Best Practices in Supervision with Early Career Sex Offender Treatment Providers

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Supervision is a distinct professional practice employing a collaborative relationship that has both facilitative and evaluative components, that extends over time, which has the goals of enhancing the professional competence and science-informed practice of the supervisee, monitoring the quality of services provided, protecting the public, and providing a gatekeeping function for entry into the profession. (APA)
APA Supervision Guidelines

- Domain A: Supervisor Competence
- Domain B: Diversity
- Domain C: Supervisory Relationship
- Domain D: Professionalism
- Domain E: Assessment/Evaluation/Feedback
- Domain F: Professional Competence Problems
- Domain G: Ethics, Legal, and Regulatory Considerations
- * Specialty Guidelines for Forensic Psychology
Challenges when Working with Sex Offenders

- Environmental Challenges
- Dual Supervision
  - Administrative and Clinical
- Personality Disorders/Psychopathology
- Safety
- Malingering
- Outcome Driven Actions
- Measuring Success
The Effects of Working with Sex Offenders

- Therapists reported diminished hopes with working with sex offenders
  - Increased anger and frustration
    - Higher rates of confrontation and less tolerance
  - Hypervigilance and suspicion toward others
  - High stress, exhaustion, depression, and burnout

- Recommend a need for change in the lack of support systems in working with sex offenders
Ever Felt This Way?

**Client's Impression of the First Session**

"Thank you. See you next week."

**Sara's Impression of the Session**

"I'm out of here... glad that's over!!! No more therapy for me!"

"Loser. Imposter. First time win."

"Inexperienced. Brand new."

"Ha."

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Mitigating Negative Consequences

- Team Cohesion
- Mutual Support
- Psychological Debriefing
- Supervision (Collins & Long, 2003)
  - Supervisees report supervision mentoring relationships have a stronger influence on professional development than academic preparation (Greig, 1998)
Goals for Supervision

- Clear
- Collaborative
- Behaviorally anchored
- Written
- Measurable
Therapist Characteristics that Impact Sex Offender Treatment

- Therapist's "Style"
- Therapist's Behavior
- Therapeutic Environment
Supervisor Characteristics that Enhance Supervisory Relationship

- Similar traits that enhance therapeutic rapport with clients also assist the supervisory relationship
  - Genuineness
  - Warmth
  - Respect
  - Humor
  - Flexibility
  - Confidence
  - Open-ended Questions
  - Directive
Supervisor Characteristics that Strain Supervisory Relationship

- Rigid, Low Empathy, Low Support
- Failure to Consistently Track Supervisee Concerns
- Failure to Teach or Instruct
- Indirect & Intolerant
- Closed, Lack Respect for Differences, Non-Collegial
- Lack of Praise & Encouragement
- Sexist
- Critical: Emphasize Evaluation, Weaknesses & Deficiencies
Supervisory Interventions

- Homework
- Co-Facilitation
- Observation
- Document Review
- Presentations
Problem Indicators

- Withdrawal
- Limited Disclosure
- Direct Criticism/Hostility
- Noncompliance with Directives
- Passive Responding
- Acting Out
- Unconscious Challenges
  - Transference/Counter-Transference
Serious Problems which Must Be Remediated

- **Ask Self: Personality Concerns or Ability Concerns?**
  - Inability to acquire professional behavior
  - Inability to acquire an acceptable level of competence
  - Inability to control personal stress
  - Severe irresponsibility
  - Inability to accept constructive criticism
  - Argumentativeness
  - Poor attitude
  - Does not acknowledge, understand, or resolve identified problem areas
References


