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ABSTRACT
        For the internship site visit to be the most
effective vehicle of evaluation for the director, and for open
communication between intern and supervisor, the director must be
aware of both the communicative relationship issues and the content
of the interactions. In all six phases of the site visit--pre-site
visit, site visit entry, intern interview, triadic interview,
debriefing, and post-site visit--a communicatively competent director
must explore the following communication issues: (1) purpose of the
site visit; (2) director's role during the site visit; and (3) timing
of the site visit. After clarifying the communication goals of each
phase, the director can then self assess and develop any
communication skills which would achieve the successful meeting of
those goals. Some possible communication skills needed include
feedback skills (evaluative, interpretive, and descriptive),
listening skills both verbal and nonverbal, and third party
intervention skills. (A site visit reaction form, and handouts on
feedback and active listening are appended.) (MM)

MANAGING THE SITE VISIT:

Communication Issues and Strategies

for the Internship Director

presented by

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INTRODUCTION

The internship site visit has become, for me, one of the most important, challenging, and exciting aspects of each student's internship. Supervisors and interns frequently express their appreciation for that visit. It is the one point during the internship experience when there is a direct interfacing among the primary actors in the internship--the intern, the site supervisor, and the academic director. Even though interns and supervisors are required to have weekly meetings, it has been my experience that supervisors are uncomfortable with giving (or are unable to give) useful, specific feedback to interns. Interns are often too intimidated, or are not skilled at addressing their concerns. It is imperative that the academic director be sensitive to, and adept at managing, the dynamics of this visit.

The site visit is the one point during the internship experience when there is an interfacing among the three primary actors in the internship--the intern, supervisor, and director. During this time, relationships are defined, redefined, developed. Power and self esteem among the three parties, although usually not the content-focus of the transaction, are often the agenda of the relationship dynamics. A director who is well prepared for this encounter, sensitive to the underlying dynamics, and

communicatively competent, will be most adept at
constructively managing this interface so that optimum
learning takes place, power is effectively balanced, and self
esteem of all parties is enhanced. This implies the creation
of a supportive climate, compatability of goals, receptivity
to feedback from the other and appropriate feedback
responsiveness, as well as flexi lity in response repertoire
among all parties. It is important that the director leave
the agency knowing his/her intervention has enhanced the
relationship/system (in no way has harmed or had a negative
impact on the system).

PHASES OF THE SITE VISIT

In reality, the pre-site visit phase is as much a part
of the site visit as the other phases. This phase includes
the writing of the learning agreement, the phone
conversation(s) with the supervisor, the weekly contacts with
the intern, and the weekly meetings between intern and
supervisor. The second phase--site visit entry phase-- is
my first direct entry into the organization. At this point I
am observing environment, interaction between the intern and
colleagues, and presenting myself and the academic
organization into the agency.

During the third phase--intern interview, a dyadic
interview between the intern and myself--I am establishing
rapport with the intern, directly discussing internship
issues and concerns, as well as ascertaining topics which the
intern wishes to have emerge during the upcoming triadic
interview, and discussing strategies for approaching that
interview. The triadic interview fourth phase of my site
visit is to then meet with both the supervisor and intern in
a triadic interview. My role is more that of a "facilitator"
to their interaction, and this interview often lasts a full
hour.

The fifth phase is a debriefing discussion with the
intern immediately following the triadic interview. I have
found that the intern often needs someone to help her/him
"balance" the feedback (so to not dwell only on the negative
or positive), to "hear" the major thrust of the comments
and to plan a behavior strategy for the future weeks in the
agency. The final phase is the post site visit phase
where I maintain contact with both intern and supervisor to
monitor reactions and assess progress.

COMMUNICATION ISSUES

A communicatively competent director would first want to
explore answers to the following communication issues: 1)

What is the purpose of the site visit; 2) What is my role during the site visit; 3) When do I time the site visit? Following this, the director would then want to clarify for himself/herself the communicative goals of each phase of the site visit. Finally, the director would want to self assess and develop communication skills which would achieve the successful meeting of these goals. The following outline poses answers to those questions, and addresses specific skills which a director would need to possess.

A.   Communication Issues Elaborated

1.   Purpose of Site Visit (want to leave things better, not worse)

a.   to maintain the site; P.R. for academic department/organization

b.   to evaluate intern's success in achieving learning goals

c.   to facilitate communication between supervisor and intern for
- receipt of usable feedback from supervisor to intern
- receipt of usable feedback from intern to supervisor
- exploration of additional learning avenues and resources for intern
- identification of additional intern resources/skills for supervisor

d.   to advocate for the student

e.   to confront, and intervene in, conflict

f.   to open own role and program to feedback

g.   to assess appropriateness and fit of site/job duties/supervisor's supervisory skills with intern's learning goals

h.   to advise supervisor

i.   to advise intern

j.   to better understand intern's experience

k.   (might also be useful to assess what site visit
     "is not"--eg...not an opportunity to change
     general management style of supervisor, nor to
     change structure of the organization).

2.   Roles of Director During Site Visit

     a.   3rd party intervener in conflict/facilitator of
          problem solving

     b.   consultant/counselor

     c.   role model

     d.   evaluator

     e.   advocate

     f.   fact/information finder, observer

     g.   learner

3.   Timing of Site Visit

     a.   too early--issues do not have time to emerge;
          relationship between intern and supervisor, and
          between intern and director, has not had time to
          develop;

     b.   too late--no time to evaluate progress or to
          change behavior following the site visit
          feedback.

4.   Phases of Site Visit

     a.   Pre-site visit
          - learning agreement/job description set tone
            and expectations
          - contacts between intern and director have
            begun establishment of a trusting, non
            threatening/supportive relationship where
            intern is empowered by the director through
            discussion of communication options/choices
          - weekly meetings between intern and supervisor
            have established a vehicle for open
            discussion

  - phone conversation(s) with site supervisor has
    helped to clarify expectations and roles

b. <u>Site Visit Entry Phase</u>
    - observations of environment
    - observation of interaction between intern and
      colleagues
    - presentation of self and academic organization
      into the agency

c. <u>Intern Interview</u> (one-on-one interview between
    director and intern prior to the interfacing
    interview of all 3 parties)
    - establish rapport and ease any intern tension
    - discuss goals of upcoming triadic interview
    - discuss internship issues - job
      responsibilities, problems, strengths,
      personal concerns, journal entries, final
      paper, etc.
    - ascertain if intern has topics/concerns which
      s/he would like to emerge for discussion in
      the triad interview
    - feedback observations to that point in time
      and introduce additional potential learning
      areas for intern consideration

d. <u>Triadic Interview</u> - Director, Intern, Supervisor
    - establish rapport and ease any supervisor
      tension
    - overview purpose for, and procedure in, the
      interview
    - talk about fit between learning goals and job
      duties
    - assess areas of strength and weakness in
      intern performance (see appendix A)
    - introduce additional intern's issues/concerns
      during the process of the discussion
    - facilitate intern feedback to supervisor
    - assess supervisor's expectations of director
      and internship program
    - intervene in conflict/disagreement areas and
      facilitate problem solving between the two.

e. <u>Intern Debriefing</u> (follow-up interview between
    intern and director immediately following the
    triadic interview)
    - check perceptions of intern - what did s/he
      "hear" the supervisor say; may need to
      reinforce balance so intern hears both "+" and
      "-".

- reinforce a task/behavior focus as opposed to
  a criticism/evaluative defense reaction, at
  the same time facilitating the intern's
  processing of feelings/reactions
- strategize for behavior change in critical
  areas

f. Post Site Visit
- maintain contact with intern/monitor reactions
  and changes
- contact supervisor near end of internship (or
  sooner if necessary) to assess intern
  progress

B. Communication Skills Addressed

1. Feedback Skills (see conflict skills section also)

   a. want feedback to be empowering

   b. three types of feedback (see appendix B)
      - evaluative (can't work with this
        effectively)
      - interpretive (can't work with this
        effectively)
      ** - descriptive - empowering

   c. use of I message/leveling as feedback and
      assertiveness vehicle
      - describe facts/observable realities (what you
        see, hear, smell, etc.)
      - describe how you feel
      - communicate your thoughts (what you see it
        as,....what you think...)

2. Listening Skills (see appendix C and conflict skills
   section B.3)

   a. nonverbal listening skills - incubate,
      acknowledge, use eye contact, project openness
      through use of posture/kinesics/proxemics

   b. verbal listening skills - utilize clarifying
      questions, summarizing, paraphrasing, door
      openers, request elaboration through examples or
      behavior descriptions, request restatements/
      perception checks by the two parties

3. Conflict - 3rd Party Intervention Skills

   a. Assess if it is appropriate to intervene (Hocker/Wilmot, p185).
      - is relationship "stuck"--no productive change has occurred and one or both parties feel dissatisfied?
      - does one person feel wronged, mistreated, coerced by another so that intervention will balance the power enough so the situation can be assessed?
      - do repetitive, destructive conflict cycles characterize the relationship to the point that one or both parties want out of the relationship or are feeling bitter/hurtful toward other?

   b. Take special care to retain neutrality; siding with either party can have destructive effects (Hocker/Wilmot, p188).
      - siding implies the director now takes on the win-lose thinking of the intern and supervisor, reinforcing the destructive cycle;
      - creates a winner - (the party chosen) and loser which can escalate the conflict;
      - siding and adding views increases the number of conflict participants, complicates the issues and the conflict behavior
      - director invests energy which increases the stakes of parties in the conflict outcome

   Director must keep in mind that s/he is entering an already existing system of interdependent parties. The "client" is the relationship between supervisor and intern.

   c. Skills needed as a 3rd party intervenor (Hocker/ Wilmot, Chapter 8)
      - empathic understanding
      - congruence
      - openness and genuineness
      - nonverbal sensitivity
      - active listening
         - reflect feelings
         - restate/paraphrase
         - ask open-ended questions
         - clarify options the parties express
         - make suggestions, give information or advice when warranted in the process

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- persuasive ability
- direct the feedback process by sharing and/or
  facilitating the following feedback rules
    - be descriptive/not judgmental
    - encourage specificity
    - deal with things that can be changed
    - speak only or self
    - encourage parties to give feedback when
      requested
    - encourage feedback whose accuracy can be
      checked.

CONCLUSION

For the internship site visit to be the most effective

vehicle of evaluation for the director, and of open

communication between intern and supervisor, the director

must be as sensitive to the communicative relationship issues

as s/he is to the content of the interactions. The preceding

discussion addresses some of those issues, suggesting

directions and strategies.

Appendix A

Site Visit Reaction Form
(completed by director following site visit)

Intern's Name _____ Date _____

Supervisor's Name _____

1. Personal appearance/courtesy/appropriate behavior

2. Tact and common sense

3. Willingness to assume responsibility and take initiative

4. Thoroughness of preparation/quality of work/ability to meet deadline and follow instructions

5. Attitude

6. Ability to work w/colleagues and supervisor

7. Effect of intern on job site

8. Fit of student's responsibilities with internship learning contract goals.

9. Fit of student's classroom preparation, knowledge and skills with internship responsibilities.

10. What most impresses supervisor about intern?

11. What one aspect would make this student a stronger intern/this internship a better experience?

12. How could I, the director, better meet the supervisor's needs?

13. Would the division/company be willing to consider utilizing another intern from our department in the future?

FEEDBACK

People give three types of feedback to others:

Evaluative: Here we observe the other's behavior and respond with our own critique of it. For example, "You are a very cold person and I don't think that's any way to be for a person in your position."

Interpretative: Here we observe the behavior and try to analyze why the person is behaving that way. For exampl , "You're acting very coldly toward others, and I think it's because you're uptight about your new job."

**Descriptive: Here we observe the behavior and simply feedback to the person our specific observations without evaluation, but share with the person how his behavior affects us. For example, "I don't see you smiling very often around the office and I guess I feel less like being friendly."

In building interpersonal relationships, try to use descriptive feedback. Also remember the following criteria for useful feedback:

1. It is descriptive rather than judgmental. Describing one's reaction leaves the individu l free to use it or not as s/he sees fit. Avoiding judgmental language reduces the need for the person to react defensively.

2. It is specific rather than general. To be told that one is dominating will probably not be as useful as to be told, "Just now, when we were deciding this issue, you did not listen to what others said and I felt forced to accept your arguments or face attack from you."

3. It takes into account the needs of both the receiver and giver of feedback. Feedback can be destructive when it serves only our own needs and fails to consider the needs of the person on the receiving end.

4. It is directed toward behavior that the receiver can do something about. Frustration is only increased when a person is reminded to change some shortcoming over which he or she has no control.

5. It is solicited rather than imposed. Feedback is most useful when the receiver has formulated the kind of question that those observing the receiver can answer.

6. It is well timed. In general, feedback is most useful at the earliest opportunity after the given behavior (depending, of course, on the person's readiness to hear it, support available from others, etc.).

7. It is checked to insure clear communication. One way of doing this is to have the receiver try to rephrase the feedback he/she has received to see if it corresponds to what the sender had in mind.

8. When the feedback is given in a training group, both giver and receiver have the opportunity to check with others in the group about the accuracy of the feedback. Is this one person's impression or an impression shared by others?

    Feedback, then, is a way of giving help, a corrective mechanism for the person who wants to learn how well his/her behavior matches his/her intentions, and a means for establishing one's identity--for answering the question "Who am I?"

RULES OF FEEDBACK

* Give feedback which helps the receiver--don't dump or unload

* Give feedback which describes behavior--not the person

* Give feedback which is well timed--as soon after the behavior as possible

* Give feedback in appropriate doses--don't give more than the receiver can process at one time

* Direct feedback toward behavior that can reasonably be expected to be corrected

* Check out feedback so as to ensure clear communication

* Give feedback that describes what effect it has on you--don't ask why. Don't try to interpret--talk at the observational level.

* Give feedback directly and with real feeling

* Check feedback out with the group to ensure accuracy and validity

* Solicited feedback is more effective than imposed feedback

* Give feedback in terms of "more or less" as opposed to "either-or"

* Present feedback in terms of the sharing of ideas and information instead of giving advice

* Give positive feedback as well as negative feedback

HINTS FOR ACTIVE LISTENING

Initial diagram of Active Listening:
  "You feel (emotion) about (partial description of the event) ..."
    Feeling   (CONTENT)

Steps: 1. First decide what emotion has been sent, and then put it into a sentence.

  2. The "you feel" above is to help the receiver phrase the sentence in such a way as to give credit to the sender for the emotion.

  3. Substitutes are: "It sounds as if you're saying ..."
        "You wish..."; "you think..."; "you want"
        -- may be used.
  Also, the event may be described first and then the emotion.

  4. Cliches or codes may be used in place of a specific emotion, such as "scared" or "worried." e.g."

  Sender: "He and I have had a good relationship up to now ...
     like father and son. Maybe he'll be as considerate of me
     as I have been of him"

  Receiver: "He might scratch your back now."

  5. When two opposing viewpoints are expressed in the sender's message, both sides of the ambivalence should be picked up. e.g.:

  Sender: "I know it would be a lousy thing to do, but they didn't
     seem to have any trouble giving me the raw end."

  Receiver: "You wouldn't feel good in doing that, but you think
     you'd be dishing out what they gave you."

  6. It is important to stress that an accurate use of the listening skills will take a person to the heart of his problem. As he defines and redefines it, it becomes clearer to him, feelings are dissipated, and solutions begin to form in his mind.

  However, if the listener fails to include emotion in the messages he sends back, this process is inhibited. Listening on content can go on at length without a person effectively working on his problem.

  7. There is a place in active listening for the listener's experience and input. However, this is only when the problem has been thoroughly aired and the listener's experience is in some way asked for. At this point, the listener should inquire about solutions the other party is considering before bringing in any of his own.

by Thomas Gordon

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