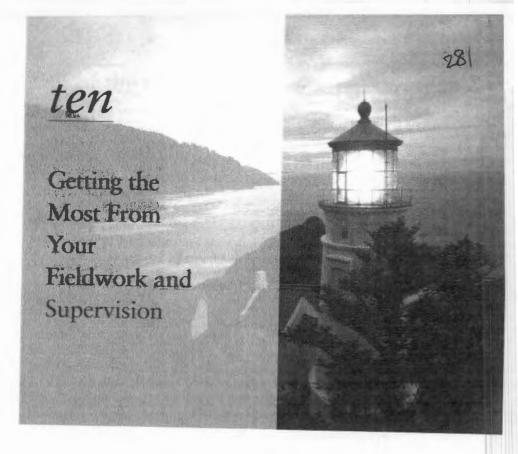
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From Becoming A Helper, 6th Ed., Focus Questions
Aim of the Chapter

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Multiple Roles and Relationships in Supervision

Multiple Roles and Relationships in Supervision

By Way of Review

What Will You Do Now?

Belmont, CA.

Focus Questions

- 1. What can you do to maximize your learning from fieldwork placements?
- 2. How can you better profit from your supervision? If you are not getting the quality of supervision you need, what steps can you take?
- 3. What are some ways to challenge your self-doubts in your fieldwork placement? How can you change your fears into assets and opportunities for learning?
- 4. What specific steps can you take to confront any difficulties you are experiencing in your field placement? What are some possible benefits of staying with a field placement that is not to your liking?
- 5. In meetings with your supervisor, what attitudes and behaviors of yours are most likely to lead to maximizing your learning?
- 6. What are your thoughts about receiving personal counseling as part of your program? Why do you think ethical practice dictates that the supervisory relationship should not be turned into personal therapy sessions with your supervisor?
- 7. What would you look for in a field placement? What kinds of questions would you ask before accepting a field placement assignment?
- 8. What personal characteristics do you think are associated with an effective supervisor?
- 9. What are your thoughts about informed consent in supervision? What would you want to know about what supervision entails from the beginning of the relationship?
- 10. What are some possible advantages of group supervision?



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Aim of the Chapter

You will get far more from your program of studies and your fieldwork activities by assuming an active stance. At times students are disillusioned with their department, their professors, and their supervision. There are negative aspects to any educational system, yet it is more useful and productive to focus on how you can get the most from both your course work and your fieldwork experiences. Rather than concentrating on what you cannot do, think of what you can do and the advantages of taking a more active role in all aspects of your educational program. In this chapter we encourage you to take steps to ensure that you will be involved in meaningful fieldwork placements and that you will take an active role in getting adequate supervision.

Making the Most of Your Fieldwork

In the helping professions of counseling, social work, psychology, and couples and family therapy, most graduate programs have fieldwork and internship placements at their core. Most undergraduate programs in human services have a comprehensive fieldwork component, which is often the heart of the program. These activities provide a bridge between theory and practice. Actual experience in a field placement gives students opportunities to learn firsthand about paperwork, agency policies and procedures, and the challenge of working with a wide range of client populations and problems. These are some of the goals of a fieldwork instruction program:

 Provide students with knowledge of the varied approaches and methods used in human services programs

 Help students extend self-awareness and achieve a sense of professional identity

 Broaden students' sociocultural understanding of the individual, the family, the community, and relevant social systems

 Assist students in recognizing and respecting cultural diversity and offer ways to use this understanding in practice

 Help students expand their awareness of professional role relationships within their organization as well as the agency's role in the community

Before you can meaningfully participate in fieldwork and internship placements, you need theory courses, specific knowledge, and a range of helping skills. You can enhance your academic learning by volunteering to work in a community agency. It is the combination of academic course work, fieldwork placement, skills training, and personal development that makes for a sound program.

Take an Active Role in Getting a Meaningful Placement

If you have some choice in selecting the place where you will be gaining supervised practical experience, take an active role in securing the best placement possible. One way of actively participating in securing a quality fieldwork placement

is by asking questions of potential agency settings when you are going through the interviewing process for a field placement. Here are some questions you might ask:

- What are the goals and purposes of your agency or organization? What services are provided?
- Have you worked with student interns before? If so, what have been some
 of their activities?
- How does the agency and professional staff view the role of interns? Are they viewed as members of the team or more as peripheral observers?
- · What internship opportunities are now available at this agency?
- Are interns ever employed at this agency once they complete their internship?
- · What would be my specific responsibilities?
- · Are there any special skills or requirements for the placement?
- To whom would I report? Who would supervise me? How many hours per week would I meet for supervision?
- Are there training or staff development opportunities at the agency? What kinds of training might I receive prior to and during my placement?
- Is there any videotaping equipment available?
- Would I be covered by the agency for malpractice liability?

We hope you will assume an active role in selecting a meaningful placement that will enhance your learning. This can take considerable thought, time, and preparation on your part. Strive for a placement where you will receive adequate supervision and where you will be able to profit from learning how to cope with a variety of problems that clients bring to the agency.

If you are employed at a community agency and want to use this agency for your fieldwork placement, we suggest that you branch out to get as much variety as possible in your placements. If you already have volunteer or paid work experience in a particular setting, try doing something different for your internship: do different tasks, occupy a different role, or work with another client population. Your fieldwork experience should provide you with a variety of settings in which to work and also with various supervising environments. A wide range of opportunities exists within most agencies. Secure training in areas new to you as a way to acquire new knowledge and skills. Internships and supervised fieldwork placements provide practical experiences that can help you learn how to work meaningfully within a system. The more practical and supervised experience you can get the better. Commit yourself to becoming the most competent practitioner you can be.

When we talk with graduates of human services programs, they typically mention that they found their current job as a result of contacts they established at their fieldwork placement. In fact, most graduates report wishing they had been able to participate in even more fieldwork activities. Some regret not having had a broader range of experience in their internships. We recommend that you visit as many sites as possible before making your selection, if that is allowed in your program. Review job descriptions and arrange interviews with selected agencies.

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Knowledge and Skills Required for Successful Job Performance

When we asked practitioners about the skills they most need in their present jobs, they listed counseling skills, supervisory skills, consulting skills, communication skills, the ability to interact with different levels of management, the ability to write a proposal, organizational skills, the ability to deal with crisis intervention, and networking skills. A number of professionals pointed out the value of self-exploratory experiences, especially groups aimed at personal and interpersonal growth. These therapeutic experiences gave them opportunities to look at themselves and to deal with their own feelings and problems, activities that were seen as especially helpful in preparing them to relate to clients. Even those professionals who were primarily engaged in the administration of human services programs commented on the value of self-awareness and the understanding of interpersonal dynamics as tools they used in their managerial functions. Those in management pointed out that they would not be able to develop and coordinate their programs if they did not know how to work effectively with people.

A view from community agencies. As part of the self-study program conducted by our department at the university, community agencies that offer fieldwork placements to our students were contacted and asked a number of questions regarding what they were looking for in hiring employees as well as their views on other relevant issues. Here are some of the questions we posed to agency personnel along with a representative sample of their responses to these questions.

- 1. What special knowledge and skills do our students need in order to work effectively at your agency?
 - Ability to work with diverse cultures
 - · Understand ethics and confidentiality issues
 - · Ability to connect with others
 - Resourcefulness and ability to direct and give referrals
 - Listening skills, case management skills, and counseling skills
 - · Ability to be proactive rather than reactive
- 2. What knowledge, skills, and competencies do you consider most important for employees in your agency?
 - A good deal of independence combined with responsible reporting of treatment plans, incidents, and therapeutic progress
 - Ability to identify and maintain clear personal and professional boundaries
 An outroach person who can organize a program from start to finish
 - An outreach person who can organize a program from start to finish
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 - Must be creative, adaptable, and open-minded with an eagerness to serve the community in a nonjudgmental way
 - Awareness and acceptance of cultural diversity, including the immigrant experience
 - · Self-motivated and hard-working

- Good organizational skills
- · Ability to work with a disabled population in an educational environment
- · Flexibility and ability to work as a team
- · Good problem-solving skills and a good innovator
- Crisis intervention skills
- 3. What trends do you foresee in the future for the field of human services?
 - · Family preservation and preventive programs
 - · Expansion in services for the upcoming senior population explosion
 - Short-term interventions aimed at psychoeducational goals
 - More community outreach to assist multiethnic communities with access to health care services
 - Managed care models

How to Profit From Your Fieldwork Experiences

For a variety of reasons, students often do not derive the maximum benefit from fieldwork and supervision. Here are some practical strategies for getting the most value out of your fieldwork placements:

- Instead of limiting yourself to one kind of population, seek a variety of
 placements. Stretch your boundaries to help you to discover where your talents
 lie and the kind of population you would eventually like to work with. Through
 your internships you may learn what you do not want to do as well as what you
 would like to do. Some students who initially want to practice counseling exclusively later find themselves in the role of administrator or supervisor.
- Take courses and workshops that will prepare you for the type of work expected of you in your placement. These workshops can be a useful resource for staying on the cutting edge of new developments with specialized populations.
- Let yourself fit into the agency, instead of trying to make it fit you. Be open
 to learning from the staff and the clients who come to the agency. Attempt to
 suspend your preconceived judgments about what you should be learning and
 focus instead on the lessons that are available to you. Learn as much as you can
 about the politics of the agency by talking with people who work there, by
 attending staff meetings, and by asking questions.
- Be aware of the toll that your work can have on you both emotionally and physically. Certain aspects of your life may surface as you get involved with clients, which can lead to more anxiety in your life. Consider the value of personal therapy as a part of self-care.
- Practice within the boundaries of your training and put yourself in situations where you will be able to obtain supervised experience. It is essential to learn the delicate balance between being overly confident and constantly doubting yourself.

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- Strive to be flexible in applying techniques to the different client populations, but do so under supervision. Be open to fitting your theory to your clients rather than your clients to your theory. Realize that diverse client backgrounds necessitate diverse communication approaches. Although it is essential to learn therapeutic skills and techniques, they should be applied in appropriate ways.
- Do not write off as a waste of time a placement that you do not particularly like. At least you are learning that working in a particular agency or with a specific clientele may not be what you want for a career. Identify what you don't find productive about the placement and ask yourself why you feel that way.
- Make connections in the community. Learn how to use community resources and how to draw on support systems beyond your placement. Talk to other professionals in the field, ask fellow students about their connections in the community, and develop a network of contacts. This kind of networking may well lead to a range of job opportunities.
- Keep a journal; record your observations, experiences, concerns, and personal reactions to your work. Your journal is an excellent way to stay focused on yourself as well as to keep track of what you are doing with clients.
- Be open to trying new things. If you have not worked with a family, for example, observe a family session or, if possible, work with a supervisor who is counseling a family. Avoid setting yourself up by thinking that if you do not succeed perfectly in a new endeavor you are a dismal failure. Give yourself room to learn by doing, at the same time gaining supervised experience.
- Look for ways to apply what you are learning in your academic courses to your experiences in the field. For example, one professional recalls having taken abnormal psychology as part of her graduate program and also having served as an intern in a state mental institution. Through this internship she was able to see some of the concepts she was studying come to life.
- Be prepared to adjust your expectations. It is unlikely that you will be asked to provide direct services to clients before the agency staff get to know you. You will probably start your fieldwork in an observing role. However, be aware that some agencies may give interns jobs without adequate preparation.
- Treat your field placement like a job. Approach fieldwork in much the same way as you would if you were employed by the agency. Demonstrate responsibility, be on time for your appointments and meetings, follow through with your commitments, and strive to do your best.
- Learn as much as you can about the structure of the agency where you are placed. Ask about agency policies, about the way the programs are administered, and about management of the staff. At some point, you may be involved in the administrative aspects of a social program.

- Try to gain a global perspective of the agency as well as seeing it as clients
 might view it. Learn how agency systems work, and assess how you can work successfully within the system. Identify others in the agency who are successfully
 working within the system: talk to them, learn from them, and use them as a
 support system. Find out what keeps them motivated to do a good job.
- Think and act in a self-directed way by involving yourself in a variety of activities. Take the initiative to get involved in meaningful assignments.

The Challenge of Working With Differences

As we have suggested, it is a good idea to seek a placement where you will be expected to work with a variety of clients and tasks. By working with diverse populations, you can explore your interests and develop new ones. If you focus narrowly on the population or problem area you have chosen as a specialization, you are likely to close off many avenues of learning and limit yourself professionally.

As a part of your fieldwork for internship placement, you usually receive on-the-job training and supervision. Therefore, you might not need expertise in counseling rape victims before being accepted for such a placement. Your coworkers and supervisors will teach you some interventions in working with such clients. Thus, more important than knowing how to work with a specific population or a specific problem is having a general background of knowledge and skills and being open to acquiring more specific abilities.

Helping someone different from you. One of our colleagues told us that her client who was paralyzed became upset and angry when she said to him, "I understand how you feel." His reply was: "How would you know? You can walk out of here, and I can't." On reflection, our colleague thought that a better response might have been the following: "You're right, I don't fully understand your situation. I can imagine your frustration and pain over being paralyzed at such a young age. But I haven't been in your situation, so I don't know what you're thinking and feeling. I hope you will help me understand what this is like for you, and I hope I can help you work with your feelings about being paralyzed."

Some interns make the mistake of clinging to the conviction that to help a person they must have had the same life experience. Thus, a male clinician may doubt his capacity to effectively counsel an adolescent girl who is struggling with what she wants to do about a pregnancy. A helper may doubt that she can work with a client of a different race. Or a practitioner who has not experienced trauma may wonder about her ability to empathize with clients who have had pain and trauma in their lives. A helper who works with people with addictions may doubt his ability to effectively reach his clients if he has not had an addiction problem. When these helpers are confronted by a client, they often backtrack and become apologetic. We hope that you can see the value of drawing on your own life experience in working with clients who are different from you. You may not have had the same problem, but you have some experience with pain. It is more important to be able to understand the client's world than to have had an identical problem. It is crucial that you realize that some of your clients will

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view the world from a different perspective than you do (see Chapter 7 for a more detailed discussion on understanding diversity).

Profiting From Your Supervision

Most professionals question their competence at certain times and in certain situations. We hope you can be patient with your feelings of incompetence rather than denying them. The purpose of your supervised fieldwork is to provide you with a varied and meaningful learning opportunity. This is a place where you can acquire specific knowledge and where you can develop the skills to translate the theories you have learned into practice. Be clear in your own mind about what you expect from your supervisors, and discuss your desires with them from the outset. This section suggests how to approach your supervision and actively participate in this process.

Be Open to Multiple Sources of Supervision

Be open to input not only from supervisors but also from teachers, peers, colleagues, and clients. Take advantage of your role: as a student, you are not expected to know everything. If you understand that making mistakes provides you with an opportunity for self-reflection, critical thinking, and, ultimately, learning and change, you will be less likely to feel frozen in an attempt to avoid making mistakes. Talk openly with your supervisor about your presumed mistakes and discuss what to do in various situations when you feel uncertain of your abilities. Believing that you must already have the knowledge and skills you need to be successful puts undue pressure on you; this attitude can get in the way of your ability to learn from your supervisors, peers, and clients.

In our training of group facilitators we typically find that the students approach workshops with considerable anxiety over looking incompetent in the eyes of their peers and supervisors. Early in the workshop we tell them this: "Be as active as you can. Stretch yourself past the point at which you typically stop. No matter what happens, there is something to be learned. If a group session is unproductive, you can explore what specific factors contributed to that outcome."

When we give students these instructions, they usually react with relief and acknowledge feeling much less anxious. We let them know that we understand and empathize with their difficulty in being observed by their peers and by supervisors. It is not possible to escape from being watched by clients, supervisors, and coworkers. Talking about our experience of being observed allows us to be in control of this process rather than being controlled by what others might think of us. Students often find it helpful to openly share their fears. Paradoxically, their fears are diminished by this act of acknowledgment.

Dealing with challenge and self-doubts. Trainees may be unsure, apologetic, and unwilling to credit themselves with the ability to be helpful. Ask yourself how you typically deal with any self-doubts you may have about your ability as a helper.

Consider how you might deal with a client who challenged you. At the initial session your client is surprised at your age. "How can you help me?" he asks. "You look so young, and I wonder if you have the experience to help me." Assume that this challenge reflects your own fears and doubts. Can you imagine saying any of the following things silently to yourself?

- "He's right. There are many years separating us. I wonder if I can understand his situation?"
- "This man's attitude makes me angry. I feel judged before I've even had a chance to know him."
- "I don't feel comfortable with this confrontation, but I don't want to back down. I feel like letting him know that even though we differ in age we might have many similarities in our struggles. I'd like an opportunity to at least explore whether we can form a relationship."

Certainly as individuals we are all affected when someone challenges us, yet we need to learn how to deal with these situations. Helping is not about proving that we are "right." By staying focused on the best interests of our clients, we can address any challenges in a direct and honest manner. If you feel that you might have done something more effectively or sensitively, it helps to simply acknowledge this.

It's okay not to know. Be willing to admit a lack of knowledge or understanding about a situation with both your supervisor and your clients. Don't be afraid to say you don't know something and to ask for help. You are at your placement to learn, not because you already have all the knowledge and skills you need. If you feel intimidated because you do not have an answer to a client's problem, you can say something like this: "Carla, I am struck by how much you want me to have answers for you. Yet I think I need to take some time to think about your situation and to consult my colleagues and supervisor so that I can help you in the best possible way." In this way you acknowledge your limitations to Carla, but you keep the door open to providing her with information she can use in resolving her problem. Your role as helper is not to provide answers or to tell people what to do but to teach them how to examine options and apply problem-solving skills.

Think out loud. In working with both students and professionals, we often find that they have many powerful reactions that they keep to themselves. We typically encourage our trainees to talk out loud rather than engaging in an internal monologue. Telling us what they were thinking but not saying helps them to get unstuck. Most of the time we find that what they are not saying could be extremely helpful to themselves and their clients if they were to share it. In a recent workshop one trainee, Victoria, was quiet throughout the group session. The supervisor asked Victoria what was going on. She replied, "I feel inhibited in following my hunches, and I fear that you might be judging me and not liking what you see." Her supervisor encouraged her to more frequently say aloud these kinds of thoughts. Victoria reported that by simply making this statement she felt much less self-conscious and less frightened over her supervisor's reactions.

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Finding your voice while listening to others. We have observed that some trainees limit their own development by trying too hard to copy the style of a supervisor or teacher. You are likely to observe supervisors whom you respect, and you may tend to adopt their style. It is important, however, to avoid becoming a copy of another person. To get the most from your supervision, try different styles, but continually evaluate what works for you and what does not.

You might ask yourself: "What fits my belief system, both personal and theoretical? Do I have any conflicts between the theory or application of my supervisor's way and my own?" If you pay too much attention to another person, you are likely to blur your own unique approach to helping people. The more experience you gain, the easier it will become to listen to your own intuitive voice and to respect your inner hunches. Eventually, you will have less need to look to outside experts.

Focus of supervision. Some approaches to supervision emphasize the client's dynamics and teach you strategies for intervening in specific problems. Others focus on your dynamics as a helper and as a person and on your behavior in relation to your client. In our opinion, comprehensive supervision takes both of these elements into consideration. You need to understand models of helping clients, and you need to understand yourself if you hope to form truly therapeutic alliances. If your supervision is focused solely on what your client is doing or on teaching you specific techniques for what to do next, we think your supervision will be lacking a significant dimension. A critical focus for discussion in supervision sessions is the degree to which you are as present as possible for your clients. If you are overly concerned about what to do about a client's problem, this concern is likely to distract you from making connections with the person. A useful focus of supervision is the quality of the relationship between you and your clients. In supervision, you can talk about what you are experiencing as you work with different clients. This focus will reveal a good deal about both you and your clients.

Our style of supervision. When we supervise, we pay attention to the relationship between our supervisees and ourselves, as well as the dynamics and relationships between supervisees and their clients. Here we see a parallel process operating between a practice model and a supervisory model. Supervisees

can learn ways to conceptualize what they are doing with their clients by reflecting on what they are learning about interpersonal dynamics in the supervisory relationship.

Rather than placing emphasis exclusively on assessing and treating a client's problems, we are very concerned with the interpersonal aspects that are emerging between the supervisee and his or her clients. In our view, supervisors do well to look beyond the cases that trainees bring to the supervisory sessions and focus on the interpersonal dimensions.

In our role as supervisors we attempt to help our supervisees develop their own insights and refine their clinical hunches. Rather than placing the emphasis on direct teaching with supervisees by giving them information, we strive to help them learn how to conceptualize a case and think about how they are likely to proceed with a given client and why. Instead of using our words with supervisees' clients, we hope supervisees will discover their own words and find their own voice. Our style of supervision is reflected by the following questions we typically explore:

- What are you wanting to say to your clients?
- What direction do you think is most appropriate to take with your clients?
- How are you affected by your clients?
- · How is your behavior affecting them?
- Which clients are difficult for you to work with, and what might this say about you?
- How are your values manifested by the way you interact with your clients?
- How might our relationship, in these supervisory sessions, mirror your relationships with your clients?
- Are you feeling free enough to bring into these supervisory sessions any difficulties you are having with your clients?

Many of the points we are making about supervision reflect our particular philosophy and style of supervision. Other styles of supervision may operate from a different set of assumptions. From what you have read in this section, consider these questions: What style of supervision do you think would be most useful for you at this stage of your development? What kind of supervisor do you think would be the most difficult for you to work with, and why? If it were impractical to change positions or change supervisors, what strategies could you use in constructively dealing with this supervisor?

Maximize your time in supervision. You will get the most from your supervision if you take an active stance as a supervisee. Here are a few suggestions for benefiting from your supervision:

- · Know the general purpose of supervision.
- Recognize that different supervisors will attempt to achieve the purpose of supervision in a variety of ways.
- Accept that a certain level of anxiety is normal to the supervision process.
- Clarify any aspects of your contract with your supervisor regarding the content of the supervision sessions.

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- Strive to be as honest and open as possible during your supervision sessions.
- If you are not able to select your supervisor, do your best to work within the framework of the supervisory style of the supervisor assigned to you.
- Clarify for yourself what you most want and need from supervision, and inform your supervisor of your needs.
- Take the time to prepare for your supervision session by identifying questions you want to explore and by bringing in examples you want to discuss with your supervisor.

Get the Supervision You Deserve

The assertion skills you practice in getting adequate supervision will be useful in your relationships with both clients and colleagues. Being assertive does not mean being aggressive. An aggressive approach will needlessly put others on the defensive. Being passive is not useful either because your supervisor will have no idea what you want or need. Being aggressive or passive will shut you off from many opportunities to learn.

Get a clear picture of how you want to spend your time in an agency. Identifying what you want may not be easy, especially if this is your first fieldwork placement. You can begin by thinking about what you would most like to learn and what skills you would like to acquire. A placement typically involves a written contract signed by the student and the supervisor of the agency. This contract usually spells out the number of hours to be worked per week, the activities that will be performed, the learning objectives, the opportunities for training, the expectations for the intern, and the expectations for the supervisor. A written supervisory contract also typically addresses the number and frequency of supervision sessions, when and how contact will be established, and guidelines for how both supervisor and supervisee should prepare for each session (Brislin & Herbert, 2009). Before signing your contract with your supervisor, discuss in some detail what you want and the kinds of opportunities available to you. In collaboration with your supervisor, spell out what you would like to experience and learn before you leave. Although you may not always get what you want, if you have a clear idea of what that is, you will have a better chance of obtaining it.

It helps to realize that supervisors are people too. They have demands placed on them. As their client load grows and pressures increase, they may not initiate the regular supervision sessions that you have been promised. Furthermore, some practitioners do not volunteer to become supervisors but are told that they should add interns to their already heavy workload. At times their training for being a supervisor is minimal, and they find they must take continuing education course work to learn how to effectively supervise. If you are able to understand the predicament of your supervisors, you are more likely to be able to establish a basis of communication with them. Within a climate of open communication, you can sensitively and assertively let your supervisor know that you need help. If you have a difficult case, you can say something like this: "I really think I am at an impasse with Kristen. For several weeks now, we have made little progress. Every suggestion I make seems to go nowhere. I suggested

termination, and she got angry with me. Now I don't know what to do. Can I meet with you to talk about some alternatives?" By being clear, specific, and persistent, you are more likely to have your needs met.

If you approach your supervisors with a genuine attitude of informing them of what you need from them, supervisors are more likely to respond positively than if you keep your distance from them. If you learn to ask for what you want and need from your supervisors without being aggressive, you will be going a long way toward creating a positive fieldwork experience and using supervision to its fullest extent.

Unfortunately, some students have negative experiences with fieldwork and with supervisors. At a conference of human service educators, Tricia McClam of the University of Tennessee made a presentation on effective field supervision. The relationship between the field supervisor and the student seems to be a key variable in determining whether the student's reactions are positive or negative. Supervisors certainly play a key role in the student's learning, and it is part of the student's responsibility to communicate with the assigned supervisor, even if he or she is less than ideal.

Students with positive reactions to supervisors made comments such as these: "She was available." "She was involved in my cases." "My supervisor clearly stated what he expected of me and what I could expect of him." "My supervisor was both supportive and flexible." Students with negative reactions to supervisors observed the following: "He was too busy to properly supervise." "My supervisor did not meet with me regularly." "My supervisor was not organized." "My supervisor expected me to do things her way and gave me little encouragement to find my own style."

When students begin their fieldwork activity, McClam states that students do best with supervisors who are clear about their expectations and who provide support and guidance. Firmness coupled with flexibility is useful for beginning trainees. When students have gained some fieldwork experience, they still need support and guidance, along with feedback from their supervisors, but they can profit from experiences that will demand more intuition and skill. Most important is establishing regular communication between supervisors and supervisees. Take the initiative to communicate with your supervisor. This is particularly difficult in cases where you perceive your supervision to be inadequate, a topic we explore shortly. Your program is responsible for providing you with regular and competent supervision. As an intern, you deserve to have a meaningful supervision experience.

Case example: Duties outside an intern's area of competence. A supervisor asks an intern to counsel a family, consisting of mother, father, and two young boys. The supervisor tells the intern that the parents are primarily interested in learning how to manage their problem children and want to learn disciplinary techniques. In the supervisor's view, a more important problem consists of the conflicts between the wife and husband. The intern has had very little course work or training in working with families and feels lacking in the competencies to do family counseling.

Your stance. If you were the trainee in this situation, what might you do? Might you give into pressure from the supervisor, especially with the offer of

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some supervision? How could you look for ways on the job to acquire the knowledge base that would enable you to work with a family? How would you like to be able to respond to this supervisor?

It is important to let your supervisor know of your concerns, so the two of you can talk about alternatives. Consider the following dialogue, and see how you might say some of the same or different things as the trainee.

SUPERVISOR: We are short on personnel in the agency, and we really need you to work with some families.

TRAINEE: I feel flattered that you think enough of me to ask for my help in seeing families. Yet at this stage of my professional development, I am going to have to decline.

SUPERVISOR: Look, it is you or no treatment at all. Most of us have hesitations when we begin working with new populations. Just jump in and get involved.

TRAINEE: In my case it is more than feeling anxious and having self-doubts. I have yet to take a single course in family therapy. It just does not seem ethical for me to undertake this task now.

SUPERVISOR: Well, I don't want you to do something that doesn't seem ethical to you. But I would be available for supervision, so you won't be without any guidance.

TRAINEE: I appreciate your offer for supervision. Perhaps I could observe your work with a family, with their permission of course, and then we could talk about your interventions after the session.

SUPERVISOR: If I had the time that would be great, but that would be adding one more thing to an already overbooked schedule.

TRAINEE: After I take the family therapy course next semester, perhaps I'll be in a better position to assist in this kind of work. For now, I need to work within my own limits.

Discussion. This case example is realistic in the sense that some organizations use interns as relatively "free" staff. The problem is not so much using interns to fill critical service needs but being unwilling to provide adequate supervision for trainees. Student interns do need some minimal theoretical foundation and knowledge competencies in working with families before they are able to effectively participate in actual clinical work with families. Certainly, when trainees are moving into a new area, they will need to acquire practical skills that will enable them to work effectively in this new setting. Good supervision enables trainees to apply their knowledge while acquiring these intervention strategies. If trainees take on work that is new for them, they can learn and gain competence through supervision.

The Effective Supervisor

Although there is no one right way of conducting clinical supervision, there are established standards for counseling supervisors. The "Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors" (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 1993, 1995) are designed to help supervisors (1) observe ethical and legal protection of clients' and supervisees' rights; (2) provide training for supervisees

in ways that are consistent with clients' welfare and requirements of the program; and (3) establish policies, procedures, and standards for implementing programs. The supervisor's main functions are to teach trainees, to foster their personal and professional development, and to assist in the provision of the effective delivery of counseling (helping) services.

Based on input from practicing clinical supervisors, Corey, Haynes, Moulton, and Muratori (2010) compiled this list of personal characteristics of an effective

supervisor:

• Is aware of clinical, legal, and ethical issues

· Possesses good clinical skills

Behaviorally demonstrates empathy, respect, genuineness, and listening

· Establishes an accepting supervisory climate

Creates a supervisory relationship characterized by trust and respect

- Is flexible in determining the developmental level of the supervisee and providing supervision methods that will best serve the training needs of the supervisee
- · Has a sense of humor
- · Develops clear boundaries
- · Encourages appropriate risk-taking on the part of supervisees

Supports a collaborative supervisory process

- Respects the knowledge that supervisees bring to the supervisory relationship
- Appreciates individual differences among supervisees and differing opinions about theoretical viewpoints

• Is open, approachable, and supportive

- · Has a keen interest in training and supervision
- Shows sensitivity to the anxieties and vulnerabilities of supervisees
- Values supervision as a "protected" time
- · Provides honest and constructive feedback

In a nutshell, good supervisors tend to be available, accessible, affable, and able.

The picture of the effective supervisor that emerges from the research is derived primarily from findings regarding supervisee satisfactions and preferences. The effective supervisor is one the supervisees respond to positively, find satisfactory, and are able to trust. The general picture of the effective supervisor is a technically competent professional with good human relations skills and effective organizational and managerial skills (Corey, Haynes, et al., 2010).

Barnett, Cornish, Goodyear, and Lichtenberg (2007) report that numerous studies have found that the quality of the supervisory relationship is a key component in determining outcomes, much as it is for the client–therapist relationship. Effective clinical supervisors provide constructive feedback to their supervisees in a supporting and nonjudgmental environment. They are well trained, knowledgeable, and skilled in the practice of clinical supervision. They limit their supervision to those areas in which they are competent, and they delegate portions of supervision when necessary to make sure that supervisees receive the best quality of supervision possible.

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Dealing With Supervision That Is Less Than Ideal

From time to time you may encounter supervision that is far from ideal. How can you recognize inadequate supervision? What can you do to ensure that you get the quality of supervision you need and have a right to expect?

Accepting different styles of supervision. You can benefit from learning how to function under a range of supervisory styles, both now as a student and later as a helping professional. One supervisor may believe confrontation is a way to cut through a client's defenses. Another may provide frequent advice for clients and promote a problem-solving orientation for client problems. Some supervisors foster a supportive and positive orientation with clients exclusively. Some supervisors may work very hard at establishing collegial relationships with their interns, whereas others may be more professionally distant. Be open to supervisors with various orientations and styles, and be open to incorporating some of their viewpoints in your practices. Do not be too quick to criticize a style different from yours, but consider it as an opportunity for learning. As a supervisee, recognize that at different stages in your professional development you may require different styles of supervision.

If you do have trouble with a supervisor, the answer is not always merely finding a new one. You can learn a great deal by working with supervisors who have perspectives different from yours and from supervisors who may initially appear to be difficult for you to make contact with. When you experience conflicts with a supervisor, it is a good idea to talk about these conflicts and do all that you can to work them out. Rather than telling yourself that your supervisor will not be cooperative, assume that he or she will be open to your suggestions. Later, when you accept a position in an agency, you typically will not have the option of changing supervisors. What is more, you often do not choose who your coworkers will be. Thus, it is important to learn the interpersonal skills necessary in working out differences.

Solving problems in your supervision. You may encounter a number of problems in working with a supervisor. Communication may not be open or encouraged. Some supervisors may poorly define what they expect of you. Some may fail to show up for appointments. Others may delegate their responsibilities to their secretary. There is also the supervisor who is insecure but disguises this insecurity by being overly controlling and autocratic. Some supervisors put too much responsibility on an intern too soon or delegate menial work. Supervisors may be guilty of unethical practices. One supervisor had her supervisee do her work and then wrote up the proceedings as though she had seen the client. Some supervisors misuse power through a need to be seen as always right. Others give little feedback, keeping the student intern in the dark and offering

very little direction. Although most supervisors have good intentions and strive to provide quality supervision, many of them feel overwhelmed with the multitude of responsibilities expected of them. This can lead to supervisors not being attentive to those in their charge.

Supervisory roles and functions themselves can be detrimental to efforts to create an open relationship. Supervisors are responsible for your work with clients and will evaluate you. It is understandable that you might be anxious about being observed and evaluated. It may help to accept that performance anxiety goes with the territory of being a supervisee. However, you can face and deal with your fears rather than allowing yourself to be caught up in performance expectations.

If you are very dissatisfied with your supervisor and believe that you are not getting the quality of supervision you have a right to receive, consider discussing this with the supervisor in question as an initial step. If you decide this is not a good alternative, bring the matter to your university supervisor for help in exploring your options.

Informed consent in supervision. Informed consent is a basic part of the supervisory relationship (ACES, 1993, 1995). McCarthy and colleagues (1995) provide a practical guide to informed consent in clinical supervision. They conclude that informed consent is an essential ingredient of effective supervision that must be clearly articulated through written documents and a discussion between the supervisor and supervisee. Accountability is increased by developing a written contractual agreement for supervision. When expectations are discussed and clarified at the beginning of a supervisory relationship, the relationship will be enhanced, promoting quality client care. McCarthy and her colleagues identified seven topic areas that are significant to informed consent: purpose, professional disclosure, practical issues, supervision process, administrative issues, ethical and legal issues, and statement of agreement. When these issue areas are addressed in the informed consent process in supervision, both supervisors and supervisees have a clear idea of the nature of their respective roles, rights, and responsibilities. Written informed consent documents, along with a discussion of their contents, are excellent ways for supervisors to teach supervisees an approach they can use with their clients. Written contracts for supervision inform the supervisee of the expectations and responsibilities of both parties in the supervisory relationship and serve to benefit both the supervisor and the supervisee. Supervisory contracts can increase the quality of care for the clients of the supervisee as well (Sutter, McPherson, & Geeseman, 2002).

Thomas (2007) reports that it is only in recent years that supervisors have more formally incorporated the principles of informed consent into their work with supervisees. It is now considered the standard of practice to incorporate clear informed consent material for supervisees, both orally and in writing. The goal of informed consent is to enhance the quality of the supervision experience. It is beneficial to discuss the rights of supervisees from the beginning of the supervisory relationship, in much the same way as the rights of clients are addressed early in the therapy process. If this is done, the supervisee is

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empowered to express expectations, make decisions, and become an active participant in the supervisory process.

Participating in Group Supervision

The value of group supervision is sometimes overlooked. In groups, trainees benefit by listening to others and by discussing cases with their peers as well as with a supervisor. Our approach is to combine individual and group supervision when this is practical and possible. Group supervision is a time-efficient and unique format that assists trainees in developing skills in conceptualizing cases and in implementing a variety of treatment interventions. One study suggests that group supervision is not only complementary to individual supervision but may be interchangeable with individual supervision (Ray & Altekruse, 2000). Crespi, Fischetti, and Butler (2001) contend that group supervision, using a case model approach, is a viable way to conduct supervisory sessions with school counselors. Group supervision using audio recordings of a session may be more efficient than individual supervision in terms of rate of learning (Calhoun, Moras, Pilkonis, & Rehm, 1998). Although group supervision will cut into other service responsibilities of school counselors, Calhoun and colleagues (1998) believe group supervision can lead to greater accountability, improve outcomes and, in the long run, be more cost-effective than individual supervision. Like individual supervision, there are various theoretical orientations to group supervision. Melnick and Fall (2008) describe a Gestalt approach to group supervision: "The challenge of group supervision involves the ability to balance the individual and group needs, while at the same time holding the well-being of the client as central"(p. 59).

If you participate in group supervision, you learn not only from your supervisor but also from fellow trainees. You learn that you are not alone with your anxiety and concerns surrounding clinical work, and you are exposed to different perspectives of the helping relationship. You can benefit from learning about issues that other supervisees are facing. This social learning dimension of group supervision can assist you to expand in areas that could be potentially problematic in the future (Brislin & Herbert, 2009). In group supervision you will have many opportunities to role-play challenging clients and to try on a variety of helper roles in a given situation. Role playing offers many possibilities, not only for you to become aware of potential countertransference issues but as a way to acquire alternative perspectives in working with clients you sometimes perceive as being "difficult." You can assume the role of your client by "becoming" the client while the supervisor demonstrates other approaches for dealing with your client. Later, the supervisor can switch roles and become the client while you try another way of dealing with your client. Of course, in a group context your peers can assume various roles, which can enhance learning. Role-playing techniques tend to bring to life a situation that all can witness, as opposed to merely talking about problems with clients.

The group supervision model is enhanced when you make the process a personal one. You can do this by focusing on your own reactions and sharing them in your supervision group. What clients trigger you? What clients do you

hope won't show up next week? What clients threaten you? What clients do you like more than others? By focusing on your relationships with your clients and your own dynamics, you can increase your self-awareness through the feedback you get from others in the group.

It is also helpful to explore your values and attitudes in conjunction with your supervision. If you become aware of a tendency to seek gratitude or approval from clients, for example, it could be useful to explore your own need for approval and your fear of rejection, either in your own personal therapy or in a group supervision session.

Multiple Roles and Relationships in Supervision

Those who teach or supervise students in the helping professions have an obligation to trainees to openly discuss appropriate boundaries and to work with trainees to solve problems involved in these multiple roles and relationships. The *Code of Ethics* of the ACA (2005) deals directly and clearly with boundary issues in teaching and supervisory relationships. It is the responsibility of clinical supervisors to create and maintain appropriate relationship boundaries with supervisees. One of these boundary areas pertains to blending supervision and personal therapy. A serious boundary violation occurs when the supervisory relationship becomes sexualized. We consider each of these topics in the sections that follow.

Supervision Versus Personal Therapy

Supervisors play multiple roles in the supervision process, functioning as teachers, consultants, mentors, and at times, counselors. This complexity of roles means that the boundaries are always changing. It may not be possible for supervisors to function in a singular role, so supervisors must demonstrate responsible behavior in managing multiple roles and relationships. The process of supervision has some similarities with instructor-student and therapist-client relationships, but there are also distinctions. The therapeutic role of the supervisor is certainly not the same as the role of the counselor, yet the distinction between these two roles is not always clear. Supervisors should not serve as counselors to supervisees over whom they have administrative, teaching, or evaluative roles unless this is a brief role associated with a training experience. The ACES (1993, 1995) ethical guidelines state that "supervisors should not establish a psychotherapeutic relationship as a substitute for supervision. Personal issues should be addressed in supervision only in terms of the impact of these issues on clients and on professional functioning" (2.11).

The primary role of clinical supervision is to maximize a supervisee's ability to become a skilled, competent, and ethical practitioner (Stebnicki, 2008). The central focus of supervision is to protect each client's welfare (Brislin & Herbert,

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ximize a supervisee's ability tioner (Stebnicki, 2008). The s welfare (Brislin & Herbert, 2009). Because clinical supervision often includes personal and professional concerns that have an impact on the helping relationship, discussion of the supervisee's thoughts and feelings often occurs during a supervision session. Supervisees need to understand that the supervision process can be emotionally charged and challenging (Brislin & Hebert, 2009). It is the supervisor's responsibility to help trainees identify how their personal dynamics are likely to influence their professional work, but it is not the supervisor's task to serve as a personal counselor to supervisees. In the supervisory relationship, it is appropriate to identify a supervisee's personal problems that are interfering with effectively working with clients. However, once a problem is identified and briefly discussed in supervision, it is the responsibility of the trainee to explore this problem area in his or her personal therapy.

One study suggests that exploring supervisees' personal issues in an appropriate manner does not necessarily affect the supervisory relationship negatively. Such supervisors confront their supervisees with personal issues that influence their work with clients, but in a warm and supportive instructional manner. As supervisees gain experience, they may be more able to benefit from identifying and exploring personal issues that affect their relationships with cli-

ents (Sumerel & Borders, 1996).

Supervisors are in a good position to recognize some of your blocks and countertransferences. They can help you identify attitudes, feelings, and behaviors that could interfere with your handling of certain clients. If further exploration is needed, and if your difficulties with certain clients are rooted in your own dynamics, a supervisor may encourage you to get involved in personal therapy. This does not mean that you are personally unfit for the profession. Getting involved in the lives of clients is likely to open up some of your own psychological wounds, and unresolved conflicts are likely to surface. We strongly encourage personal therapy along with your supervision as an ideal combination (provided your supervisor and your therapist are not the same person). This arrangement prevents blurring of boundaries and allows the proper focus to be either on working with clients (in supervision) or on dealing with your personal issues (in personal therapy). We address the importance of personal therapy for trainees in more detail in Chapter 3.

When Sex Enters the Supervisory Relationship

Those who are in charge of supervising student trainees must avoid engaging in sexual relationships with trainees and avoid subjecting trainees to any form of sexual harassment. You have a right to expect a learning environment free from sexual harassment, both in the classroom and at your field placement. Ideally, you should not be expected to deal with situations involving unwanted sexual advances from those who function in teaching or supervisory roles. Realistically, however, you need to know what to do in the event that you are faced with sexual harassment. Most agencies and institutions of higher education have specific policies regarding sexual harassment, as well as procedures to follow to report such abuse. Find out what the procedures are at your institution and be prepared to use them should the need arise.

By Way of Review

- Your fieldwork courses are likely to be among the most important experiences you will have in your program. Select these experiences wisely and arrange for diversity in your placements. Realize that these placements can help you decide on your professional specialization.
- Treat your field placement like a job, even if you don't get paid for your internship.
- Don't try to be a perfect intern. Fieldwork experiences are designed to teach you about the skills of helping, and you can learn much from your mistakes.
- Learn how to ask for what you need from your supervisor. It is important that you learn your limits and communicate them to your supervisor.
- Supervisors have different styles, and no one way is right. You can learn a great deal from various supervisors.
- The ideal supervisor may be hard to find. Supervisors are sometimes assigned to this role with little preparation or training. If your supervision is inadequate, be assertive in doing something about it by taking an active stance in asking for what you need from your supervisor.
- Even though supervision is similar to therapy in some ways, there are important differences. Supervision sessions should not evolve into personal therapy sessions. Personal therapy can be a useful adjunct to supervision, but the supervisor and the therapist should not be the same person.
- Sexual relationships between supervisors and supervisees (or professors and students) are unethical because of the harm that they typically do to supervisees (or students). Such relationships represent a clear misuse of power and also confound the supervisory or learning process.

What Will You Do Now?

- 1. If you have a supervisor (for your fieldwork or in your job), make up a short list of questions that you would like to discuss with him or her. What would you like to gain from supervision? Approach your supervisor before the end of the semester to discuss your goals.
- 2. Make it a point to visit several community agencies where you might work as an intern. Interview the director of the agency or the supervisors who make decisions about accepting fieldwork students. Learn to ask questions

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gencies where you might cy or the supervisors who 3. Learn to ask questions that will help you select a placement that will teach you about various client populations and a range of problems. Each student in your class could visit just one agency and then present the findings to the rest of the class.

- Reflect on some of the following issues and use this as a basis for your journal writing. Remember to write whatever comes to mind rather than censoring your thoughts and the flow of your writing.
 - Write about the kind of learner you see yourself as being. What does the
 concept of active learning imply to you? How can you become a more
 active learner as you read this book and take this course?

 Write about the ideal kind of fieldwork experience you would like to obtain. What can you do to get that kind of field placement?

If you are already in a field placement, write briefly about the work you
are doing. What are your reactions to the staff at the agency? How are
you being affected by your clients? Are any personal issues emerging as a
result of your work with clients? What are you learning about yourself?

 If you are in supervision currently, what is most satisfying about it? What kind of relationship do you have with your supervisor? What ideas do you have for improving the quality of your supervision sessions?

4. The full bibliographic entry for each of these sources can be found in the References at the back of the book. For a comprehensive book on clinical supervision, see Bernard and Goodyear (2009); for a practical approach to doing and making use of supervision, see Corey, Haynes, Moulton, and Muratori (2010). Useful introductory texts in the human services field include Neukrug (2008) and Woodside and McClam (2009). For a practical and concise guide to the internship experience, see Faiver, Eisengart, and Colonna (2004). Refer to Kiser's (2008) human service internship handbook as a way to get the most from your internship experience, and see Russell-Chapin and Ivey (2004) for useful discussions on how to maximize your supervised practicum and internship experiences. For an excellent treatment of the successful internship, see Sweitzer and King (2009). Refer to Alle-Corliss and Alle-Corliss (2006) for a most useful book on orientation to fieldwork.