School Counseling and Solution-focused Site Supervision:

A Theoretical Application and Case Example

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Abstract

The solution-focused counseling theory provides a useful framework that can be applied to supervision of counselors-in-training. Solution-focused supervision is especially useful for school counseling site supervisors who may have little time for supervision, not a lot of training in clinical supervision, or had different training experiences than their interns. This article delineates the tenets of the solution-focused theory and describes its application to school counseling site supervision and the American School Counselor Association National Model (ASCA, 2005) through a thorough discussion and a case example.

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In 2006, Dollarhide and Miller underscored the need for professional school counselors to gain knowledge about supervision:

> Clearly an understanding of supervision would benefit school counselors and counselors-in-training, because this knowledge would help them make the most of their own supervision experience (Magnuson et al., 2002; Pearson, 2004) and would allow them to provide supervision for colleagues and school counseling students (p. 249).

Current literature suggests that professional school counselors are rarely prepared for the supervision of counselors-in-training (Page, Pietrzak, & Sutton, 2001), nor equipped to initiate interns into the various roles required of a school counselor in the American School Counselor Association's (ASCA) National Model (Studer & Oberman, 2006). These complications may result in inadequate supervision, including unbalanced and inappropriate supervision and poor modeling on the part of the supervisor, and frustration and substandard initiation into the profession for the school counselor-in-training (Magnuson, Wilcoxon, & Norem, 2000). Lack of training in supervision theory and technique, in addition to their varied responsibilities may make it difficult for school counseling site supervisors to cover "everything" from individual and group counseling to consultation and program evaluation with interns (Kahn, 1999). Time constraints (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006), difficulty accessing university personnel who often have multiple expectations (Dollarhide & Miller; Roberts, 2001), and lack of concrete practica and internship agreements are all challenging issues for the school counseling site

supervisor (Akos & Scarborough, 2004). In addition, poor site supervision experiences may “turn off” school counselors from taking other interns, participating in site supervision, or continuing a relationship with the university training program.

Dollarhide and Miller (2006) note that supervision is a process by which the supervisee is immersed in the professional culture, through which he or she learns “mores, attitudes, values, modes of thinking and strategies for problem-solving that are embedded in that culture, thereby acquiring a professional identity” (p. 242). Therefore, school counseling interns must quickly acclimate to school culture to gain credibility among teachers, students and administration (Peterson & Deuschle, 2006), as well as simultaneously learn and adapt to the site supervisor’s style (Ladany, Walker, & Melincoff, 2001). During the internship experience these soon-to-be professionals begin the difficult task of integrating the knowledge and skills they have learned through coursework into practice with real students as their clients. School counselors-in-training often must find a balance between the multiple and sometimes conflicting expectations of the university training program’s supervisors, and the site supervisors in cooperating schools (Akos & Scarborough, 2004; Roberts, 2001). Understandably, they can easily become overwhelmed in the counseling internship experience.

While the school counseling literature is replete with examples of different types of supervision paradigms, few supervision articles address the diverse roles and tasks required of school counselors (Wood & Rayle, 2006), nor the school counselor’s implementation of the ASCA Model (ASCA, 2005; Studer & Oberman, 2006). Wood and Rayle (2006) suggest that a supervision approach which is “clear, concise and practical, and one that provides [interns with] concrete preparation regarding their [school

counselors'] professional knowledge and roles" (p. 253) is important for school counselors working with interns. Hence, a strength-based supervision approach such as solution-focused supervision (SFS) can efficiently be utilized in a school environment with supervisees. The specific techniques of the solution-focused paradigm may lend themselves to interns' increased performance in and knowledge of the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors as prescribed by the ASCA National Model. Authors of this article contend that the SFS theory provides an efficient, strength-based theory that is clear, concise, and beneficial to both the school counseling supervisor and intern. School counselors, who apply solution-focused principles to supervision, may find that the SFS not only enhances the supervisory relationship and facilitates goal setting and evaluation, but, also, pinpoints and builds upon the skills and positive contributions the intern brings with him/her into supervision (Kahn, 2000; O'Connell & Jones, 1997; Murphy, 1996).

Research Support for Solution-focused Supervision

Researchers in a variety of helping fields such as counselor education (Juhnke, 1996), social work and psychology (Selekman & Todd, 1995) have recommended applying SFT to supervision. As a relatively young theory, solution-focused tenets have only recently been applied to supervision; hence, there is a modest but positive empirical support in the research literature. However, what is known is that when solution-focused (SF) principles are applied to supervision, counselors-in-training experience increased feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment (Koob, 2002), accomplishment (Hsu, 2007), greater insight in goal-setting using client cues (Hsu), and the ability to engage in the professional development process (Hsu).

Koob (2002) found that social workers-in-training reported positive increases in perceived feelings of self-efficacy and empowerment which he contended was related to the supervisees' opportunity to choose a counseling theory that is congruent with the supervisee's own personal style, rather than being expected to align with the assigned site supervisor's theoretical orientation. Thus, supervisees learn there is more than one "right" way to utilize theory in counseling practice. Furthermore, the goals identified in solution focused supervision (SFS) center on the supervisee's development; so, they inhibit the supervisor from treating the client through the supervisee. Therefore, the supervisee may feel a stronger sense of competency as his or her ideas for the client are put into practice. Koob also argues supervisee's successes are highlighted while "mistakes" are minimized when the focus is on solutions and successes in training using the SFS paradigm.

Hsu (2007) also examined the effects of SFS on the supervisee in a qualitative study. An analysis of responses to supervisee questionnaires and supervisor written records revealed an increased sense of supervisory self-efficacy and an enhanced awareness of accomplishment. Specifically, Hsu found that supervisees could more aptly reflect on their own strengths, while also recognizing the areas in need of continued professional development. Supervisees were able to identify how their own involvement was related to helping the clients achieve their goals, which related in turn with reported feelings of increased competency in counseling.

Existing research regarding solution-focused supervision points to the positive effects on supervisee development and the supervisee-supervisor relationship. The SFS approach provides both the counselor-in-training and the supervisor with a model

that is familiar to them, as well as assists site supervisors in required knowledge regarding his/her role. The authors of this article support Roberts' (2001) assertion that site supervisors may not know what is expected of them. While this assertion spoke, specifically, to university requirements, the authors believe this also extends to site supervisors having actual knowledge of models or the process of supervision. For untrained site supervisors, utilizing the SFS approach gives the supervisor *structure and specific techniques*, increasing their professional "know-how". Hence, site supervisors who utilize SFS can rest assured that not only are their supervisory practices grounded in solid research, but that the SFS approach to site supervision benefits them in a variety of ways.

Underpinnings of the Solution-focused Supervision Approach

Like the counseling paradigm this theory is based upon, SFS assumes the following: (a) the intern has the resources and expertise necessary to solve their reported problems, (b) the supervisory relationship is a collaborative one, (c) the supervisor's expertise is on the process of supervision itself, (d) resistance is seen as the interns and supervisors being "stuck" or needing new options or ways of viewing the challenges, and (e) evaluation is based on the fulfillment of intern-initiated goal setting, discussion of expectations, and continual evaluation. In essence, "solution-focused supervision allows a neat match between what therapists want from supervision and what a supervisor can helpfully assume about his or her supervisees" (Waskett, 2006, p. 9).

Intern Expertise

A primary tenet of SF supervision is that the intern has wishes and desires within the supervisory experience, and knows what is best for one's self, given that he/she is the inherent expert on one's situation and experience. This may be a difficult proposition for site supervisors to "swallow" as interns frequently "don't know what they don't know." However, O'Connell and Jones (1997) suggest that the site supervisor should be open to "being surprised" by intern progress, development and attempts at change as the site supervisor leads him or her through the SFS process.

Literature supports the supervisee's need to feel and appear competent and respected as a consistent contributing factor to effective supervision (Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982; Rabinowitz, Heppner, & Roehlke, 1986). Counselors-in-training desire a supervision process that is built on respect, honor, and understanding, which affirms and respects their competence and opinions, as well as a supervisor who promotes a strong, safe and healthy supervisory relationship. Hence, the SFS approach which is not pathology or deficit-oriented can decrease feelings of shame, frustration, and inadequacy in both the intern and supervisor.

Power and Expertise

During supervision, the site supervisor, traditionally, has wielded incredible power in the perspective of the intern and within the supervisory relationship. However, in this approach, the SFS supervisor must acknowledge and explore the supervisory power differential. This exploration facilitates trust and the intern's ability to self-reflect and self-discover. In the solution-focused model of supervision, the site supervisor abdicates a great deal of power in order to build a safe relationship and demonstrates empathy, a

nonjudgmental stance, and a sense of intern validation - all hallmarks of a “good supervisory relationship” (Gazzola & Theriault, 2007; Worthen & McNeill, 1996). In turn, the abdication of power on behalf of the site supervisor lends itself to increasing supervisee assertiveness, and the “honoring” of his or her own style and needs (Gazzola & Theriault).

Since the practicing school counselor is often made to be the expert in all areas of professional conduct (Roberts, 2001), the school counselor supervisor may feel the need to be the expert, providing the intern with answers in every situation. However, with SFS the supervisor does not necessarily need to know the cause or function of the intern’s concern in order to resolve it, nor does he or she need to access his or her own expertise to “solve” the intern’s “problem.” The site supervisor’s primary area of "expertise" is the process of solution-focused supervision, itself, which includes eliciting the interns' beliefs and ideas; exploring prior attempts at solutions; identifying differences between past and current intern performance; adjusting for the intern’s pace of development, strengths, and limitations; and assuming change will occur while empowering the intern to make that change. The site supervisor concentrates on the successes of the intern; thereby, helping the intern apply the skills utilized in those successes to the current problems which are brought up during supervision. The supervisor guides the process from a stance of respectful curiosity, exploring possibilities with the supervisee, and opening up alternate ways of questioning or problem solving; therefore, the site supervisor need not feel that he or she must have answer or resolution to every intern’s question.

Resistance

In solution-focused supervision, resistance is seen as the supervisor and supervisee being “stuck” or unable to move forward in development, resulting in the need for a collaborative effort to identify new options and directions. If an intern continues in his or her “stuckness,” the site supervisor may explore the intern’s “absolutes” or expectations for himself or herself with regard to the problem at hand. Thomas (1996) writes that one of the supervisor’s roles is the respectful questioning of the supervisee’s “absolutes” so that the supervisee is empowered to discover and explore alternate ways of viewing the concern, and to open realms of choice for thought and behavior that the intern may not have entertained because he or she was “stuck” in problem-viewing mode. Likewise, O’Connell and Jones (1997) suggest that supervisors can gently draw attention to how their supervisees use *language* to construct their reality in order for the supervisees to gain more self-awareness into their own self-constructed meanings.

The supervisor and intern can explore what the intern believes to be an acceptable solution or status of the problem versus perfect resolution. Site supervisors who begin to feel frustrated with their intern’s seeming inability to work through new skills or difficult situations can utilize techniques such as the positive blaming technique, wherein the intern is “blamed” for doing well or any small success he or she has encountered. Likewise, a site supervisor may choose to look for exceptions to the “rule” or standards where the intern is stuck by asking “when has this problem not been a problem for you?” or “Has there ever been a time when you’ve faced a similar situation? What did you do to work through it?” This way, the supervisor points out the positive

impacts of the intern's own behavior, but continues to listen to the language the intern is using and offer an alternate, positive perspective of the situation.

Like its theoretical counseling counterpart, the assumption in the SFS model is that a ripple effect will occur in which one small change will lead to future successes and more positive change. Site supervisors will be challenged to believe that change is constant and rapid change is very possible. "No supervision 'problem' remains the same, nor do 'problems' in supervision follow the prescripted course" (Thomas, 1996, p. 133). These assumptions are entrenched within the solution-focused supervision process.

Supervision and Evaluation

The lack of clear expectations, standards for accountability, and supervisory continuity all have been cited as factors contributing to "lousy" supervision (Magnuson et al., 2000). However, in the solution-focused paradigm of supervision, intern-initiated goal-setting, discussion of expectations, and continual evaluation of supervisee progress are focal points. To the end of supporting the intern's skills and identity, the site supervisor first can use the ASCA National Model (2005) to identify skill areas in which the intern is strong as well as areas in which the intern needs more exposure or work (Studer & Oberman, 2006). Second, site supervisors can utilize the school counselor performance standards in the ASCA Model (2005), as well as the newly-adopted ASCA school counselor competencies (2007) as a method of identifying the level of intern performance and formatively monitoring intern progress.

However, the authors would, also, emphasize the importance of evaluating interns. In their training to become successful school counselors, interns must become

accountable for their current skill set and formulate goals with their university and site supervisor in order to develop and refine their abilities to prepare them for the work place. Evaluation of the intern's training is inherent in the process in order for satisfactory completion of courses and gatekeeping, and vital for counseling interns to reach both ASCA school counselor standards and to ensure ethical practice.

Process of Solution-Focused Supervision

Site supervisors can apply the six practical and easy- to- implement steps from the solution-focused counseling approach to their supervisory experiences (de Shazer, 1985; Murphy, 2008). These steps include: (a) establishing a collaborative supervisory relationship focused on change; (b) identifying changeable problems, determining goals as well as past solution attempts, intern resources, and "exceptions" to the intern's problem; (c) promoting a change in the perspective of the problem or a reframing of it if intern solutions and exceptions cannot be readily identified or applied, (d) evaluating intern progress and make plans for maintenance; and, (e) terminating the supervision relationship (Murphy, p.159).

Building the Relationship

While building a strong relationship is integral to most supervision theories, the supervisor in the SFS takes a different role in the relationship. Solution-focused supervision emphasizes the more collegial aspects of supervision characterized by a climate of respect, curiosity, and collaboration (O'Connell & Jones, 1997). In the initial stage, site supervisors build rapport with their interns by adopting Murphy's (2008, p. 47) "ambassador perspective" or O'Connel and Jone's (1997) "one down" position (p. 289). Site supervisors adopt this position in order to learn from the intern what he or she

requires of a supervisor. This position requires the site supervisor to be comfortable with abdicating a position of power and expertise, while minimizing potential occurrences of oppression or discrimination (O'Connell & Jones).

To do this, the site supervisor approaches the intern with what Murphy (2008, p. 47) refer to as a "beginner's mind" which conveys humility, curiosity, and a willingness to learn from the intern through looking, listening, and asking as much as possible before suggesting or offering an opinion. The site supervisor can then work with the intern on building the supervisory relationship by respectfully investigating and acknowledging the interns' preferences and perceptions regarding supervision, and, most importantly, finding out what is the most important issue to the intern in supervision and what he or she wants from the process and experience of supervision (Murphy, 2008). Site supervisors listen without blaming, compliment the intern for positive approaches, empower the intern by using pre-suppositional language (conveying to the intern that positive change will, in fact, happen) and continually explore, with the intern, his or her perception of the supervisory relationship. However, O'Connell and Jones (1997) caution that this collaborative and seeming egalitarianism does not excuse the site supervisor from confronting unethical or incompetent behaviors.

Problem Identification and Definition

During this phase, the site supervisor can use several techniques to continue building the relationship, and elicit information about the presenting concerns of the intern. One technique, commonly used in the solution-focused counseling paradigm, is "videotalk." Using this technique, the site supervisor may request that the intern

describe what he or she is “doing” in the problem situation as if seeing the interns’ specific, observable behavior through the camera’s eye. The “videotalk” technique enables the site supervisor to see the concern through the intern’s perspective while also facilitating the intern’s understanding of what others might see him or her doing during the problem situation. As the exploration of behaviors continues, the supervisor can ask the intern to describe, as if filming the situation, what happens before or after the problem situation occurs as well as what the intern is doing during the situation. These follow-up questions allow both parties to have a more concrete idea of context of the problem situation as well as any people around whom the situation occurs. These discussions may facilitate empathy and a better understanding of the perspective of students, parents or school personnel.

The site supervisor can also use the “scaling” technique to help identify more concrete information about the intensity, frequency, and duration of the behavior. Using a defined scale, the intern explains where he or she thinks he or she is on that scale in regard to how strong the feelings are, how often the behavior is happening, or how long the behavior has been established. This scale can be used to compare concerns and establish priorities for goals. Later, it can be used to measure gains in goal areas, and in evaluation of the intern’s strengths and areas in need of improvement.

If videotalk or scaling proves unsuccessful, or if the intern appears overwhelmed by several different situations, the site supervisor may borrow a technique from solution-focused counseling called the Formula First Session Task (de Shazer, 1985; Murphy, 2008). In this task, the site supervisor may request that the intern take the time between the current supervision meeting and the next to examine an area of his or her

professional development that is currently "working" or successful that the intern would want to see more of or to continue to happen. At the next supervision session, the site supervisor and supervisee would explore these identified skills of the supervisee and consider how to apply these to one or more other areas that need development.

An additional technique at the supervisor's disposal is the miracle question (de Shazer, 1985). Using this technique, the site supervisor asks the intern to consider a future in which the problem situation did not occur. For example, the site supervisor might ask the intern to imagine that he or she wakes up one morning to find his or her particularly stressful problem had been resolved as a result of a miracle. Like the use of pre-suppositional language in which the site supervisor communicates to the intern that change will, in fact, happen (de Shazer, 1985), the use of the miracle question enables the intern to visualize envision his or her professional life without the problem and essentially suggests to the intern that a positive change to the problem situation will occur.

The miracle question serves a two-fold purpose in supervision. First, the question requires the intern to consider his or her professional life without the problem, and to reorient him or herself from the presenting problem towards the desired behavioral outcomes without "rehashing" the intern's prior shortcomings. The focus changes to the skills and behaviors the intern will be using to make a positive difference with the specified concern. Second, as the site supervisor and supervisee work together to identify behavioral specifics as to "what would be different" as a result of the miracle, the stage is set for goal setting (Murphy, 2008).

Setting Goals

The miracle question helps the supervisor and supervisee formulate small, practical goals pertaining to the presenting concern. In solution-focused counseling, characteristics of goals include significance and meaning, specific, small, simple, self-manageable, and "start-based" or stated in the positive (Murphy, 2008). In other words, goals that interns set for themselves should be behaviorally specific, within the interns' ability and control to reach, meaningful to them, not supervisor derived, and simplistic enough that interns will have a reasonable chance of fulfilling that goal. Revising the miracle world throughout the internship can also facilitate the intern's ability to identify small indicators that change has occurred. Site supervisors should also take the time to assess, on a regular basis, the degree of supervisee commitment to the goals they have set. Once goals are selected, the site supervisor can guide supervisees through identifying past solutions and resources that may help them meet those goals.

Exceptions and Resources

One of the supervisor's most important tasks is to help the supervisees examine "exceptions" to their "rules." Exceptions are examples of times when successes occurred or the problem did not occur for the intern. Site supervisors could choose to include eliciting exceptions, elaborating upon them via questioning, and expanding the exceptions to apply to other situations or in increasing frequency to the presenting problem (Murphy, 2008). Interns may find it difficult to think of these exceptions, so the supervisor may need to "catch" the supervisee in a moment when things are going well in relation to the agreed upon goals.

Site supervisors may ask questions about the duration, frequency or intensity of the issue with which the intern presents to determine any small decrease in these areas. Any change, no matter how small, is seen as a move forward and offers the supervisor an opportunity to compliment and empower the supervisee. Another option for the supervisor is to use the scaling technique to identify places or situations where the scaled score is better, and to note those places or situations as exceptions. Last, the site supervisor can request the interns to think of people in their lives they consider to be role models whose advice they might seek or behaviors they could positively emulate in the circumstances at hand (Murphy, 2008).

Reframing or Changing Perspective

When interns are challenged to find exceptions to their problem situations, supervisors can help interns reframe or change their perspective of the problem situation. Reframing involves the intern looking at the situation in a novel way, and identifying new ways to use what has worked in the past to gain insight into the presenting problem. For example, the supervisor can reframe concerns by "blaming" the intern positively by drawing attention to the fact that the intern has yet to give up on the problem at hand or at the very least, managed to survive yet another day with the presenting problem (Murphy, 2008). Using the solution-focused paradigm, site supervisors who practice encouraging intern expertise and success, eliciting exceptions, and changing the way they see situations can facilitate a safe environment for interns to practice self-discovery and healthy, flexible, positive exchanges of ideas. This environment provides a chance for both parties to see issues from multiple perspectives.

Supervisor Evaluation of Intern Progress

The ASCA National Model (2005) offers a convenient way to evaluate intern progress using the School Counselor Performance Standards (p. 62-65). The site supervisor can begin by asking the intern to reflect on his or her own areas of strength and those in need of improvement on each of the thirteen standards. Using scaling techniques, the intern and site supervisor can begin by using the intern's scaled scores to establish a baseline for the intern. As the internship progresses, the site supervisor and intern can identify what each component would look like using a form of the miracle question. Here, it would be important for the site supervisor to share the minimum level of competency required for admittance into the profession. Then, movement on the scale can be operationalized by goal setting and using the videotalk technique. Problem reduction may occur through positive-blaming and exception-finding. Formative evaluations can be done through periodic discussions of the intern's progress on each scale. The site supervisor can also use the goals set by the intern for the summative evaluation for the university program.

Termination

The termination process usually involves transferring the power of the supervisor to the supervisee. In solution-focused site supervision, the supervisee has been established as the expert, so this transference of power is no longer necessary. However, the site supervisor still has a role in the termination. First, the site supervisor gives the intern the "credit" for reaching his or her goals, reinforces independence by discussing the process of growth of which he/she was an integral part in, and reminds the intern of his or her successes by using past scales and positive blaming or asking

the interns what advice he or she would give to the next intern who might encounter this problem. Second, the supervisor identifies and clarifies what the intern has changed and how those changes have impacted professional development at the school. Third, the site supervisor further explores the goals with the interns by envisioning future plans and areas of potential growth. Last, the intern and site supervisor together make plans for potential "relapse" or times in which the intern may face a similar problem and need to reapply what he or she has learned (Murphy, 2008). The termination stage is critical; it is here that the site supervisor allows the intern to take full responsibility for his or her successes to feel confident entering the field as a competent professional.

Case Study

To provide an illustration of solution-focused tenants and techniques, the authors have created the case study of Joe, a school counseling intern, and Kathleen, his site supervisor at a middle school.

> *Joe is a school counselor-in-training who has been matched with Kathleen for his internship. Both Joe and Kathleen feel anxious about their roles in the internship experience. Joe is nervous about dealing with parents who he believes can be very emotional about their children. Kathleen, on the other hand, is concerned because she has been a school counselor for 20 years, but has never had a supervisee. She is ambivalent about how her past learning in her preparation program and wonders if it is outdated or pertinent to Joe's learning now. She also is unsure how exactly to go about the process of "supervision". Kathleen decides to participate in a solution-focused site supervision workshop offered by the university Joe attends to gain confidence and skills needed to make the*

internship a positive one for Joe and herself. Bringing both of their expertise to the supervision process, Kathleen and Joe develop a healthy and productive professional relationship.

At the beginning of their supervisory relationship, Kathleen and Joe dedicate time getting to know each other to build rapport. Kathleen and Joe then begin their work by discovering where Joe rates himself on each of the performance standards of the ASCA National Model (2005). Kathleen introduces the goal setting and scaling techniques at that time so that Joe feels that he can assess himself and set goals for the internship. During this exploration, Joe shares his ambivalence about working with parents, so they identify parental collaboration as a goal area for Joe. By allowing Joe to determine what the problem is (in this case, gaining more skill and confidence about working with parents) and the degree of the problem's severity, Kathleen is agreeing that indeed, working with parents *is* the problem. She is also transparent in that she has no other agenda for Joe other than helping Joe sort through this issue.

In this case, Joe's story about working with parents is problem-saturated. Joe has experienced what he perceives as mostly negative interactions with parents, or more frequently, times in which he has felt helpless or incompetent when working with them. First, Kathleen can use the miracle question to help Joe conceptualize what his professional life would be like without discomfort when working with parents, but with increased confidence and skill. Then, Kathleen can work to help Joe identify times in which he has worked with parents and been successful, or times when his problem does not occur. Joe's exceptions may include times when he has greeted parents in the morning when they drop their students off at school, or successful contacts Joe has

made with parents to get permission to work with and tape sessions for university supervision requirements. Kathleen notices that Joe seems to be more comfortable discussing difficult issues with fathers, but has difficulty responding to mothers, especially those who are emotional. Kathleen suggests to Joe to see if he notices differences in these situations. Then, any positives he identifies in his interactions with fathers may be applied to strategies to his work with mothers.

Understanding that scaling is not limited to the initial rapport-building and the problem-definition component, Kathleen uses the scaling question to ascertain the seriousness of Joe's problem from his perspective as well as his commitment to solving the problem. Kathleen continues to use the scaling throughout her supervision with Joe in order to take a "pulse" of Joe and his concern and to determine Joe's progress towards the goals he will develop for himself in the next step of the process (Murphy, 2008). In this way, Kathleen determines how Joe's perception of the seriousness of his problem changes over time. Keeping in mind that scales can be framed either negatively or positively depending on the need to decrease Joe's feelings of anxiety or increase Joe's skill level, Kathleen asks, "So Joe, last week you reported you were an 8 with your level of discomfort in working with parents. Now this week, on a scale of 1 to 10, one being not at all uncomfortable, and 10 being very uncomfortable, where do you think you are?"

As Joe makes progress toward his goal of working with parents, Kathleen tries to find exceptions and examples to reinforce Joe's movement toward his goal. For example, Kathleen highlights Joe's willingness to continue working with a parent, although he feels uncomfortable in those situations. Kathleen can blame Joe positively

and follow up with additional exception-seeking questions such as, “You were so successful with that parent. What was different for you in this situation? What did you do right?” She may also ask Joe to envision his professional life without the problem, and discuss what kinds of things he can do to practice those skills now.

As Joe develops throughout the internship, Kathleen asks Joe to rate himself on a scale in regard to his competence or confidence in working with parents, and uses that opportunity for positive blaming for any growth on the scale. Noting areas of strength on other standards, Kathleen encourages Joe to use skills from his strong areas such as consultation with teachers to his goal area of working with parents. At the end of the internship, Joe and Kathleen examine the level of competence in relation to the ASCA performance standards, and celebrate the growth Joe has made in areas that originally needed improvement.

Limitations of Solution-focused Supervision

While SFS creates supervisors who feel confident in problem-solving (Murphy, 2008), as well as supervisees who feel an increased sense of self-efficacy, empowerment, and accomplishment in supervisees (Koob,2002; Hsu, 2007), research has not explored the developmental effects of SFS on the knowledge and skills of supervisees overall. Further research is also needed to determine how SFS affects the clients of the trainees who are being supervised under SF principles. While it is important for the supervisee to feel effective and empowered in supervision, determining the actual effectiveness of the counseling with the client is paramount. Therefore, field-based studies of supervisees using SF tenants and techniques are needed.

Conclusions and Implications

Solution-focused site supervision (SFS) addresses the documented concern of school counselors in professional literature who are site supervisors, but are not trained in supervision styles or techniques (Dollarhide & Miller, 2006; Page et al., 2001). Solution-focused site supervision (SFS) gives practicing school counselors a familiar theoretical framework which is rooted in a research-based counseling paradigm, providing current and potential site supervisors an easy- to-follow process and method which matches supervisor skill to intern need. The SFS approach also lends itself to school counseling supervisors in various stages of implementation of the ASCA National Model as a guide for the intern development and evaluation of the supervisee (Studer & Oberman, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006). In addition, university supervisors benefit from solution-focused supervision by receiving detailed goals and a concrete way of measuring those goals from the intern for development in university supervision. Further, the SF paradigm helps the university supervisor and site supervisor to use common language with each other, and decrease the complexities of coordination and differing expectations. Last, while research on the use of the solution-focused model is needed to determine its efficacy in supervision, it provides a foundation for training that counselor preparation programs can easily use to encourage effective and dynamic site supervision for their site supervisors and a "good," if not powerful, supervisory experience for their school counselors-in-training.

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