Peer Supervision Groups: an investment in our counseling skills & well-being

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• I have the following financial relationships to disclose.
  Consultant for: Phosphorus, Recombine, Invitae, GeneDx, Gilead, Myokardia
  Speaker's Bureau for: n/a
  Grant/Research support from: n/a
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- I will not discuss off-label use and/or investigational use in my presentation.
Have you taken part in supervision?

Peer group supervision

- Why do it?
- What is it?
- What is it like?
- How do you do it?
- What do you talk about?
- Discussion

Why do it?

Kennedy et al 2000

Place to process problems
Stay connected
Help with work/home boundaries
Help with getting overinvested in cases
Fresh look at one's work
Gain wisdom

Stay one step ahead of students
Recognize, understand, address countertransference

Benefits

Learn new ideas & approaches to practice

Increased self-awareness

Think through situations more critically

Manage intensity of counseling work

Means of analyzing, improving and validating practice.

“Peer group supervision promotes professional and personal development by providing peer support and validation, deepening one’s understanding of patients and one’s self, increasing knowledge and skills, offering opportunities for informal socializing, and fostering a sense of community.”

Zahm et al 2007

“Insecurity can be transformed into better counseling skills and past failures become the seeds for future successes”

“... these stories also beg us to take the rich body of our experiences and, with the help of supervision, become better genetic counselors and better people”

-Bob Resta

Who doesn’t want all that?!
What is it? (What is it not?)

Not just for students!

Ongoing professional development

Required by some employers, countries

Definition of Genetic Counselling Supervision

Genetic counselling supervision is a formal and contractual arrangement, whereby genetic counsellors meet with a suitably trained and experienced supervisor to engage in purposeful, guided reflection of their work. Focusing on the dynamics between client and genetic counsellor, the aim of this process is to explore the interaction between the counsellor and their client, and the impact of external factors on this, enabling counsellors to learn from experience, improve their practice and maintain competence. The overall intention is to enhance the quality and safety of client care and to promote the ongoing professional development of the genetic counsellor.

Clarke et al 2007
Form of reflective practice

Holding place

Peer Group Supervision
- Bi-directional/mutual
- Ongoing/throughout career
- Self awareness
- Self assessment
- Psychological counseling skills
- Feedback

Student Supervision
- Clinical skills, Genetics knowledge
- Evaluation

Support Group

Admin Meeting

Medical Case Conference
Support Group
- Problems not related to counseling, cases
- Support
- Safety
- Confidentiality
- Relationships
- Group process

Peer Group Supervision
- Professional growth
- Counseling skills development

Group
- 3-10 members
- learn from each other’s cases, input
- less individual attention
- open or closed
- take turns presenting cases

Leader-led
- Leader: GC, psychologist, MSW
- leader/supervisor

Leaderless
- No leader
- Or rotating leader
- no $

One-on-One
- private
- safer
- $$$
- supervisor:
  - senior clinician
  - genetic counselor,
  - psychologist,
  - MSW


What is it like?
- stimulated
- refreshed
- contemplative
- thoughtful
- therapeutic

What is it like?

- exhausted
- angry
- irritated
- stimulated
- refreshed
- contemplative
- mixed
- thoughtful
- intense
- challenged
- overwhelming


But worth it

- challenging
- intense
- therapeutic
- scary
- overwhelming


How do you do it?

Clarke et al 2007

APPENDIX A: SAMPLE GROUP SUPERVISION CONTRACT

It is envisaged that each group will develop its own contract and may differ from the sample version below. The terms of the contract are usually developed to fit the nature and size of the group.

1. The supervisor will explain the aims to be discussed at the beginning of the session and set the agenda for the meeting. The group will be given an opportunity to discuss and shape the agenda.
2. The aims for the session can be set for individual members as well as for the group.
3. The aims for the group supervision cannot be discussed with any other members of the department who are not group supervision members.
4. Any group members who are unable to attend can be informed of what was discussed at the meeting they missed, and the group can discuss means that have been rated within the group outside of the session.
5. Each group member will make all reasonable efforts to attend every session, where this is not possible, at least 24 hours will
6. The supervisor will not be aware of the group setting but has been invited to individual one-to-one work. However, individual work by the group may be used to maintain the nature of the group.
7. Confidentiality within the group may be used to maintain the nature of the group. However, this will only
8. The supervisor will not know of the individual who was referred to group supervision and the group members confidentiality.
9. The group will be aware of the above means that have been used only. Those remain confidential and the direct contact will be given to
10. The group may agree that the group should be encouraged to make specific comments, in addition to
11. Every group is responsible for only bringing issues that they feel comfortable with and everyone is also expected to

Clarke et al 2007
Our contract

- Mission
- Member goals
- Structure
- Rotation
- Ground rules
- Safety, confidentiality
- Roles & responsibilities
- Closed group
- Re-evaluate occasionally

Our mission statement

To develop our psychotherapeutic counseling skill set and our self-awareness by creating a safe space in which to explore those aspects of our sessions, to learn from each other, and to support one another in that development. To develop our culture and identity as a genetic counseling team that values and prioritizes psychotherapeutic counseling.

Our schedule:

1 meeting/month

1.5 hours

~15 minutes check-in

~75 minutes case discussion

Key considerations

- confidentiality
- safety
- only discuss within group
- keeping time
- multiple relationships – bosses, students, friends
- collusion/soft vs truly challenging

(leader watches for these issues)
What do you talk about?

Audiotapes
Notes
Transcripts

Applying theory
Counselor insecurity
“Difficult” clients

Countertransference
“Type” of patient challenges counselor

Client behavior
Impact of personal issues on counseling

Family dynamics
Case significantly distresses counselor

Topics

Kennedy et al 2000

My topics/cases

Weakness, lack of confidence in counseling children & their parents

Building therapeutic relationship in busy multidisciplinary clinic

Challenging case - countertransference, incidental finding, counselor emotional reactions

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A Leader-Led Supervision Group as a Model for Practicing Genetic Counselors

Annetta L. Kennedy

Supervision for Practicing Genetic Counselors: An Overview of Models

International Journal of Genetic Counseling, 2016

Recommended reading

An Investigation of Genetic Counselor Experiences in Peer Group Supervision

Michele L. Zane, Patricia McCarty Vanek, and Eileen K. Lotos

Psychological Interventions for Family Members of Individuals with Developmental Disabilities

Reflections on the Experience of Counseling Supervision by a Team of Genetic Counselors from the United Kingdom

Discussion

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