



Motivational Interviewing in Supervision

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Agenda

- Brief introduction to clinical supervision
- Three supervision styles
- Using Motivational Interviewing as a supervisor
- Case example: Understanding and responding to supervisee “resistance”

Supervisor responsibilities

- Administrative related
 - Organizational responsibilities (compliance)
 - Ethical practice and ethical dilemma's
- Supervisee growth & effectiveness
 - Fostering effective supervisory relationship
 - Integration of theories, knowledge, and values
 - Continuous learning, personal and professional growth



Research about supervision

1. A fundamental component in counselor training and professional development
2. Few studies conducted on the effects of clinical supervision on therapist competence
3. Recent trends in supervision
 1. Increased focus on administrative management tasks (compliance coaching)
 2. Less discussion of social workers' emotions or reflections on client situations
4. “Task-oriented” supervision significantly predict increase in supervisee self-efficacy

Supervisee's

- Anxiety
 - Supervision is both educational & *evaluative*
 - Fear of making a mistake, being judged, corrected, scolded, or fired
- Resistance
 - Self-protection from a variety of sources of anxiety
- Resistant behaviors adversely impacts the quality and effectiveness of supervision*

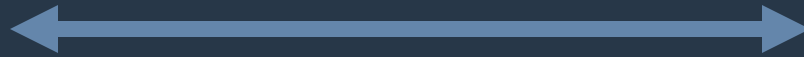
A common approach to supervision

1. General check-in & consideration of workload and HR issues
2. Agreement on a list of "cases" to discuss
3. "Verbal deluge" from the supervisee about client(s)
4. Identification of "the problem"
5. Provision of a solution by the supervisor
6. Few references to the emotional impact of the work, with the exception of the frustration at perceived client resistance

Supervision style

Directing

- Telling
- Prescribing
- Compliance
- Correcting



Following

- Supporting
- Allowing
- Go along with
- All is well

Negative Emotional Attractor Coaching (NEA)

Directive or compliance focus

- Activates regions of the brain (fMRI's)
 - Para-cingulate cortex and medial prefrontal region
 - Networks and regions of the brain associated with *sympathetic* stress response and self-consciousness
- Response to directive style & NEA coaching
 - Defensive
 - Decreased motivation
 - Feelings of guilt and obligation
 - Less open to change—no matter how much supervisee desires change

Supervisor using Directing Style

- Supervisee struggling with step-mom who wants her son to go to residential treatment.
- Bio father and “team” want adolescent to remain at home



When Directive Style may be necessary

- Imminent harm to supervisee, client, or the organization
- Other safety concerns
- Ethical decisions



MI in Supervision

*“A collaborative
supervisory style for
strengthening a
supervisee’s own
motivation and
commitment to decision
making and professional
growth”*



The MI Shift - Autonomy & self-efficacy

From feeling responsible for
changing supervisee to
*supporting them in thinking
and talking about their own
reasons and means for
changing how they work with
clients*

Fig 1. The four tasks of motivational interviewing



Source: Miller and Rollnick (2023)

Engagement
“Can we walk together”

Focusing
“Where are we going?”

Evoking
“Why do you want to go there?”

Planning
“How will we get there?”

Engagement Spirit of MI

Acceptance

Absolute Worth

Affirmation

Autonomy

Accurate Empathy



Guiding style

Directing ↔ Guiding ↔ Following

- Compliance
- Prescribing
- Telling
- Correcting

- Elicit
- Encourage
- Empower
- Instructive

- Supporting
- Allowing
- Go along with
- All is well

Guiding style

Positive Emotional Attractor Coaching (PEA)

- Activates regions of the brain (fMRI's)
 - Parasympathetic nervous system, default mode network, and lateral visual cortex
 - Networks and regions of the brain associated with *parasympathetic* modulation & stress regulation
- Response to PEA coaching is
 - Openness to change
 - Feeling engaged
 - Motivation
 - Big-picture thinking
 -

Supervisor skills

- Asking **open-ended** questions
- Offering deep **Affirmations**
- Listening **reflectively**
- Providing **Summaries**



Supervision Example

- Caucasian man in late 30's
- Student in a counseling program practicum
- Decade in human service positions
- Directive style and problem-solving orientation
- Career change to clinical mental health counseling
- Connects more with professors than other students
- Relies on previous skills without integrating new skills
- Says he is open to new skills but has poor follow through

Supervisor's perspective

- Target behavior
 - Directive style and problem-solving orientation
- Reasons for the supervisee's style
 - A decade of success in human service work
 - Believes skills learned in previous experience serve him well
 - Difficulty being an adult student among younger students
- Underlying dynamics to address
 - Fear of failure in his career change
 - Vulnerable to unpleasant emotions such as shame and discouragement
 - Lacks engagement in supervision

Engaging the supervisee: Spirit of MI

- Engagement
 - Strengthen the supervisory alliance
 - Safe and supportive environment
 - Seeking to understand the supervisee's resistant behaviors (OARS)
- Focusing
 - Assess ambivalence underlying supervisee's behavior
- Evoking
 - Reasons why supervisee would like to make changes
- Planning
 - Encouraging self-reflection of the discrepancies

Supervisor MI Engagement Skills

- OARS
 - Open-ended questions
 - Affirmations
 - Reflections

Engagement using OARS

- Supervisor: During the past few weeks, we've discussed some of my concerns about your approach with clients. Can you talk about them? (open-ended question)
- Supervisee: You've said that I am too focused on problem solving with clients. But I feel like I get a lot more accomplished with people when we just cut to the chase.
- Supervisor: Your style has worked in other settings, so it's difficult to reconcile your past success with my feedback that your approach in practicum can be problematic. (reflection)
- Supervisee: I know that other students in this program are younger than I am but I have my own style based on experience
- Supervisor: I appreciate you being open about that, because it helps me understand why I haven't seen the feedback that we've discussed reflected in your sessions with clients or weekly reflection journals. (affirmation and reflection)

Engagement using OARS

- Supervisee: Well, I want to improve. But to be honest, I feel more comfortable being myself.
- Supervisor: It can feel unpleasant trying a new approach as a counselor, especially when you have spent so much time doing things in a particular way. (reflection)
- Supervisee: It is difficult. I know you've said that counseling is different than the work that I've done in the past, but there are similarities.
- Supervisor: Helping others seems to be a common thread. The way that the helping is done differs. During our first supervision session this semester, some of those differences came up when we talked about why you made a career change. (reflection)
- Supervisee: Yeah. I feel like I made the right decision enrolling in this program. But I guess that I am used to doing things in a certain way.

Review: How did supervisor do?

- Use Spirit of MI to strengthen the alliance?
- Address concerns (task oriented) without an argument?
- Explore ambivalence about change?
- Encourage self-reflection?

Focusing on a goal change

- Focus of change is shaped by
 - Needs of the supervisee
 - Expertise of the supervisor
 - Setting
- Two areas of focus
 - Administrative responsibilities
 - Growth and change of the supervisee
- Process of Focusing Task
 - Collaborative “Where are we going?”
 - Addressing ambivalence about growth and change

Ambivalence led to minimal engagement

Change

Desire to improve

Education

Help people

Status Quo

My current style is effective

Don't want to be vulnerable

Help people

- Psychological costs of receiving help



Focusing on a change goal

- Needs of the clients/needs of supervisee
- Performance based
 - Client feedback surveys
 - Video or audio recordings of session
 - Reflections journal
- Supervisor responsibilities
 - Maintain a supportive, collaborative relationship
 - Assess and address supervisee performance
 - Deepen supervisee's awareness of the problem

Supervisor MI Focusing Skills

- Asking permission
- OARS
 - Open-ended questions
 - Reflections
- Provide information
- Giving advice

Focusing: collaboration, guiding

Supervisor: Can we take a few minutes to make sure that we are on the same page about what needs to be addressed moving forward? (asking permission)

Supervisee: Yeah, sure.

Supervisor: You mentioned being “too focused on problem solving” with clients. Can you talk some more about that? (open-ended question)

Supervisee: You’ve said that I sometimes immediately try fixing client problems, instead of getting to know my clients and understanding their problems better.

Supervisor: That’s right. By not spending time building a strong therapeutic relationship, your clients feel less engaged in counseling. Results from the client feedback surveys seem to confirm that disconnect. (providing objective information)

Focusing: collaboration, guiding

Supervisee: That's true. But I haven't really seen that many clients yet.

Supervisor: Given how much you want to help your clients, it must be difficult to hear that they do not feel engaged in counseling. (reflection)

Supervisee: It's frustrating. If I try to slow down or use some other techniques, I'm worried that my clients will think that I am incompetent, or they are wasting their time. I also don't want you to think that I don't know what I'm doing.

Supervisor: Do you mind if I share some information that might help? (promoting engagement)

Supervisee: OK.

Supervisor: I've supervised a number of students over the past few years who felt the same way. They were unsure about the process at first, but through practice and supervision, they became more comfortable. This is only your second semester in the program, so I don't expect you to be a master counselor. (giving advice)

Focusing: collaboration, guiding

Supervisee: That's good to hear.

Supervisor: I expect that you went through a similar learning process when you began your previous career. (reflection)

Supervisee: Yeah. But that was over 10 years ago!

Supervisor: It's scary to think about having to go through this all over again. (reflection)

Supervisee: Not exactly. But it doesn't feel comfortable.

Supervisor: That's probably why you have relied on skills from your previous career. Trying out a new approach is kind of risky and makes you uneasy. (reflection)

Review: How did supervisor do?

- Maintain a supportive, collaborative relationship?
- Encourage involvement and collaboration on developing a focus for change (guiding style)?
- Deepen supervisee's awareness of the problem
- Provide information and advice (task oriented)?

Evoking Task

- Follows the “what”. Asks the “why?”
- Literally means calling forth what is already there. Not “installing” motivations
- The primary vehicle for *empowerment*
- Draws upon ambivalence; change talk and sustain talk

Sustain talk: Reasons for keeping the status quo

- Sustain talk
 - A decade of success in human service work
 - Believes the skills serve him well
 - Difficulty being an adult student among younger students
- Supervisor must continue to keep in mind
 - Fear on failure
 - Vulnerable to unpleasant emotions (shame and discouragement)
 - Lack of engagement and poor follow through

What does “change talk” look like?

- Problem recognition
- Concern about the problem
- Ambivalence
 - Potential benefits of change
 - Cost of not changing

Supervisor MI Evoking Skills

- Providing information
- OARS
 - Open-ended questions
 - Affirmation
 - Reflections
- Giving advice

Evoking supervisee's own reasons for change

Supervisor: For next week, I'd like you to focus on rapport building with your clients. You can do this by slowing down your pace and using process skills, such as immediacy and reflections. How does that sound? (providing information)

Supervisee: I can do that.

Supervisor: I also want you to write about what you did differently with clients and what it was like trying these skills in your journal. What are some reasons why reflection is an important part of counselor training? (providing information, open-ended question)

Supervisee: I am so focused on doing that I forget to stop and think about how I'm doing.

Supervisor: Reflecting on your experience gives you a chance to evaluate your progress and sort out some of the internal reactions that seem to be triggered in session with clients. What else? (reflection, open-ended question)

Supervisee: It can help keep me on track. We've talked about these topics before, but I wasn't really thinking about what I needed to work on when I was with clients.

Evoking supervisee's change talk

Supervisor: Tell me some more about that. (open-ended question)

Supervisee: Having to write about my experience will help hold me accountable. I have three sessions scheduled before our next supervision, so I'll take notes about my experience with each client so that I can write my journal.

Supervisor: That's a great idea! What else? (affirmation, open-ended question)

Supervisee: I really want to do well in this program. I gave up a lot to change careers.

Supervisor: Learning the skills we've discussed will help you succeed in practicum and beyond. What else? What might it mean for the connection you have with your clients? (reflection, open-ended question)

Supervisee: It wouldn't hurt to spend some time getting to know my clients better.

Review: How did supervisor do?

- Maintain a supportive, collaborative relationship?
- Drawing upon the supervisee's own reasons for change
- Deepen supervisee's awareness of the problem
- Provide information and advice (task oriented)?

Planning: Taking Steps

- Guiding supervisee from talking about change to talking about *how* to change
- Expected changes are made clear through collaboration
- Concrete strategies as well as a timeline established
- Supervisor continues to engage, focus, and evoke change talk

Supervisor MI Planning Skills

- Providing information
- OARS
 - Open-ended questions
 - Affirmation

Planning: Collaboration, guiding

Supervisor: Let's talk about some steps we can take together to help you move forward. (providing information)

Supervisee: Thanks, I know what I need to do.

Supervisor: OK. What are some changes that you can make to help you follow through with what we've discussed so far? (open-ended question)

Supervisee: Spending a few minutes ahead of each session thinking about my role and what my goals are will help me stay more focused during my sessions.

Supervisor: What else? (open-ended question)

Planning: Collaboration, guiding

Supervisee: Since part of the reason why I feel uneasy in session is because I get nervous about being recorded, I can place the camera somewhere out of my line of sight.

Supervisor: Great idea! I'm also wondering what it will be like for you to share the reactions you have with clients in your weekly journals and future supervision sessions? (affirmation, open-ended question)

Supervisee: Honestly, I've never had supervision like this before, so I'm still figuring out what's expected of me. I'm not used to talking about these things with someone who is evaluating me. But if you think that it will be helpful, I'm fine with it.

Planning: Collaboration, guiding

Supervisor: Talking about the “uncomfortable” experiences is an important part of supervision. So I look forward to having those conversations. Any other ways I can help? (providing information, affirmation, open-ended question)

Supervisee: Do you want me to use a certain number of reflections? Do I have to use silence?

Supervisor: I think that it might be useful for us to review the different evaluation criteria for practicum to clarify what progress you are expected to show at this point in the program. This will also help us identify specific behaviors to address this coming week. How does that sound? (providing information)

Review: How did supervisor do?

- Maintain a supportive, collaborative relationship?
- Drawing upon the supervisee's own reasons for change
- Deepen supervisee's awareness of the problem
- Provide information and advice (task oriented)?

Summary of MI in Supervision

- Spirit of MI supports the development of a working relationship
- Is an effective model to address supervisee anxiety, resistance, and disengagement in supervision
- Allows for supervisors to address both administrative responsibilities while supporting growth
- MI Supervision pairs with other approach's
 - Role-based supervision models
 - Solution-focused supervision

References & Additional Resources

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That's all Folks

Thank you!

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