

# Relational Supervision from a Catholic Worldview

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## Tips for Beginning the Supervision Process

### Relational

- Remember your relational frame
- Share your own experiences
- Model vulnerability and take the lead in opening important conversations
- Name the tensions and experiences in the room
- Acknowledge the reality of power differences and evaluation
- Invite supervisee into process of deciding together how things will be handled in supervision
- Name the boundaries and things that cannot change
- Plus any conversations and themes in the relational considerations handout

### Administrative

- Review and sign the supervision agreement
- Discuss and establish training goals for the semester
- Inform supervisee about evaluation process and introduce them to the forms
- Discuss the ebb and flow of the year and level of work involved
- Talk about managing self-care and starting early
- Talk about supporting accessibility and accommodations needs, expressing willingness to advocate for their needs
- Introducing trainee to specific learning tasks:
  - Note-writing
  - Creating case conceptualizations
  - Watching own videotape and identifying areas for feedback
  - Role-playing specific interactions or interventions
  - Process transcriptions
  - Developing self-reflective practices in preparation for supervision
  - Identifying and deepening theory of change
  - Therapeutic modality development

### Self of Supervisor

- What is your theory of change for supervisees?
- How are you most helpful as a supervisor?
- What are the places you are most likely to struggle or exert power to save yourself?
- How can you access support to recharge as a supervisor?
- How do you want to grow as a supervisor in this year?
- How do you receive and give feedback in a way that works for the relationship?
- How can you share this self-knowledge with your supervisee?

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## Relational Considerations in Supervision

### Training Philosophy and Approach

Two over-arching questions that drive the process:

- Who am I as a therapist?
- How am I therapeutic?

Similarly, for supervisors....

- Who am I as a supervisor?
- What do I do that is effective supervision?

### Foundational Relational Principles

- Central Relational Paradox – we want connection and we fear it... so we must attend to the balance and tension between risk/growth and safety
- All participants have significant responsibility and influence for creating the relationship
- We work to be curious about the experiences and desires of the other
- We attend to and talk about interpersonal processes
- We work to empower and share power as much as possible
- We value context and culture – we care about creating a just experience and valuing a diversity of perspectives
- No blank slates – supervisors share, take risks, and engage with vulnerability as well
- We are valuable and flawed persons, with inherent value beyond professional roles
- The process of rupture and repair is normal and ongoing – rupture is not the end
- We give continual attention to the status of the supervisory relationship/system/culture

### Building the Supervisory Alliance

- **Creating a Relational Process:** Our values are for being personal, present, and open, giving attention to the process between the dyad, valuing the relational connection, noticing ruptures and repairing relationally. We work to elicit the perspectives of both in the dyad, valuing each perspective and attending to the needs presented. While the supervisor can more easily use their power to initiate and tend to these processes, both are responsible for cultivating the connection.
- **Holding a Frame:** Supervision is evaluative, there is a power differential, and this serves to help both protect client welfare and foster supervisee growth. There is a gatekeeping aspect to a supervisory relationship, AND we want to empower the supervisee as much as possible, AND we value strong relationships as a pathway to increased confidence, competence, and flourishing.
- **Tasks & Goals:** These are generally explicitly discussed and agreed on between the supervisee and the supervisor. Both have input, acknowledging that it is the supervisee that is directing their career and learning, and that the supervisor has expertise in the function and process of supervision, as well as the needs of the center. The goals direct the supervisory interactions, and the tasks make up the meat of the interactions.

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## **Ways to implement a relational frame in supervision:**

- Each share history of supervisory experiences and training experiences
- Share hopes for this experience, and concerns about this experience
- Discuss strengths and developing areas of both people
- Tend to process of all interactions – discuss here-and-now experiences
- Discuss questions like these together, fostering power sharing and mutuality:
  - How will we use power and authority in the room?
  - What do we expect of each other – how shall we define our roles?
  - How do we keep it safe enough in here?
  - What happens when we disagree?
  - How do we want feedback, how do we give feedback?
  - How do we tend to the relationships of supervision?
  - How do we balance structure/directiveness with flexibility/exploration?
  - How are we different? How are we the same?
  - How will our cultural backgrounds bring us together and/or get in our way?

## **Holding the frame of the process means openly discussing:**

- Power in supervision
- Intention for a collaborative relationship
- Evaluation process
- Limited confidentiality
- How multiple relationships are handled
- What are OUR goals?
- How do we get there? (Tasks)
- How will we structure sessions?
- Addressing ruptures immediately, openly, transparently
- Modeling transparency and the willingness to be vulnerable yourself