To Keep the Lamp Burning...Reflective Supervision Consultation

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Agenda
• Define
• Breakdown
• Why?
• Observe
• Evidence
• Implementation

What is Reflective Supervision/Consultation?

Best Practice Guidelines for Reflective Supervision/Consultation
A relationship-based supervisory approach that supports staff to provide services in ways that support healthy parent-child relationships
— Shea, Goldberg, & Weatherston, 2016; Heffron & Murch, 2010; Bernstein & Edwards, 2012; Flowers & Burgeson, 2015; Fenichel, 1992

Supervision is “the place to understand the meaning of your work with a family and the meaning and impact of your relationship with the family.”
Jeree Pawl, public address

• “When it’s going well, supervision is a holding environment, a place to feel secure enough to expose insecurities, mistakes, questions and differences.”
  — Rebecca Shahmoon Shanock (1992)

Reflective Supervision/Consultation

“...the supervisor creates a safe and welcoming space for staff members to reflect on and learn from their own work with a trusted mentor/supervisor at their side.”
Heffron & Murch, 2010
RSC includes...

Intentionally slowing down to "step back" from the immediate, often intense direct work with young children and their families in order to better consider what the experience means, both to the professional and to the family/young child

— Parlakian (2001)

"Reflective supervision is a relationship for learning."
— Fenichel, 1992; Shahmoon-Shanok, 2007

"The process of examining, with someone else, the thoughts, feelings, actions, and reactions evoked in the course of working closely with young children and their families."
— Eggbeer, Mann, & Seibel, 2008

The RIOS Five Essential Elements of RSC

• Understanding the Story
• Parallel Process
• Holding the Baby in Mind
• Professional Use of Self
• Working Alliance

The RIOS Five Essential Elements of RSC

Understanding the Family Story
Discuss the relationships between family members and those connected to the family, including what is seen and heard and other relevant facts and information about past and present relationships. Questions encourage details about the parents/caregivers and the relevant relationships in their lives.

Professional Use of Self
Careful attention is given to the one’s subjective experiences, thoughts, beliefs and emotional responses, which become important information and lend greater understanding and clarity to the work with infants, young children, parents/caregivers and families.

Holding the Baby in Mind
Attention will always cycle back to the baby/young child, his or her experience and wellbeing, relationship with the parent/caregiver, as well as the impact of the presence of the baby/young children on the others in the story.

Parallel Process
The pair will consciously connect the lived experience of individuals and their relationships with the lived experience and relationships of others. They recognize that what has happened in one relationship impacts emotions and behaviors in other relationships.
“Do unto others as you would have them do unto others.”
- Jeree Pawl’s “Platinum Rule

The RIOS Five Essential Elements of RSC

Reflective Alliance
The quality of the relationship developing between supervisee and supervisor is of utmost importance. Both must come to the interaction with the intent to explore openly and reflect on the deeper meanings under the surface of the story in order to learn together.

Cultural Responsiveness

• We serve culturally and linguistically diverse families
• Staff of color/non-majority groups are less likely to be promoted to supervisory/leadership positions
• Supervisors start discussions related to diversity and support provider awareness and ability to engage in open communication about diversity with families.
• RSC can help face (rather than avoid) the discomfort, the challenges, the risk, and the tension of engaging in these discussions.
  – (Stroud, 2010)
"RS/C often includes administrative elements and is always clinical, while administrative supervision is generally not reflective and clinical supervision is not always reflective."

**Blended Model of Reflective Supervision**

- Administrative, clinical and reflective supervision components are often integrated into the same conversation during supervision.
- Blended model uses an intentional focus on process (rather than on content)
- Supervisors "... merge the qualities of an effective, efficient administrative supervisor with the qualities of a thoughtful, responsive reflective supervisor."
  
  — Bertachi & Gilkerson, 2009

**FOUR LITTLE WORDS**

- Observe
- Listen
- Respond
- Wonder

**(Supervisor’s Role)**

- Observe supervisor’s responses
- Listen and think about what the supervisor is saying
- Respond to what the supervisor is saying
- Wonder about what the supervisor is saying

**Blended Model**

- Protect time & place from interruption
- Sit quietly, fully attentive to supervisee
- Allow supervisee to “set the agenda”
- Remain aware of supervisee’s emotional state
Work with infants, young children, and their families is complex, sometimes confusing, intense, and always challenging.

Often the needs are extensive and the available resources feel inadequate to address the wide range of concerns that impact the family.

- Heffron & Murch (2013)
“We go through some pretty crazy things in a regular day and don't have any type of system set up to even address how to deal with it.”
- Part C Early Intervention Provider

Secondary Traumatic Stress
From Gallen, Lepore, Peterson, & Willford (In Revision)

Why Reflective Supervision?
- This work with vulnerable, high-risk populations requires a highly skilled workforce
- Frequent exposure to the trauma of children and families has a cumulative effect
- "...reflective supervision helps early childhood practitioners cope with the stress and feelings of being overwhelmed that often result when working with vulnerable families and children"
  — Bernstein and Edwards (2012)
- Reflective supervision is necessary to maintain fidelity to models, the quality of services, and for the well being of home visitors.
  — Heffron et al. (2016)
- Help to address client mental health problems, substance abuse, and domestic violence in terms of skills and confidence

Occupational Hazards
- Domestic Violence
- Substance Abuse
- Historical Trauma
- Child Abuse and Neglect
- Mental Health Difficulties
- Chronic Health Issues
- Generational Poverty
- Living with Constant Crisis

Traumatic Countertransference
Emotional, physical or interpersonal reactions toward the client (Burke, Carruth & Pritchard, 2006, pg. 287-288).

“...disturbing, disheartening, disgusting, shocking, and frightening”
— Ososky, Putnam, & Lederman (2008)

Professionals working with trauma often experience reactions to clients’ stories
“Occupational Hazards”

**Vicarious Trauma**
Harmful changes in view of self, others and the world as a result of exposure to traumatic content

**Secondary Traumatic Stress**
Syndrome among professional helpers that mimics PTSD and occurs as a result of exposure to traumatic material

“Occupational Hazards”

**Compassion Fatigue**
Gradual lessening of compassion over time with loss of pleasure in work, sleeplessness, apathy, and reduced job performance, etc.

**Burnout**
Long-term onset of employment related exhaustion, loss of interest, and reduced sense of accomplishment.

*To keep the lamp burning we have to keep putting oil in it.*
-Mother Teresa

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**Secondary Traumatic Stress Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupation</th>
<th>STSS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mental Health</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Emergency Workers</td>
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<td>Juvenile Justice</td>
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<td>Hospital Care Workers</td>
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<td>Child Welfare</td>
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<td>ER Nurses</td>
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<td>SA Counselors</td>
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<td>Social Workers</td>
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<td>Ei Service Coordinator</td>
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<td>Ei Service Provider</td>
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- STSS: Secondary Traumatic Stress
Growth of the Approach

• Current credentialing systems:
  • Endorsement for Culturally Sensitive, Relationship-focused Practice Promoting Infant Mental Health® (MI-AIM/Alliance) [link]
  • California Training Guidelines and Personnel Competencies for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health [link]
  • Colorado Coaching Credential [link]

WHAT IS NEEDED TO IMPLEMENT FOR EFFECTIVE REFLECTIVE SUPERVISION?

• Regularity
• Supervisor Needs (Supports)
• Organizational Support
• Ongoing Training including RSC for Supervisors
• Trust in the Process
• Adequate Time and Attention

IMPLEMENTATION CHALLENGES

• Providers trained to "leave their feelings and issues at the door"
• Confusing to be asked to “tune in” to emotions and feelings
• Early childhood is a "culture of action"
• Time taken from children and families
• RSC comes at the expense of other program requirements
• “More pressing priorities”
• What is the evidence?
• Administrative understanding and support
• Financial and programmatic resources

What is the evidence?

**Current Research Efforts**

- In order to develop effective RSC training programs and to justify the continued requirement for RSC, we must:
  - Clearly define what it is
  - What makes it work
  - Identify the specific competencies needed to provide reflective supervision with fidelity
  - Develop measures are needed to evaluate the implementation and effectiveness of reflective supervision.
  - Rating scales and observation ratings have been developed to rate actions or behaviors that are present in supervisory interactions
- A concerted process is underway to develop the necessary evidence base to support of RSC.
- Work groups (Alliance) are developing projects to evaluate RSC impact and outcomes

**RSC Research Overview**

- Small-scale studies conducted following pilot implementation of training and/or administration of a specific tool or procedure related to reflective supervision.
- There is significant evidence to support theories linking reflective skills in parents with child outcomes including treatment approaches for remediation of attachment problems
  - Fonagy & Target, 2005; Sadler et al., 2006 as cited in Tomlin, et al., 2014).
- Most research on “reflection” has been directed toward understanding, evaluating, and improving parents’ capacities to be reflective.
  - Tomlin et al. (2014)
- There are several qualitative reports and “widespread recognition” of the value of RSC, yet there is currently limited empirical evidence about its effects on professionals and their practice.
- Efforts are currently underway to identify the core processes essential to RSC, to examine the impact of RSC on the practitioner and on the client, and to discriminate between the unique aspects of RSC
  - Tomlin & Heller, 2016

**RSC Evaluation Tools**

- Reflective Supervision Rating Scale (2010)

**Reflective Supervision Rating Scale**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Scale Description</th>
<th>Rating Options</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I have a regular meeting relationship.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I have established a consistent supervisor schedule.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I provide encouragement to improve my practice.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I engage throughout the entire session.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>I am a true teacher and a guide.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>I make the felt, not just talk.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>I am honest about my strengths and areas for improvement.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>I have helped me to refine my communication.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>I have improved my ability to be reflective.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>I allow the client to come to their own conclusions during supervision.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>I help client to develop their own ideas.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>I help them to think about their own ideas.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>I help them to think about their reflections.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>I help them to think about what they thought was happening.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>I help them to think about what others thought was happening.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>I help them to think about their reflections and their reflections.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Jordanna Ash**
Findings: Increased Reflective Capacity

- Gilkerson & Imberger (2016) adapted the FAN (Facilitating Attuned Interactions) model to increase reflective capacity and practice of home visitors.
- Tomlin, Sturm, and Koch (2009) found that Part C EI providers
  - Increased their ability to recognize that reflective skills are important in their work
  - Decreased judgmental attitudes toward families
  - Increased willingness and ability to provide individualized services to families
  - Reported better use their discipline-specific knowledge to support the parent-child relationship
- Watson and Neilsen, & Gatti (2012) described qualitative findings that regular meetings with a RSC supported supervisees ability to identify and use their feelings to inform their work with families
- Using a professional development model, Shea, Goldberg, and Weatherston (2016) trained supervisors and supervisees in RSC.
  - All participants achieved mastery of RSC skills and knowledge measured by responses to training vignettes.
  - Supervisees demonstrated increase in use of RSC skills in their work with families.
  - Supervisors demonstrated increase in self-efficacy regarding their ability to apply RSC skills

Findings: Increased Quality and Job Satisfaction

- Positive supervisory relationships are associated with higher job satisfaction, less turnover, lower burnout, increased comfort with disclosure, and less anxiety in a HV sample (Tomlin & Heller, 2016)
- Observational studies show that child welfare agencies with more relationship-based supervision have lower turnover and greater success in obtaining permanent placement for children (National Council on Crime and Delinquency, 2006)
- RSC enhanced nurses’ work satisfaction with very low birth-weight infants and families (Pridham et al. 2006)
- A HV program found significant positive changes in how staff conducted their work with families and in their satisfaction with their work (Gilkerson, 2004).
- Part C EI providers in Pennsylvania reported that RSC specific experiences were associated with important program quality factors identified (Gallen, et al., 2016).
  - Higher ratings by supervisors of supervision/reflective supervision correlated with higher job satisfaction, higher ratings of the quality of RSC, better work-life balance, and higher compassion satisfaction.
  - Higher supervisee ratings of the supervisor associated with lower ratings of burnout, secondary traumatic stress overall and avoidance symptoms
- RSC associated with an increase in reflective capacity of childcare providers (Virmani and Ontai, 2010) and more positive interaction between children in care and early care staff (Virmani et al., 2013)
- RSC is also associated with retention in childcare providers (Howes, James, & Ritchie, 2003).

Conclusions

- RSC appears to contribute to program quality through;
  - Improved quality of interactions with children and families
  - Increased Reflective Capacity
  - Improved ability to identify and talk about emotions
  - Decreased negative judgment of families
  - Improved ability to support families
  - Adherence to model fidelity
  - Increased job satisfaction
  - Increased staff ability to manage stress and implement self-care strategies
  - Reduced secondary trauma
  - Reduced burnout
  - Improved retention of staff and clients
- Need for continued evaluation and development of tools to systematically assess;
  - Reflective supervision process elements
  - Supervisor confidence/competence
  - Supervisee progress in practicing reflectively
  - Connect these measures to child/family/program outcomes data.
- Need for more studies and data!

- RSC is “… a form of ongoing professional development that helps early childhood practitioners work effectively with vulnerable families, support parent-child relationships, deepen [provider] understandings of their experiences, cope with work-related stress, feel less isolated in their work, and prevent burnout.”
Key Resources