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## Using Supervision Mapping to Enrich School Counseling Fieldwork Supervision

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### Abstract

Supervision mapping is a creative, visual approach to supervision wherein trainees identify concerns, strengths, goals, and ethical questions. While the supervision map has been identified as a potential tool for school counselors-in-training, no research has focused on its effectiveness. Therefore, this study sought to explore trainees' experiences using the supervision map with faculty supervisors throughout their fieldwork experiences. The supervision map was used with school counseling trainees in two graduate practicum seminars in the Northeast (n=31). After using the supervision map for the duration of the seminar class, an electronic survey of their experience was administered, to which 23 trainees responded. Response frequencies, percentages, and qualitative feedback were analyzed to ascertain student perception of the supervision map. Results indicated favorable reactions to using this tool to help trainees develop reflective practices. Additionally, results suggest the benefit of using supervision maps may extend to the faculty supervisor, site supervisor, and group supervision process. Potential future uses for the supervision map are highlighted.

### Keywords

school counseling fieldwork, supervision, and supervision map

## **Introduction**

Supporting school counseling trainees to become reflective practitioners is a key to promoting a strong sense of professional identity (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006). Many supervision models exist to assist counselor educators develop core competencies for trainees. Inviting trainees to focus in on a single concern to be shared through supervision mapping can elevate the group supervision dialogue. By honing in on the trainees' strengths related to the concern, the areas in need of attention, their goals to address the issue, and any potential ethical constraints, they practice a sequence of reflection that may make them more effective practitioners in the future.

## **Literature Review**

### **Supervision in School Counseling**

The Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) (n.d.), and the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) (2016) support the importance of supervision for school counselors-in-training during practicum and internship. The duties and responsibilities of site supervisors and faculty supervisors are multifaceted (Thompson & Moffett, 2010) and include facilitating personal and professional growth (Boyd, 1978), assessing the trainee's performance and professional competence, and ensuring the welfare of the individuals with whom the supervisee assists (ACES, n.d.).

Various models of clinical supervision have been cited in the counseling literature, including theory-specific, developmental (e.g. Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987), and integrated (e.g. Bernard, 1979). School counseling-specific models have also been established, such as the School Counselor Supervision Model (Luke & Bernard, 2006), which extended Bernard's (1979) Discrimination Model to support supervision for trainees in comprehensive school counseling

programs. More recently, additional models to support school counselor development have emerged, including the Change Agent for Equity (CAFE) Model (Ockerman, Mason, & Chen-Hayes, 2013), the Professional Academic Response Model (PARM) (Henderson & Lampe, 1992), and the SAAFT Model (support, accessibility, advocacy, teamwork, and feedback) (Cook, Trepal & Somody, 2012). While an in-depth review of these models is beyond the scope of this paper, similarities among these models include providing structure to the supervision process and promoting a reflective approach to one's growth as a school counselor trainee.

### **Creative Approaches to Supervision**

There is a growing interest in utilizing nontraditional, creative techniques in counseling supervision to assist trainee development and enhance the supervisory experience for both the supervisor and supervisee (Huss, 2006; Koltz, 2008; McCurdy & Owen, 2008). Huss (2006) outlines the benefits of utilizing creative approaches to supervision as being two-fold. First, the supervisor is modeling the use of creative techniques, therefore giving permission for the supervisee to also do so in their counseling. Second, creative approaches support professional reflection thus providing "time and energy for processing the learning experiences" (p. 118).

Examples of creative approaches to supervision are vast. The literature supports creative approaches such as utilizing sandtray supervision (Anekstein, Hoskins, Agramovich & Terry, 2014), bilateral art (McNamee & McWey, 2004), bibliosupervision (Graham & Pehrsson, 2009), and video journaling (Parikh, Janson, & Singleton, 2012). Another creative approach suggested in the literature is the supervision map, which has been specifically identified for use with school counselor trainees (Huss, 2006).

## Supervision Mapping

The supervision map illustrated in Figure 1 shows the logical progression of reflective practice for a school counseling fieldwork student. Following along with the graphics, the trainee first identifies a concern from their fieldwork to address. This is most often an issue about which they have questions. Perhaps this is an issue that they have not confronted in their coursework or a protocol they are trying to learn in their particular setting. An example concern might be: *how do I support a student who is having a conflict with a teacher?* Moving to the next graphic, they must brainstorm the strengths that they bring to this particular issue. They might identify their listening skills or ability to help trainees develop communication skills. When they next consider what needs attention, they might admit, for example, feeling intimidated about speaking to the teacher about a student who has a conflict with them. Next, the trainee considers their goal for this situation. They might be focused on supporting the student to speak to the teacher themselves about the conflict and how they might go about working together to best benefit the student's learning. The trainee then considers the ethical dilemma that this situation might generate. This step encourages trainees to refer to the American School Counseling Association (ASCA) *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (ASCA, 2010). Furthermore, there is room on the map for the supervisor to provide feedback to the trainee and space for the trainee to document feedback from peers that may result in a positive resolution.

The goal of supervision mapping is to encourage structured, targeted and rich discussions of universal concerns for school counseling trainees while teaching them to become reflective practitioners. Trainees can present their maps each week and were given feedback by their university supervisor and peers. At the end of each class, supervision maps can be collected and

additional written feedback can be shared with the trainee each week. At the close of the semester, trainees can be asked to write a reflection paper about their supervision maps. Finally, the supervision map can give trainees the opportunity to engage in rich conversations about social justice and equity. For example, when discussing the school counselor's role in disciplinary action, the trainee may find themselves discussing differential treatment of students who commit the same offense. Working through the multiple components of the supervision maps can give trainees a rich template for working through the inevitable challenges for novice school counselors.

### **Purpose of the Study**

Supervision plays an important role for the development and competence of school counseling trainees. Utilizing creative approaches in supervision may help facilitate the supervisory relationship and provide reflective opportunities for trainees. While some of these approaches have been explored in the literature, no research has focused on using the supervision map (Huss, 2006) for school counselors-in-training. Therefore, this study sought to explore trainees' experiences using the supervision map with faculty supervisors throughout their fieldwork experiences.

### **Method**

#### **Participants**

Participants included 31 school counseling trainees (25 females and 6 males; all identified as Caucasian) at two state universities in the Northeast. Participants were enrolled in the practicum course where the use of supervision maps was a required assignment.

## **Procedure**

Each week of class trainees presented their map and received feedback from peers. Supervision maps were collected and the university supervisor then prepared written feedback about each map. Toward the end of the term, trainees were asked to reflect on their sequence of maps and to look for signs of growth in their professional identity, skills, and competencies over time. At the close of the term, trainees at both universities were invited to participate in a survey that assessed how the use of the supervision maps impacted their learning during their school counseling fieldwork. Response frequencies and percentages were calculated to ascertain student perception of the supervision map. The Institutional Review Boards at both universities where data were collected approved this study procedure.

## **Results**

Of the 31 trainees who used the supervision map in this study, 23 (74%) completed the survey. All respondents utilized the supervision map throughout the duration of their fieldwork experience. The participants' responses to the survey indicated support for utilizing the supervision map approach as a tool to assist in identifying strengths, items needing attention, goals and ethical issues. Response percentages are listed for each Likert scale survey item in Table 1.

Table 1

*Response Percentages for Likert Scale Survey Items*

<u>Item</u>	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>	<u>Disagree</u>	<u>Neutral</u>	<u>Agree</u>	<u>Strongly Agree</u>
I understood the purpose of preparing a supervision map for our group meetings.	0%	0%	21.7%	26.1%	<b>52.2%</b>
Preparing the map helped me focus on questions and concerns that came up during practicum.	0%	4.3%	21.7%	<b>39.1%</b>	34.8%
I was able to identify an area of concern for each supervision map that I wanted to discuss.	0%	21.7%	17.4%	21.7%	<b>39.1%</b>
I was able to identify personal strengths using the supervision map.	0%	8.7%	17.4%	<b>39.1%</b>	34.8%
I was able to identify at least one thing that needed attention using the supervision map.	0%	8.7%	4.3%	34.8%	<b>52.2%</b>
I was able to identify my goals using the supervision map.	0%	8.7%	8.7%	<b>47.8%</b>	34.8%
I was able to identify ethical issues using the supervision map.	0%	0%	30.4%	30.4%	<b>39.1%</b>
The class discussions of the concerns I identified on my supervision map were helpful to me.	8.7%	4.3%	21.7%	17.4%	<b>47.8%</b>
The feedback/suggestions I received from my supervisor on my map were helpful to me.	4.5%	0%	18.2%	36.4%	<b>40.9%</b>
I feel the use of supervision maps were a positive addition to the practicum seminar meetings.	8.7%	13%	8.7%	30.4%	<b>39.1%</b>
I learned strategies for self-reflection that I can apply to my career by using the supervision map.	0%	8.7%	26.1%	30.4%	<b>34.8%</b>

In addition to the Likert scale questions, participants were asked to respond to the following open-ended prompt: “Please identify any suggestions or changes for the use of the supervision map.” Lastly, they were provided a space to write any additional comments. Several trainees reported that the supervision map was a useful tool to help them process their strengths, areas for improvement, and development over time. For example, one student wrote:

The supervision maps helped me address areas of concern that arose while I was at my practicum site. They also made me reflect on my experience as a school counseling intern and assess my performance and what I believe my strengths and weaknesses are. I believe that the maps helped focus our classroom discussions on important areas instead of just talking about our experiences at our schools in general. The supervision maps also helped me relate to my other classmates. My classmates and I were able to provide excellent feedback and suggestions to each other. Each class we were able to gain strategies on handling our own issues as well as everyone else’s.

While the majority of feedback on the use of supervision maps was positive, several trainees also offered constructive suggestions. For example, one trainee commented on the time it took to prepare a supervision map, stating, *The supervision maps were sometimes helpful but also a bother sometimes. I found myself struggling to fill out all of the areas at times and this made it become more of a task than a tool.* All did not share this sentiment, as another respondent suggested using the tool more frequently.

## **Discussion**

### **Benefits of Supervision Mapping**

Benefits of the supervision map are trifold and include, impacting the trainee, the group process, and the supervisor. Trainees noted many benefits derived from the use of supervision

mapping. For example, the graphics on the map model a reflective process supervisees can utilize to gain insight into their development as a school counselor. Some trainees reported initially struggling to complete the “strengths” area. Most counseling trainees question their competence to utilize the skills and techniques they learned in their coursework (Howard, Inman & Altman, 2006). This process invited trainees to consider both strengths and areas in need of development with equal importance. Use of supervision maps encourages trainees to develop a critical consciousness of their own process of becoming an effective school counselor. This complex role involves individual and group counseling, consultation, participation in whole school planning and initiatives, taking on leadership and advocacy roles, as well as crisis response (ASCA, 2012).

The supervision map also integrates ethical decision making into the trainee’s daily work. School counselors confront a myriad of ethical dilemmas including issues around confidentiality, dual relationships, and acting on information concerning harm to a student (Bodenhorn, 2006). Using the map fosters personal involvement in professional dialogue both internally and through group supervision or consultation with more seasoned colleagues. Additionally, the supervision map helped them develop self-reflection strategies that they can employ in the future. One respondent suggested *maps should be a monthly requirement for all teachers and [K-12] educators.*

Use of the maps allowed trainees to see their own personal and professional growth develop over time. Early concerns (such as being taken seriously or knowing key protocols) give way to more clinical and systemic questions concerning best practices in school counseling. Further, as the use of data and accountability measures are essential for today’s school counselor, the supervision is a tool that can facilitate fieldwork trainees’ own data collection process.

There are many benefits to the group supervision process. Use of supervision maps lends an essential structure to discussions and equal participation. One trainee said, it was a *great way to come prepared to class. Made me think about issues I needed to bring up.* Similarly another trainee reported, *the maps helped provide a focus and structure for the meetings that may have been lacking otherwise. [It] provided efficiency of group meetings.* If trainees know that the expectation is that they will be asked to present their map each week, as well as provide feedback to those of their peers, they are more apt to arrive at supervision prepared to discuss a concern of importance to them and to listen to the concerns of others. Thus, it is useful in guaranteeing equity of time spent discussing each trainee's concerns. Supervision maps can create dialogue among supervisees about issues of social justice and equity across differing districts, grade levels, and programmatic approaches.

There are also benefits for the faculty or site supervisor. The supervision maps can act as a monitoring tool and can document growth over time. With new certifying standards, this is of great importance. In addition, supervision maps can raise shared concerns of supervisees and can help build group cohesion. Supervision mapping can allow for distance supervision in cases of illness, inclement weather, etc. This approach can also assist in grading process. For new supervisors, the map provides structure to individual or group supervision and can facilitate providing targeted feedback to supervisees.

Supervision mapping can also be a tool employed to train supervisors. The authors selected this approach as they were training to become counselor educators. Initially, they had limited experience with supervision. To guide their practice of group supervision, they selected the map approach to focus their trainees' discussions and to collect useful data about professional

identity development. Moreover, the use of mapping has familiarized counselor educators with common concerns of new trainees and ways to support their development.

### **Implications**

Trainees experience a heightened sense of dependency in the initial stages of their hands-on work (Stoltenberg & Delworth, 1987). With practice, they become more comfortable initiating tasks on their own. It is possible that the use of supervision mapping can help them to see their competence develop over time. This gives trainees the opportunity to reflect on their strengths in the face of each challenge. Once trainees are proficient in this reflective process, perhaps the use of supervision mapping would become more cumbersome or redundant than helpful. Thus, this tool might be best suited for trainees in practicum and in the initial stages of internship.

Supervision maps could also be helpful in bridging the gap between the site supervisor and faculty supervisor. The site supervisor is often juggling multiple responsibilities when overseeing a fieldwork student. The use of supervision mapping gives the site supervisor and faculty supervisor specific talking points when they are attempting to support a shared trainee. Use of the supervision map could be added to site supervisor education in alignment with the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP) site supervisor training requirements (2016). Also the data generated from the maps can help school counseling programs identify trends in concerns for fieldwork trainees, which can then be addressed in coursework.

### **Limitations**

No pre-test was administered, therefore trainees' capacity in the area of professional reflection before the use of supervision mapping is unclear. While trainees reported that they

had developed reflective skills utilizing the supervision map, we relied on self-report methodology, which may differ from their actual skill level (Cook & Campbell, 1979). This study represents a relatively small sample size. Finally, it is possible that approach differences of the two instructors could have impacted the outcome of the survey about the use of supervision mapping.

### **Further research**

Future research on the use of supervision mapping might focus on the integration of technology that ensures trainee and student confidentiality. Trainees can share supervision maps at a distance, perhaps outside of the class experience as concerns arise. The supervisor can give feedback remotely and more expediently than during a weekly class. Perhaps software could be created to house supervision maps, which could allow trainees or supervisors analyze trends via frequency of word use.

This study focused on school counseling trainees, however in the future other counseling trainees such as clinical mental health or rehabilitation counselors may benefit from using a supervision map. In addition, it might be possible to develop the supervision map to increase level of sophistication as the trainee transitions from practicum to internship. Additional reflections might include identifying evidence-based interventions to address concern (when applicable) and/or identifying a data collection process to measure effectiveness of intervention (when appropriate). The supervision map could invite trainees to reflect on their interpersonal style and social and emotional competencies by challenging trainees to think about their decision making skills, relationship skills, interpersonal relationships on the site, and their ability to resolve conflicts professionally and regulate their emotions. Lastly, including areas for self-care and professional development could enhance the supervision map. In short, it might be of great

importance to differentiate this tool given the clinical development of student over the span of their fieldwork experience. Perhaps a more intricate supervision map could also be used for the purposes of professional development and remediation for school counselors who struggle to be effective in their multiple roles.

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Figure 1

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Supervisor \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

**Topics/Questions for Today:**

**Strengths:**

**Concerns:**

**Goals:**

**Ethical Issues (including diversity issues):**

**Supervisor would like to mention:**

**Intern would like to mention:**

**Direct hours to date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Total hours to date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Next meeting date:** \_\_\_\_\_

*-adapted from Huss, in Studer, 2006*