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AUTHOR Campbell, Linda F.
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ABSTRACT

Supervision of psychologists-in-training continues to be a valued component of teaching skills and professional development. Mentoring within training venues and professional peer consultative venues is gaining recognition as an essential element of professional development. This paper illuminates some of the fundamental values and elements of mentoring and supervision and offers suggestions for movement toward an integrated perception of the two functions in training and professional development. The merging of these roles partially results from shared expectations of students for role-modeling, encouragement and support, and relational growth through both mentoring and supervision. Some of the suggestions given for those who supervise and those who mentor include: (1) discuss expectations of the relationship from the perspective of the supervisor and supervisee; (2) be alert to boundary issues that can be blurred by mixed roles; (3) male supervisors and mentors should be aware of the socialized power dynamics that can play out differently with male and female supervisees; and (4) women supervisors and mentors should be aware of cross-gender dynamics in mentoring men. (Contains 20 references.) (JDM)

Mentoring Processes and Functions in Supervision

Linda F. Campbell, Ph.D.

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MENTORING PROCESSES AND FUNCTIONS IN SUPERVISION

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Supervision of psychologists in training continues to be a valued component of teaching skills and professional development and continues to be researched as part of the professional commitment to process and treatment outcomes. Concomitantly, mentoring within training venues and professional peer consultative venues is gaining recognition as an essential element of professional development. Surprisingly, supervision and mentoring have not been viewed in any integrated or related way in our continued exploration and investigation of each as a construct or as process variables in training. This paper illuminates some of the fundamental values and elements of mentoring and supervision and offers suggestions for movement toward an integrated perception of the two functions in training and professional development.

Mentoring

There is no consensual definition of mentoring; however, there are commonly accepted functions of mentoring. Mentoring functions are "those aspects of a developmental relationship which enhance both individuals' growth and advancement" (Kram, 1988, p. 22). Theorists have proposed two primary categories of mentoring functions (Levinson, 1978;

O'Neil and Wrightsman, 1988; and Kram, 1988). The psychosocial function includes role modeling, affirmation, interpersonal dynamics, and essentially, relational concepts and values of mutuality and respect. The career function incorporates activities such as coaching, sponsorship, and introducing the student to others in the field.

Gender. Gender aspects of mentoring are reflected in the changing, but current landscape of educational and training settings in which there are fewer senior faculty women than men and most mentors are still male (Rix, 1987; Aisenberg & Harrington, 1988). The proportion of women mentors is not increasing as rapidly as the percentage of women doctoral students (Willis & Diebold, 1997). Women doctoral students seek out same-sex role models and mentors and tend to identify with their female role models more than men do with same-sex mentors (Gilbert & Evans, 1985). It is hypothesized that women students look to female role models as exemplars that they too can achieve, be competent, and be successful.

Ethnic minorities. There continues to be an under-representation of ethnic minorities within the ranks of tenured academic psychologists (Blackwell, 1989). If ethnic minority students are to receive mentoring, non-minority psychologists will often be filling that role. Studies suggest that non-minority professors and senior professionals can serve as mentors

effectively (Atkinson, Neville, & Casas, 1991). Importantly, however, is the finding that ethnic minority students and novice professionals who had an ethnically similar mentor perceived their mentoring more positively than those with non-minority mentors (Atkinson, et al., 1991).

Supervision

The profession often treats mentorship in a formalized way by assigning mentors to students and early professionals; however, effective mentorship is often a spontaneous experience that develops within a supervisory or consultative experiences and takes on the mantle of an expansion of the supervisory role relationship (Collins, 1993). Awareness and sensitivity on the part of the supervisor is vital in this common scenario because the mentorship may not be expressly addressed by the mentee/supervisee. The supervisor may be positioned in the role of the mentor without the realization of such.

Professional identity development is a critical component of doctoral training. There is evidence that supervision contributes to the proficiency with which students learn therapeutic interventions, enhances knowledge, and increases the ability to facilitate internal therapeutic processes (Holloway and Neufeldt, 1995). Supervision of clinical skill development as well as critical thinking ability (e.g. dissertation and research supervision) is

a fundamental part of doctoral training and therefore these activities lend themselves to a mentoring function sought by students.

Various studies have cited the importance of quality supervision in terms of importance of relationship (Worthen & McNeill, 1996), conditions necessary for disclosure and importance of the supervisory alliance (Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996), matching of learning styles (Evans, 1998), and the supervisor-supervisee relationship in the development of future psychotherapists (Henderson, Cawyer, & Watkins, 1999).

The Merging Roles of Mentoring and Supervision

Mentoring and supervision are valuable fundamental training and professional development roles. The merging of these roles partially results from shared expectations of students for role-modeling, encouragement and support, and relational growth through both mentoring and supervision Bruce, 1995). Following are recommendations for those who supervise and mentor and for those students whom they train and mentor:

1. Discuss expectations of the relationship from the perspective of the supervisor and the supervisee (Berger & Buchholz, 1993).

2. Be alert to boundary issues that can be blurred through mixed roles (Neufeldt & Nelson, 1999).

3. Discuss how supervision will be conducted and agree on a format and structure (Berger & Buchholz, 1993).

4. The interpersonal relationship is important and can facilitate learning and self-awareness. Frustrations with the relationship are also important because understanding the conflictual relationship issues is the very skill the trainee is commissioned to learn (Berger & Bechholz, 1993). The supervisor should foster professional identity development by the trainee and yet not promote an idealization (Brightman, 1985). Attendance to process awareness is very important in this experience.

5. Supervisors are encouraged to be sensitive and aware of the potential development of a mentoring process with supervisees. The student will choose whether or not to mentor, but should know that the supervisor is accepting of this role or not.

6. Women mentors are more likely to effectively conduct the psycho-social type of mentoring in which relational connection and role modeling are central (Gilbert & Rossman, 1992). Correspondingly, women mentors may want to nuture their ability to conduct career mentoring in working with both male and female mentees.

7. Male mentors are more likely to effectively conduct the career functions of mentoring in which sponsorship, coaching, and networking are central

(Gilbert & Rossman, 1992). Likewise, men may want to nurture their ability to conduct psycho-social mentoring with both males and females.

8. Those engaged in cross-cultural mentoring should explore and identfy directly with their mentees any obstacles to mentoring.

9. The evaluative role of supervision but collaborative role of mentor often conflicts in the supervisory process and manifests as students want to learn but want to appear competent and already knowing. This phenomenon can be dealt with directly.

10. Male supervisors and mentors should be aware of socialized power dynamics that can play out differently with male and female supervisees and consequently, damage the mentoring relationship.

11. Women supervisors and mentors should be aware of cross-gender dynamics in mentoring men (e.g. psycho-social vs. career functions of mentoring).

12. Male mentors of females should be aware of potential difficulty in mentoring females in the career function area with as much comfort as they can mentor males.

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