the majority of counselor supervisors received and continue to receive their supervision training in the field through seminars or workshops. This study extended our knowledge base by providing insight into how master’s level supervisors are trained in the field and how they function as supervisors. In considering the dominant themes and conclusions of this study, three areas of potential benefit were identified: (a) counselor education and supervision, (b) supervision training, and (c) counselor supervisors.
Counselor Education

The centrality of counselor education in the growth and development of participants as counselors and supervisors was a prevailing topic of discourse throughout this study. Participants identified numerous growth promoting aspects of their counselor education and supervision which contributed to their functioning as a supervisor. This included the role that faculty played in their experience, in addition to the training they later incurred attending workshops and the guidance they secured on site from their peers.

While participants valued the meaningful contribution that their academics had provided, their responses exhibited an absence of knowledge of advanced level skills and an understanding of the role of literature. Highlighting their significance, Nelson et al. (2006) cited clinical skills as a functional aspect of the supervision experience, as they are a point of reference for counselor supervisees. Processes such as (a) impasse, (b) parallel process, (c) transference, or (d) counter-transference were rarely reflected in participant narratives. This could be a result of never having experienced impasse with their supervisor or supervisees and so, never having to use those skills. Thus, exposure to advanced skills at this juncture of their clinical preparation could provide a framework upon which later training in their early career years and as a new supervisor could be built upon.

A second area revealed in this study was the participants’ lack of reliance upon literature. In general, participants did not demonstrate an appreciation of literature, given its capability to train and inform or to structure and guide. Participants were unable to cite literature, leading one to question the degree of their awareness of the literature that
exists. It further led to question how well they understand counselor development and how to promote it.

Bernard and Goodyear (2004) cited that adding to one’s knowledge base through the use of literature was imperative to the livelihood of one’s clinical or supervision practice. Due to what was reflected in this study in relationship to literature, considerations about how to infuse literature in education and education that goes beyond the counselor educator’s immediate purposes (i.e., academic) are needed to promote in students the ability to better abstract the roles and objectives of research within the field.

For example, a more thorough understanding of the goals of research as a professional responsibility could promote research (a) as a source of remaining current, (b) as a source of professional development, and (c) as a source of life-long learning. This would accomplish two important goals. First, it would impart a more global comprehension of the role of literature as it relates to the profession, and answer “why” and “how” questions which may not be emphasized. Second, it could create or stimulate a circumstance for creative thought through students’ increased participation in research within the field of clinical mental health counseling and supervision outside of academia.

Finally, it is important to note that many study participants identified their inability to access research literature once they graduated from their counselor education programs. The main reasons were primarily financial. However, enough participants cited this as a barrier because if they did belong to counseling organizations, the fees did not ensure their access to search engines or other online databases. This circumstance appeals to a larger level, as solutions to this reside with local, state, and national professional organizations.
The influence of prior supervisors is forceful. Yet, this study revealed some participants had learned by default. As noted earlier, counselor training and the position of being a supervisee is formative and despite some of the challenging stories that participants provided, they demonstrated a prevailing ability to learn by default. Some of the more testing experiences reflected in their descriptions provided examples that included absent, ineffective, and unethical supervision. An analysis of participants’ descriptions revealed possible areas of need relative to (a) regulatory issues, (b) awareness and use of models, (c) supervisory expertise, and (d) the quality of supervision training that is available at workshops, seminars, conferences, or workplace education.

It is important to reiterate the role that supervisors and colleagues have in the growth of the supervisee. Hence, the supervisor or colleague’s knowledge and skill base related to clinical issues and supervision can be central to the growth and development of a supervisee. The impact of others’ knowledge or lack thereof is supported by Nelson et al. (2006) who cited how the first phase developmental models of supervision by Hess (1986) and Stoltenberg and McNeill (1997) described the tendencies of supervisees to rely upon external structures for support, such as their supervisor, peers, models, or other forms of knowledge. Thus, the weight of these relationships has a key impact on the growth, development, and professional identity of the supervisee because of their reliance upon other’s knowledge (Nelson et al., 2006) in a decided manner.

**Supervision Training**

The major findings of this study related to supervision preparatory practices were that supervisors in the field are committed to providing excellent supervision and practice
in accordance with their training. They demonstrated some awareness of the literature and understood their role as supervisors. Many examples were provided in their narratives that when faced with adverse conditions of neglectful or absent supervision, participants endeavored to secure the needed resources. There were obvious attempts by this study’s supervisors to provide their supervisees an improved version of any supervision they may have experienced, much of which was gained through peers, colleagues, and most importantly, their own supervisors.

However, the findings of this study also point to limitations in their preparation and development. Specifically, their use of models and the ability to cite supervision models and needs related to supervision is remarkable. As noted, participant responses reflected a lack in the use of or ability to cite supervision models. Conversely, a supervisee who experienced a supervisor’s emphasis on supervision theory would consequently be able to cite it and discuss it. Therefore, a possible indicator of why supervision theory is not identified may be due to the tendency of participants not to seek supervision literature beyond the continuing education requirements per the renewal cycle.

Another implication for counselor education and supervision was related to a need for formalized preparation in supervision. Thus, counselor education programs may need to consider expanding upon the current CACREP recommendations (which are vague and unstructured requirements) and move to require formal, stand-alone courses in supervision theory during master’s counselor programs. However, a problem may be that students who receive this training while they are in practicum may not be
developmentally ready to incorporate this knowledge while their ultimate concern is to learn to become a counselor.

A second major area identified by participants concerned supervision training. Participants reported that their supervision education at seminars was predominantly limited to topics on ethics and risk management and accessed primarily through workshops and seminars. Furthermore, participants’ descriptions did not describe opportunities to gain knowledge and skill in areas such as supervisor development or supervisee development. Instead, opportunities were described as repetitive and found to be neither helpful nor memorable. Also, participants’ efforts in learning about supervision through use of textbooks were described as being met with frustration and found to be too complicated. From a developmental standpoint, when individuals are overwhelmed by a subject, this may be indicative of gaps in knowledge and earlier preparatory phases. Therefore, considerations for supervision instruction should focus on examining whether seminars, conferences, or continuing education is supportive, salient, and able to developmentally assist supervisors.

Because the area of multiculturalism was so neglected, it is important to remember that multicultural competency was identified as central to an ethical counseling practice and is essential in helping trainees develop multicultural competence (Ancis & Ladany, 2010). The need for multiculturalism in supervision is evident, as research found that trainees’ perceptions of their supervisors’ cultural competence are linked with how trainees integrate supervisory direction, feedback, and multiculturalism in their work with clients (Pope-Davis, Liu, Toporek, & Brittan-Powell, 2001).
A pressing need exists for supervision preparatory practices to be evaluated at both the academic level and within the field. In 2009, CACREP made modest alterations of their mandates for supervision training; the field of counselor education and supervision could benefit from accelerated mandates at the master’s level for formalized preparatory practices in supervision.

**Counselor Supervisors**

Another major area identified by participants illustrated the negative characteristics of counselor supervision. This led to considerations for counselor supervisors and implications for the field of counselor education and supervision as the field moves toward a structured certification and endorsement mandates. Because less than helpful supervision proliferated in participants’ descriptions, examination needs to be focused toward those who have been granted supervisor status.

Many participants (a) speculated that individuals pursued supervisory roles for prestige, financial gain, or promotion and (b) questioned why the individual chose to become a supervisor. In addition to their accurate and sometimes cynical descriptions, participants provided evidence of supervision practices that are largely unchallenged by any authority. As a result, other than a study of this nature, there is no oversight of what supervision is being given and no exposure of such ineffective supervision practices.

Secondly, while efforts by some states to enact endorsements or certifications in supervision exist, for supervisors from states where they are not instituting certifications, access to supervision seminars or workshops was described as limited. This situation revealed the positive impact on availability of supervision training in states that have
pursued supervision endorsements. However, it also raised questions about the ability of
the field of counselor education and supervision to meet the demand for basic and
advanced supervision instruction due to the lack of endorsed or certified counselor
supervisors. Furthermore, this raises the question of whether those providing supervision
training are endorsed or certified counselor supervisors and thus infers areas of attention
that the field of counselor education and supervision should deliberate.

A final consideration is focused on advanced skills and how participant
descriptions of advanced skills were not represented. For example, narratives did not
represent accounts of cognitive dissonance related to the growth of a supervisee or of
clinical process dynamics such as transference, counter-transference, parallel process, or
impasse. While it is important to note that master’s level students in practicum and
internship or those early in their career may not be at the developmental level to practice
advanced skills, a case can be made that early exposure to such concepts could be helpful
in their growth of a knowledge base. Furthermore, this is particularly true when
considering that clinical processes such as transference, counter-transference, parallel
process, and impasse are equally vulnerable to the supervision setting. Integrating
knowledge of these areas could prove helpful in neutralizing any negative impacts of
these unconscious processes for a new or early career professional who encounters them.

Limitations

While the results of the study offer significant insight and considerations, the
study has a number of limitations.
Sample size. The study was limited to a small sample of 10 participants, with eight completing the second interview. Therefore, attrition and sample size impose limitations, despite the support of small sample size by key qualitative researchers (Creswell, 1998; Denzin & Lincoln, 1998; Moustakas, 1994) who have sanctioned this size as adequate for a qualitative, phenomenological study. Furthermore, Patton (2002) asserts that a small sample can facilitate the researcher’s reach and contribute to creating a more purposeful sample. It is acknowledged the sample size is too small to be representative of the counseling profession as a whole; however, to produce the same would require extensive funding and manpower.

Finally, participants were in the nascent phases of their professional development as a counseling supervisor; some came into supervision under new mandates for supervision training and some had not. This could have influenced their understandings and perceptions of questions or the directives of this study.

Future researchers might consider in design the generation of an ample study that can withstand attrition; researchers may improve the generalizability of results or seek financial support in order to achieve those goals; and researchers may consider specific eligibility requirements based upon specific types of counselor supervisor endorsement or preparation which may strenghten the sample.

Methodology. Qualitative studies are more difficult to accomplish in a competent scientific manner than a quantitative study and despite that, the experience of the study and the results met the researcher’s expectations. However, qualitative studies are less accepted than quantitative research and viewed as less scientific.
Another aspect of the research process that may have unduly influenced the study was the length of time between first and second interviews. The intention of the research design was for a two-week interval between the first and second interviews. This departure from the original plan to conduct interviews within weeks, as opposed to completing interviews a year later could be identified as an unforeseen advantage as, developmentally, study participants were able to contribute to the study based on increased experience and time in the field of supervision, which may have positively impacted the study.

A third consideration is that despite efforts to increase the potency of the second interview protocol and generate more evocative responses, the participants did not produce narratives that reflected what was expected nor did they relate to the questions from their knowledge and skill as a counselor (i.e., counseling theoretical concepts such as empathy or the counseling relationship). Another consequence to seeking to broaden the sample was reliance upon skype and/or interviews which may have improperly influenced the research process.

Finally, because of the size of the sample, data were coded manually which may have been a limitation and viewed as less valid. Most qualitative researchers espouse complete reliance upon computer software with some researchers recommending a combination of computer assisted and manual coding methods. However, it is difficult to use computer software for the fluid and imaginative manner in which themes emerge as well as the limitations (i.e., type of connections it makes) of computer software and that effect upon the relationships it creates.
Future researchers might consider allowing for needs that may surface based on the first interviews and second interview protocol needs; researchers may want to address needs that may allow the researcher to more specifically establish the time between interviews and secure a sample where interviews do not rely on any technological methods.

Implications for Future Research

The possibilities for future research emerging from this study are numerous. A leading topic would be to continue researching the experience of master’s level supervisors who are being trained in the field. Furthermore, supervision training efforts are intensifying and many states are moving to supervisory endorsements or certifications. As these changes become more predominant, there may be some recognition of the need for research in this area, as it will assist national accrediting and state regulatory boards. Finally, the possibility of a longitudinal study could be impactful, as participants would have the potential to offer meaningful reassessments or advanced insights as part of a study of this nature. Also, given that literature has supplied studies which examined doctoral level counseling and psychology student supervisors, a long-term study could identify knowledge and resources that furthers supervision as a profession at all levels.

Another valuable area for further research would explore supervision preparatory processes and master’s level counselor supervisors’ perceptions of their training effectiveness and to establish needs. This could provide insight into gaps in knowledge, skills, and instruction along developmental lines, such as sequencing or pertinent topics
members in the field identify as essential. Also, it may expand the breadth of supervision research, as noted by Nelson et al. (2006) that exists beyond theoretical, legal/ethical, or administrative issues and focus on training processes and training needs.

Finally, it would be beneficial to conduct a study of endorsed or certified counselor supervisors. A study of this type would produce qualitatively different research data because of the nature of the study participants. It is likely that the prerequisite continuing education in supervision to obtain certification or endorsement would inform the field of counselor supervision in an unmistakable manner, thus furthering the field. In fact, a simplistic but profound study to assess the number of counselor supervisors seeking certification or endorsement in comparison to the number seeking endorsement prior to the mandated continuing education in supervision and endorsement could offer valuable insights.

**Researcher Transformation**

Because of the inherent characteristics of qualitative phenomenological research, it was impossible to avoid the effects of this experience. The connotation of transformation for this researcher has conclusive consequences because of the professional, academic, ethical, and leadership responsibilities associated with being a Counselor Educator. Therefore, areas of illumination were that I found that I was further engaged in the profession of Counselor Education and Supervision. By virtue of being immersed in supervision theory, counselor education training and developmental considerations, regulatory, national and programmatic developments, and counseling and supervision practice concerns, one is changed.
Along with the realization of being further engaged in my chosen field of study, I found the experience inspiring. The development of growing in knowledge stimulated the creative process and promoted ideas for my practice as a counselor educator, supervisor, and mental health clinician. The sources for these came from participants, for example, through realizations of gaps in their knowledge, skills, and preparation. I became aware of needs such as multicultural sensitivity and competence, advanced skills awareness that could be protective factors because of the vulnerability of the supervisory relationship and process to these areas. As an advocate, the potential for furthering an understanding in the field of counselor education and supervision exist, and research publication and advocacy efforts could impact the field. This is an exciting prospect – and an outcome of conducting research of this type.

The themes identified in the study clarified and destabilized some previously held ideas about counselor education, supervision, and training. Prior to this study I held the belief that in supervision, the supervisee was more the object of supervision, rather than the consumer of supervision. My intentions were to impact the field on this topic. I came to understand that my views were changed because of what surfaced from participants in the study and the concerning aspects that were revealed impacted. What was a priority shifted to concerns that were more fundamental in the education and developmental activities of counselors and supervisors because of disturbing accounts of less than helpful, nonexistent or susceptible aspects of the field of counselor education and supervision. I was disturbed by the lack of attention to multiculturalism in participant responses.
Needs exist within the field, but they are much more personal to me now. I hope that the effort offered here enriches the field and the profession.

Summary

The current research investigation of master’s level counselors who were trained in their field has considered their experience of becoming a supervisor. Participants shared their meaningful and influential experiences, while also sharing their challenges, frustrations, and disappointments of their education, practicum, and internship supervision experiences. They described their evolution as a counselor supervisor and the transformative effects that a journey of this nature can provide. Crucial information was obtained that led to the synthesis and analysis of participant narratives and provided the backdrop from which recommendations for counselor education and supervision could be offered.
REFERENCES


APPENDICES
Dear Administrator:

This letter is to request your assistance in a research study for my doctoral dissertation from Department of Counseling, The University of Akron, Ohio. I am a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision program, working under the direction of Dr. Sandra Perosa, Dissertation Advisor, on this qualitative study. The title of my study is “A Phenomenological Exploration of the Development of Master’s Counseling Level Supervisors who were Trained in the Field” which examines the experience of becoming a supervisor.

I will be interviewing participants who have practiced supervision for approximately two years to gather their impressions of their training, development and opinions on the influential factors in their path to their role as a supervisor. Therefore, if you have any supervisors that you think meet the criteria or would be interested, I would appreciate you providing them with one of the enclosed fliers and also ask you to post a few of them in your agency.

Finally, I would be happy to meet with you to discuss any questions about the study or to clarify any aspect of the study. In advance, thank you for your support of my research project.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Gibson Semivan, M.S., M.Ed., PCC-S
APPENDIX B

FLYER TO RECRUIT PARTICIPANTS

THE EXPERIENCE OF TRAINING IN COUNSELING SUPERVISION
AT THE MASTER’S LEVEL

Suzanne Gibson Semivan, M.S., PCCS, A Doctoral Candidate, Department of Counseling, The University of Akron, is seeking participants who are new supervisors for a study* which examines the developmental experiences of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field.

Information will be gathered in two interviews to better understand the meaningful, consequential and developmental aspects of Master’s level supervision training.

Participants will receive a $25.00 gift card after the second interview in appreciation for their time and effort. Confidentiality and privacy measures will be taken.

To volunteer for or learn more about this study, please call:

Suzanne Gibson Semivan at 330-519-1211 to leave a confidential message.

*This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of The University of Akron.
APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT ELIGIBILITY QUESTIONNAIRE

This study requires the following criteria for eligibility to participate in this study:

1. Master’s degree in counseling

2. Counselor supervisory endorsement for a maximum of 2.0 years

3. Willingness to sign an Informed Consent (Appendix E) wherein participants agreed to be audio recorded

4. Agree to have interview reviewed by the researcher and researcher’s dissertation advisor and methodologist committee members

5. Answer the following to further establish eligibility:
   a. What is your highest degree?
   b. How long have you been providing supervision?
   c. Will you be able to discuss your impressions about your training, development, practice and overall experience of becoming a supervisor over a two to three week period involving two interviews?
   d. Are you willing to provide consent to be audio recorded?
   e. Will you also provide consent to have your audio recordings and research data reviewed by the dissertation advisor and methodologist (research advisor) along with myself, the researcher?
APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT TO ACT AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT

Title of Study: “A Phenomenological Exploration of the Development of Master’s Level Counseling Supervisors Who Were Trained in the Field”

Investigator: Suzanne Gibson Semivan, M.S., PCC-S
   Doctoral Student, Department of Counseling
   The University of Akron
   Akron, OH 44325
   330-972-7777

Advisor: Sandra Perosa, Ph.D.
   Department of Counseling
   The University of Akron
   Akron, OH 44325
   330-972-7777

Introduction: You are invited to participate in a research project conducted by Suzanne G. Semivan, a doctoral candidate in the Department of Counseling, The University of Akron, under the supervision of Dr. Sandra Perosa, Dissertation Advisor.

Purpose: The purpose of the study is to investigate the lived experience of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field. There will be 10-15 individuals participating in the study.

Procedures: The participants will be asked to participate in two interviews of approximately 1½ - 2 hours in length, with the second interview (held approximately 2 weeks from the first interview). The interviews will be held at the Community Counseling Clinic, Beeghly College of Education, on the campus of Youngstown State University. The purpose of the second interview is to review information from the first interview and gather further impressions. Both interviews will be audio recorded, with participant consent.

Risks and Benefits: The risks of participation are minimal. The interviews will be conducted in private, safe setting, chosen to enhance comfort, held at a mutually agreed time. If a participant experiences distress, they may discuss this with the researcher. Additionally, the interview can be stopped or discontinued at the discretion of the researcher. The benefits to you for participating in this study may be the self-discovery or self-awareness related to your supervision practice, yet, you may receive no benefit from participating in this study.
Cost and Payments: No cost will be incurred by participants. Each participant will receive a $25 gift card at the completion of the second interview.

Right to Refuse or End Participation: Participation in this research is voluntary and no participant is compelled to remain in the study. Therefore, individuals may withdrawal from the study at any time; refusal will involve no penalty or loss to the participant.

Confidentiality of Data/Records: All study research data, audio recordings, and transcripts will be securely stored in a locked file owned by the researcher and will be accessible to the dissertation advisor and methodologist after identifiable information is removed. The audio recordings will be destroyed after the approval and acceptance of the dissertation by the Graduate School of The University of Akron. Participants will not be identified in any publication or presentation of the research results. Signed consent forms will be stored in a separate location from your data, thereby further protecting the privacy of responses.

Voluntary consent for two interviews: Researcher, Suzanne Gibson Semivan, has explained the above information related to this research study and answered any questions. Suzanne G. Semivan may be contacted at 330-972-7779, Department of Counseling, The University of Akron if questions should arise. Participants may also contact Dr. Sandra Perosa, dissertation advisor, with any questions or concerns at 330-972-8158. Anyone who further wishes to address their rights as a participant may contact The University of Akron Institutional Review Board Research Services, The University of Akron at 330-972-666.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Signature</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Permission to Audio Recording: I understand that the interview sessions will be audio recorded, and that the recorded interviews will be transcribed without any identifying information. I also understand that following the completion of this study the tape recordings will be erased. I voluntarily agree and give permission to the above to allow audio recording of my interviews.

Investigator’s Certification
Suzanne Gibson Semivan, researcher, certifies that she has explained the above participant the nature, purpose, potential risks and benefits associated with this research study and has answered all questions posed by the participants. Suzanne G. Semivan has witnessed the above signature.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Investigator</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signature of Advisor</th>
<th>Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Dear (Participant):

Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research study which examines master’s level counseling supervisor’s who were trained in the field and their experiences of becoming a counseling supervisor. It will be an exciting exploration and a noteworthy contribution to the field of counseling and counselor supervision.

I have enclosed the informed consent document for your review. You can bring it to our meeting date we set when we spoke on the phone. You will sign in two places, because you are giving permission to participate and also be audio recorded; you will sign two sets—one for my records and one for your records. You are not obligated to the study by signing and you may opt out of the study at any time because this is by voluntary participation.

Any audio or transcribed research data or information is strictly confidential and steps will be taken to preserve confidentiality and your privacy. This information is only available to me, my dissertation advisor and research methodologist.

Our meeting is set for:

DATE: ________________________ TIME: __________________________

LOCATION: _______________________________________________________

This is the first of the two interviews and should last approximately 1½ - 2 hours with the second interview in two to three weeks, depending upon your schedule. In advance, I thank you for your participation. You may reach me at 330-519-1211 with any concerns.

Sincerely,

Suzanne Gibson Semivan
Doctoral Candidate, Department of Counseling
The University of Akron
APPENDIX F

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

The current research is designed to explore the phenomenological experience of master’s level counseling supervisors who were trained in the field. Thus, it will study the growth producing experiences that master’s level supervisors who were trained in the field with the goal to identify in-depth descriptions of their experiences of becoming a supervisor. The research process will include two separate open-ended interviews, completed face to face. The first will be the main tool for gathering impressions, the second will serve to gather further impressions, to address any questions that may arise between interview sessions and as an accuracy check.

The following interview questions will be asked of each participant during two audio recorded interviews, scheduled at approximately 2-3 weeks apart. The interviews will be confidential and the recordings will be available only to the researcher, and the dissertation advisor and dissertation committee member (methodologist).

1. Describe for me your practice as a counselor supervisor. (contextual information)

   Prompts (as needed):
   - Specifics of current (or past) practice—who, what, where, when, context of practice, how long, other?
   - Broad perspective on their practice—job satisfaction (expectations, sense of being successful?, dissatisfaction), benefits to others, how they see themselves in their field

2. Describe your experience of becoming a counselor supervisor. (Research subquestion 1a)

   Prompts (as needed):
   - Early expectations of counselor supervision/ Early expectations of supervision training
     - Did you belong to a counseling professional organization?
     - What kinds of activities were you involved in which would promote your growth as a supervisor?
       - Attend conferences?
       - Subscribe to professional publications/other counseling supervision/counseling publications?
- Attend training/workshops?
- Belong to local counseling associations
- Have specific personal goals in counseling supervision?
- Supportive work environment with emphasis on training and development

- Specifics in training program, activities, sequencing, time-frame, etc.
  - Expectations as an intern?
  - Training at your jobs?
  - Workshops?
  - What experiences or circumstances exposed to that you consider best?
  - What did you take and use?

- Perceptions of the training experience - meaningful, engaging, fulfilling expectations, frustrations, dissatisfaction, ambivalence, etc.
  - Was the progression as you expected?
    - What experiences were meaningful, engaging, or fulfilling?
    - What aspects were frustrating, created ambivalence
    - Was their dissatisfaction?
    - Did you anticipate dissatisfaction?

- Shifts or turning points in the training experience
  - What did you learn about yourself as a supervisor?
  - What or how are you different?
  - What worked in your development – or what seemed helpful?
  - What are the books or literature you found helpful and important?
  - What have your supervisors been like?
    - What did you tell yourself about your supervisor?
    - What specific behaviors or attributes did they possess?

- Perceptions of the outcome of the training experience-- meaningful, engaging, fulfilling expectations, frustrations, dissatisfaction, ambivalence, etc.
  - How are you evaluated as a supervisor?
    - Do you process your supervision with someone?
    - Does your agency require you tape supervision sessions?
    - When you have reached an impasse in supervision, who do you go to?

3. How did you integrate this new knowledge and experience that you gained as part of your identity as a counselor? (Research subquestion 1b)

Prompts (as needed):
- What was most helpful in developing as a supervisor?
• How have your early expectations of supervision been met or not met? Explain.

Now as you take the time to think back:
• What shifts or turning points can you identify in your understanding of counselor supervision? Explain.
  o What models of supervision do you use?
  o How do you work within that framework?
  o Experiences in impasse, transference or countertransference?
  o Failure or post-failure growth?

• How has your conceptualization of how to train others changed or remained constant over the years?
  o Given your experience, is there any way you would change the training of a supervisor?
  o What would you say is a weakness in your training as a supervisor?

• What competencies do you currently view as most important in training others in supervision?
  o Skills of teaching
  o Skills of counseling
  o Relationship/alliance with supervisee
  o Knowledge of models
  o Reflectivity
  o Commitment to self-growth
  o Aspects of health and wellness
APPENDIX G
SECOND INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Rq 1: Describe for me your practice as a counselor supervisor

Supplemental Questions (Rq1):

- If there have been changes: Have those changes impacted you? In what way?

- What is different from how you practice as a supervisor versus how you practice as a Counselor?
  - How are you different as a supervisor?
  - How do you handle it when a supervisee has a different approach?

Prompts from Interview 1 (as needed):
- Specifics of current (or past) practice—who, what, where, when, context of practice, how long, other?
- Broad perspective on their practice—job satisfaction (expectations, sense of being successful?, dissatisfaction), benefits to others, how they see themselves in their field

Rq 1 a: Describe your experience of becoming a counselor supervisor

Supplemental Questions (Rq 1a):

- How have you experienced growth and development as a supervisor?
  - Look back – pick out 3 examples of experiences that led to your development as a supervisor
    - Using a verb, what are the 3 most memorable experiences that helped you to grow?

- From your interactions with your supervisee, you have learned a lot about your supervision (and the supervisee) – Have you thought about what you do and what you say?
  - How has this impacted your perspective, understanding or actions
  - Can you give me a couple of examples where this occurred?

- What do you draw upon to understand or guide your supervision?

- Can you give an example of how you learned to supervise?
• What did you get that informed/guided the supervision process?
  o Give an example of what you did get in your own supervision that informed your supervision practice

• Where are you in your development as a supervisor now?

  Prompts from Interview 1 (as needed):
  • Early expectations of counselor supervision/ Early expectations of supervision training
    o Did you belong to a counseling professional organization?
    o What kinds of activities were you involved in which would promote your growth as a supervisor?
      ▪ Attend conferences? /Subscribe to professional publications/other counseling supervision/counseling publications? /Attend training/workshops?
      ▪ Belong to local counseling associations
      ▪ Have specific personal goals in counseling supervision?
      ▪ Supportive work environment with emphasis on training and development
  • Specifics in training program, activities, sequencing, time-frame, etc.
    o Expectations as an intern? /Training at your jobs?
    o Workshops? /What experiences or circumstances exposed to that you consider best? /What did you take and use?

  • Perceptions of the training experience - meaningful, engaging, fulfilling expectations, frustrations, dissatisfaction, ambivalence, etc.
    o Was the progression as you expected?
      ▪ What experiences were meaningful, engaging, or fulfilling?
      ▪ What aspects were frustrating, created ambivalence
        • Was their dissatisfaction? /Did you anticipate dissatisfaction?

  • Shifts or turning points in the training experience
    o What did you learn about yourself as a supervisor? /What or how are you different?
    o What worked in your development – or what seemed helpful?
    o What are the books or literature you found helpful and important?
    o What have your supervisors been like?
      ▪ What did you tell yourself about your supervisor?
      ▪ What specific behaviors or attributes did they possess?

  • Perceptions of the outcome of the training experience-- meaningful, engaging, fulfilling expectations, frustrations, dissatisfaction, ambivalence, etc.
    o How are you evaluated as a supervisor?
- Do you process your supervision with someone?
- Does your agency require you to tape supervision sessions?
- When you have reached an impasse in supervision, who do you go to?

Rq 1b: How did you integrate this new knowledge and experience that you gained as part of your identity as a counselor?

Supplemental Questions (Rq 1b):

- How have you processed or thought about your supervision
  - How does this relate to you as a supervisor?

- How do you make meaning in your supervision?
  - How is the impact of that (meaning making in supervision) experienced differently between you as a Counselor and you as a Supervisor?
  - How does this impact you differently as a supervisor versus a counselor?
    - What about reflectivity?

Prompts from Interview 1 (as needed):

- What was most helpful in developing as a supervisor?

- Have your early expectations of supervision been met or not met? Explain.

- Now as you take the time to think back: What shifts or turning points can you identify in your understanding of counselor supervision? Explain.
  - What models of supervision do you use? / How do you work within that framework? / Experiences in impasse, transference or countertransference? / Failure or post-failure growth?

- How has your conceptualization of how to train others changed or remained constant over the years?
  - Given your experience, is there any way you would change the training of a supervisor? / What would you say is a weakness in your training as a supervisor?

- What competencies do you currently view as most important in training others in supervision?
  - Skills of teaching / Skills of counseling
  - Relationship/alliance with supervisee
  - Knowledge of models / Reflectivity
  - Commitment to self-growth / Aspects of health and wellness
APPENDIX H

INTERVIEW DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: ____________________________________________

Address: ___________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

Age: _______ Date of Birth: _________ Place of Birth ____________

Gender: M F US Citizen: Y N

Educational Background (include foreign/overseas education):

High School: ____________________________

College: ____________________________ Degree: __________________

College: ____________________________ Degree: __________________

College: ____________________________ Degree: __________________

Licensure(s): ____________________________

Specialized Training/Certifications:

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

________________________________________________________________________

CEUs accumulated: ________________ In Supervision: ________________
APPENDIX I
RESEARCHER JOURNAL

Excerpts of Researcher Journal

The following are selected excerpts from the research journal which reflect the researcher’s process during the interview phases of this study.

April 29, 2010

This will be my first interview. I am finally doing this. The interview was conducted in a university counseling clinic office. It was an evening appointment and I approached it with a lot of anticipation and excitement. There we were interviewee and interviewer sitting facing one another. I questioned how this would go.

I did it! What an experience . . . nothing like I thought it would be. Just goes to show you how preconceived ideas can interfere in the research process. “Sam” is a serious woman in her mid-twenties. She brought out ideas about community mental health and her academic experiences that I did not anticipate! This is going to be an interesting journey . . . a great start!

June 22, 2010

I am planning for my second interview with “Elliot.” I had a meeting with Sandy and Suzanne to evaluate the use of the interview protocol in the first interview and we discussed the need for a less formal interview process . . . something more friendly and inviting. Yikes! My goal is to be more natural and less nervous during the process. They offered great critical feedback such as considering a more inviting environment or creating a more inviting space for the interviews.
July 16, 2010

My second interview; it is time to use the advice given by Sandy and Suzanne. We are meeting in Elliot’s office. I brought Danish to soften the vibe. Eliot is a 50ish male, with a tremendous amount of experience in the business world. It was interesting that at this outset of this interview he began to talk about his own supervision—when he was being asked about supervising people. What a great interview. He was very forthcoming with raw details exposing his vulnerability. As he talked about his experiences with post-failure growth he detailed the impact that it had upon his values, beliefs, and behavior. Wow, didn’t expect that. I will have to remember to examine this aspect of his experience of becoming a supervisor in his second interview.

July 27, 2010

This will be my first interview with “Rowan.” She is a mid-30s woman who is a very committed to the profession of counseling and counselor supervision with plans to do great things! This was a very exciting interview for the reason that this interviewee is so excited about being a supervisor. I found her view of impacting the field interesting. It involved helping supervisees to develop and improve their skills to go on to help their clients and then they become supervisors who impact their supervisees. This is a long range plan here. ☺

December 20, 2010

Coding. Lord have mercy! I am learning but am I ever going to get done? I am so frustrated and deflated right now. I have to allow myself to enjoy the holidays.

June 6, 2011

This is my second interview with “Avery.” She is an African American female. I realize her contribution to this study, as she was the only person in the participant pool that brought up the subject of multicultural issues in counselor supervision, for which I am grateful. Reflecting on both interviews, I see her commitment to challenging me and others to focus attention on this
neglected area. I realize it is not just multicultural counseling competence but also competence in multicultural supervision, which has its own dynamics.
APPENDIX J

AUDIT TRAIL

The interviews were based upon the interview protocol which was developed as part of the pilot study. The pilot study was conducted prior to the research study in order to refine the interview questions. The interview questions followed a progression which paralleled the main research and two research sub-questions, and was what guided the progression of the interviews. In general, the participants’ responses addressed the questions to some degree and then diverged to a point that they wished to make about the topic.

The first question asked the participant to tell me about their supervision practice. The researcher sought to learn more about the contextual aspects and their perspective of their practice, to understand what at their experience of becoming a supervisor and how they integrated this new information into their identity as a counselor. The interview protocol was used as a framework and gathered participant’s views, but also provided necessary structure and flexibility. For example, an unexpected turning point occurred in the interview with Elliot when he began to describe his experience of becoming a supervisor, which involved a post-traumatic growth experience. The interview protocol assisted in reorienting Elliot back to the interview and thus, was an organizing structure. Furthermore, during this course of the interview, the interview protocol provided flexibility that was necessary for the interviewer. This was also illustrated during times when the researcher found it necessary to change the wording for participants who required more concrete terminology or more explicit descriptions of the essence of the research questions.
Second interviews followed the second interview protocol, developed by the dissertation advisor, methodologist, and researcher. The second interview protocol was based upon the first interview protocol but also included specific questions that sought to gather information related to changes in the perceptions, growth, or development of the participants. The purpose of the second interview was to clarify and confirm with participants that their stories from the first interview were understood. A characteristic of the second was that rapport was established and consequently, encouraged a richer interview experience. The first interviews lasted from one to one-and-one half hours, where the second interviews were generally 45 minutes to an hour.

Post-interview processes involved burning the digital recordings onto compact discs for later ease of listening, as well transcribing the interviews. Transcripts were printed into hard copies and reviewed simultaneously with the content of the audio form to check accuracy. Transcripts were read and re-read throughout this process and during the coding phase.

The Nvivo software was considered at this juncture. The dissertation advisor and researcher were trained on the NVivo software. Because of the manageability of the data from the small research sample, along with the preference of the researcher to interact more closely with the data, it was decided that the NVivo software would not be used. This decision process involved the dissertation advisor, methodologist, researcher, and the University of Akron NVivo computer lab trainer who consulted about the viability of manual coding.

Using excel spreadsheets, the data was coded, which involved the reexamination of transcripts to ensure accuracy and to interact with the data. The decision to code the data manually was a benefit and one which facilitated the coding process. Furthermore, consultation with other researchers who used the NVivo program noted its unwieldy, non-user-friendly nature which led to a significant amount of frustration. However, for a larger amount of data, it would be advisable to consider the use of NVivo. Subsequent data analysis was accomplished with the dissertation advisor and the dissertation methodologist, who offered invaluable guidance.
throughout the remaining research process, including identification of themes and drafting of the remaining dissertation chapters.