Understanding Feedback as Formative Evaluation in Weekly Supervision Sessions: An Exploration of Relationship and the Process of Novice Supervisory Communication.

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Abstract

Supervision is one of the most common activities of psychologists. With increased focus on competence based treatment and training, supervision has emerged as a cornerstone of clinical training. The purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the experiences of novice supervisors and supervisees regarding the use of feedback within the supervisory relationship. Using an empirical phenomenological approach, this inquiry describes how corrective and supportive feedback was experienced within supervisory relationships at the onset of supervisory training. Findings indicated that the feedback experience in novice supervisory relationships was directly impacted by the strength of the relationship, developmental levels of supervisor and supervisee, internal reflection and external consultation regarding identified feedback, organic and salient multicultural interactions, and the perception of support within training contexts.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Prior to entering my undergraduate program, the only "Doctors" I knew were those who treated my childhood ailments, reset my broken arm, and removed my tonsils. The only people I knew who graduated from college were my public school teachers. As a child raised in a family of blue collar, lower middle class, trade focused women and men, those with formal degrees were respected; those who were doctors were unequivocal experts. They were individuals who were to be respected, trusted, and most certainly listened to when their expertise was sought.

Upon entering the teaching profession, I engaged in the ongoing tension between "instilling a love of learning" and "meeting standards". I struggled to teach to the best of my abilities, to know and see my students for the complex and beautiful individuals they were, and to meet increasing demands for standardized testing and measurement across the nation.

These two identities and worldviews, fueled by an intense personal desire to grow, learn, and develop, continued to shape the way in which I interacted with and engaged in teaching, learning, and professional development. My personal history has shaped my belief and value that our clients deserve, minimally, to be treated by counselors and psychotherapists who are competent and have proven and demonstrated expertness at their

appropriate level of education and training. As a doctoral level psychologist in training, it is my duty, obligation, and responsibility to meet standards for competence in order to ethically treat individuals who seek treatment and, if unable to do so, remediation or termination by those in gate-keeping roles should be upheld so that the profession itself remains ethically grounded. When I think about clinical supervision and training, a grounding question for my own clinical training and my work with supervisees has long been "Does this meet a standard that I would be comfortable with if this was one of my family members seeking care?" who, in deference to education level and title, would assume expertise.

This research project stemmed from a deep seeded belief that standards of competence can be integrated with positive, challenging, and intensive personal work. I believe, as an educator, in the adage that students will work for and learn from teachers with whom they feel connection and, as such, can be challenged to meet high standards and expectations within a supportive relationship. Neither supportive relationships nor robotic feedback is enough for deep learning and development; therefore, the ability to provide corrective and positive feedback within supportive and connected relationships is essential to meet and exceed standards of competence.

Background and Significance

Within the field of counseling psychology, supervision has been commonly accepted to be a cornerstone of education and training for clinicians (e.g. Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Falender & Shafranske, 2004; Russel & Petrie, 1994). Complementing the increased focus on competency based practice and empirically validated treatments is an increased focus on supervision and training in practice and in the literature (Falender & Shafranske, 2004).

Cormier and Bernard (1982) posited three essential skills in training psychologists as evaluators that directly apply to the development of this inquiry:

> (a) The ability to evaluate efficiently using some objective criteria as a yardstick or measure; (b) the ability to communicate feedback clearly and to have some method of checking the counselor's understanding of the feedback; (c) the ability to be comfortable and effective with the power inherent in the role of supervisor (p. 490).

Simply stated, supervisors must be able to evaluate supervisees according to an established and measurable standard and provide feedback that is heard, understood, and integrated by supervisees within a relationship where s/he inherently holds a level of power and expertise.

At the core of this research project was the process of giving and receiving feedback within the supervisory relationship. Chapter Two provides a firm grounding in current literature and will explore relationship, competency, and the process of feedback in depth.

Aims of the Inquiry

The aim of this study was to explore the ways in which feedback occurred within novice supervisory relationships with an emphasis on the strengths and barriers of feedback as perceived and experienced by supervisors and supervisees. I was particularly interested in how feedback, both corrective and supportive, was understood by supervisors who provided the feedback and their supervisees who received the feedback.

Research questions. In order to establish loose parameters of this qualitative inquiry, I established five broad questions to guide and ground my focus:

- What is the relationship between perception of supervisory relationship/working alliance and articulation of feedback?
- When novice supervisors report corrective feedback has been given, do their supervisees' report hearing/experiencing the feedback? If so, what features (i.e. of the supervisee, supervisor, relationship, and/or context) are characteristic of feedback received by

supervisees? What features are characteristic of feedback that is not received by the supervisee?

- What do novice supervisors articulate as barriers to giving feedback?
- How do experiences of diversity and intersectionalities enter the relationship and affect supervisors' and supervisees' perceptions of feedback in novice supervisory relationships?
- What types of feedback are left unsaid by novice supervisors and how is the exclusion of such feedback explained by novice supervisors?

The questions above provided guidance for my relationship with the data and provided the foundation for midterm interview questions, open ended journal questions that were asked of supervisors and supervisees for the duration of their supervisory relationships, and auditing meetings.

Method. In order to understand the lived experiences of individuals within novice supervisory relationships, I elected to use a phenomenological approach of inquiry. Phenomenology has emerged as a more common method of qualitative research within counseling psychology (Hays & Wood, 2011) which implies broader acceptance of findings emerging from this approach.

As a feminist and researcher, I was attracted to phenomenology because of its emphasis on a deep and meaningful

description of the experiences articulated by others. I believe that my identity as a feminist, which stretches far beyond the parameters of professional identity, facilitated and under girded my dedication to accurately capture, reflect, and describe the experiences of those who participated in this inquiry. In addition, bracketing was utilized to understand and suspend my own biases and experiences, and meetings with participants were offered in order to elicit feedback regarding my own understanding of their lived experiences.

Definition of Terms

There are several concepts that are explained thoroughly in Chapter Two; however, I want to clearly articulate definitions for feedback, evaluation, and gate-keeping to establish a context for how these terms are distinguished and implemented for the purposes of this inquiry. There may be slightly nuanced meanings of these words used by other authors cited within this work although all interpretations appeared to be similar enough to create a consistent grounding.

Feedback, in this inquiry, is a rhetorical tool primarily used for the purpose of sharing evaluative judgment, based upon level of training, and understood through the lens of gate-keeping responsibilities. Feedback, then, is a building block of evaluation and several subtypes of feedback, including that which is non-evaluative and more probing in nature, will be

elaborated upon in upcoming sections. Since formal evaluation at this level of training is the responsibility of faculty and based upon programmatic requirements, evaluation was studied as it emerged in relationship to feedback and the developmental process within the novice supervisory relationship. In following this logic, gate-keeping is identified as the ultimate evaluative process and will be described if and when it is experienced within the supervisory process.

Implications of Study

By utilizing empirical phenomenology to describe novice supervisors’ and supervisees’ experiences regarding feedback as formative evaluation, I can contribute to the growing body of research regarding clinical supervision. My focus on novice supervisors, and the experiences and perspectives of the supervisees with whom they work, provides insight into the unique challenges and experiences of supervisors as they initially transition from therapists to emerging trainers within counseling psychology.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

Overview of Supervision

The provision of supervision has been ranked as one of the top five activities in which professional psychologists spend their time (Norcross, Hedges, & Castle, 2002) and is one of the most pivotal relationships within our profession (Riggs & Bretz, 2006). By weaving the significance of supervisory relationships, an increased focus on competencies, and demand for ethical client care, we have created a demand for a richer and fuller understanding of the supervision process.

Transition from therapist to supervisor. Though supervision and therapy share certain common characteristics, such as empathy, respect, genuineness, and self-knowledge (Carifio & Hess, 1987) there is a clear distinction between supervision and therapy (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). Supervision will often incorporate clinical approaches and techniques such as collaborative interpersonal process, relationship building, and working alliance (Falendar & Shafranske, 2004) and yet is distinguished from therapy through the intentional integration of therapy, teaching, consulting and, most importantly, evaluation (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Falender and Shafranske (2004) asserted that the most important task of supervision is to "monitor the supervisee's conduct to ensure that appropriate

and ethical professional practices are implemented leading to the best possible clinical outcome for the client” (p. 6). It makes sense, then, that novice supervisors may experience anxiety, discomfort, and resistance to the shift of power as supervisors within the supervisory relationship. In counseling, it is expected that clients can enter and leave the relationship at any point (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004) and the inability for supervisees to do the same may increase novice supervisors’ awareness of the power differential within the relationship.

Later in this chapter, I specifically address the relevance of developmental models of supervision; however, to better understand the importance of the transition from therapist to novice supervisor, I will provide a brief overview of common processes of development. There are commonalities along the spectrum of supervisor development which include early stages/experiences of insecurity, anxiety, and lack of supervisor identity and ideally culminate with the emergence of a stable, consistent identity as a competent supervisor (e.g. Hess, 1986; Rodenhauser, 1997; Stoltenberg, McNeil, & Delworth, 1998; Watkins, 1993). It is understandable, then, that novice supervisors may experience tension and anxiety as they transition from provision of therapy to provision of supervision.

A brief history. Supervision of clinical work has increasingly become a focal point for the training and education of counselors and psychologists and is cited as the most frequently used training method for teaching therapy (Milne & James, 2002). Although several similar and overlapping definitions have been produced and cited in the literature, the following definition was selected by Falender et al. (2004) in their initial quest to clearly identify and articulate competencies in supervision:

> Supervision is an intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior member of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s), monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients she, he, or they see, and serving as a gatekeeper for those who are to enter the particular profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004, p. 8).

Simply stated, the goal of supervision is to ensure ethical treatment of clients while facilitating continued learning and growth for trainees.

Focus of prior literature. Although this literature review is more narrowly focused on feedback and relationships within the supervision process, I thought it wise to include an

overview of major areas of supervision research in the field. Supervision has become one of the primary areas of inquiry within counseling psychology (Heppner, Casas, Carter, & Stone, 2000) and much of the research has fallen under three topical umbrellas. One of the three main areas of focus in the supervision literature has been on articulating goals and functions of supervision (e.g. Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Frietas, 2005). The second sub-area of emphasis has been on the development of supervision theories (e.g. Holloway, 1995; Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982; Stoltenberg, 2005) and the third on the core tenets of the supervision process (e.g. Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Ladany, Friedlander, & Nelson, 2005). Feedback, of primary importance in this study, has received relatively little focus in publications to date (Coleman, Kivlighan, & Roehlke, 2009; Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005).

Importance in training. The increase in enrollment in psychology programs across the country speaks to the need for a related increase in understanding the process of supervision as individuals seek expertise and competence as therapists and clinicians. A unique paradox within this training process is the rather clear understanding that supervision is salient and pivotal in training experiences yet relatively little training is expected, or even offered, to assist professional

psychologists to become effective, competent supervisors. In fact, research has shown that experience alone cannot provide and environment for optimal growth; clear and evaluative feedback through the supervisory process is necessary for clinical progress (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

Competence. The demand for competence in supervision is directly related to the increased demand for competency in education and training and has been well documented in psychology literature (e.g. Falender & Shafrasnke, 2004; Fouad et al., 2009; Kaslow, 2004; Nelson, 2007; Roberts, Borden, Christiansen, & Lopez, 2005). In the context of clinical work, competence includes the "habitual and judicious use of communication, knowledge, technical skills, clinical reasoning, emotions, values, and reflection in daily practice for the benefit of the individual and community being served" (Epstein & Hundert, 2002, p. 226). Since supervision is a primary tool for gaining clinical competence it is clear that competence in supervision itself is an essential component of training.

I have opted to focus on competency in supervision rather than ethical considerations because, according to reports of the APA Ethics Committee (2006-2010) there have been zero complaints brought against professional psychologists related to supervision in the past five years. If viewed on a spectrum with ethical concerns (such as the prevention of malpractice and

violations) and competence (such as increased emphasis on advanced skill development and the integration of the scientist-practitioner model) as anchors on either end of the spectrum, then the need is not for research that focuses on the end of the spectrum of ethical malpractice but on that which moves toward competencies and best practice standards.

According to Falender and Shafranske (2007), competency based supervision is:

> an approach that explicitly identifies the knowledge, skills and values that are assembled to form a clinical competency and develop learning strategies and evaluation procedures to meet criterion-referenced competence standards in keeping with evidence-based practices and the requirements of the local clinical setting (p. 233).

I posit that this definition captures both the focus on clinical competence of the trainee and also the clinical competence reflected in competent supervisory processes. The explicit identification of standards allows for further movement toward a base level of competency to which all trainees are compared versus the internal rank order that may occur when supervisors in training are compared to one another without regard to a common standard (Falender et al., 2004).

In 2004, Falender et al. created the Supervision Competencies Framework which articulated observable and

measurable competencies categorized as knowledge, skills, values, social context overarching issues, or assessment of supervisor competencies. Several of the competencies within this framework speak directly to feedback and evaluation within the supervisory relationship and provide support for the further examination of the way in which these competencies emerge within ongoing supervisory relationships. The above mentioned feedback and evaluative components are displayed in Table 1 below.

Table 1

Supervision Competencies Framework re: Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback & Evaluative Competency	**Category of Competency**
• knowledge of evaluation/process outcome	• knowledge
• relationship skills—ability to build supervisor relationship/alliance • sensitivity to multiple roles with supervisee and ability to perform and balance multiple roles • ability to provide effective formative and summative feedback • ability to encourage and use evaluative feedback from the trainee	• skills
• respectful • balance between support and challenging	• values
• diversity • creation of climate in which honest feedback is the norm (both supportive and challenging)	• social context
• documented supervisee feedback	• assessment of supervision competencies

Note. Only competencies directly related to feedback and evaluation are included in this table. Adapted from "Defining Competencies in Psychology Supervision: A Consensus Statement by C. Falender, J. Cornish, R. Goodyear, R. Hatcher, N. Kaslow, G. Leventhal, E. Shafranske, and S. Sigmon, 2004, *Journal of Clinical Psychology, 60*(7), p. 778.

While this study was not designed to measure competency of supervisor or supervisee, it was reasonable to assume that issues of competency would arise in the inquiry process, especially since the design was both qualitative and measured over time. Not only did I expect to see language reflecting competencies, I expected that linguistics may also reflect the deeper concept of metacompetence, or one's ability to know what one knows and what one does not know. Falender and Shafranske (2007) posited that metacompetence is pivotal in developing competency and necessary due to the complexity of the responsibilities inherent in supervision across one's career.

Developmental Framework for Acquisition of Supervisor Competence

Feedback, evaluation, and gate-keeping are common terms within supervision and, due to varying levels of definition and application, there are numerous ways in which each can be defined, adapted, and utilized within the field. As part of a qualitative inquiry process, I believed that clearly articulating the way in which I was interpreting and applying these words is essential. It was my goal that the elucidation of feedback, evaluation, and gate-keeping that follows would provide a framework for understanding the acquisition of supervisor competence beginning at the earliest stages of supervisor training.

Feedback. Friedlander, Siegel, and Brenock (1989) posited that feedback is "a statement with an explicit or implicit evaluation component that refers to attitudes, ideas, emotions, or behaviors of the trainee or to aspects of the trainee-client relationship or the trainee-supervisor relationship" (p. 151). The evaluative aspect is a critical one: for the purpose of this inquiry, feedback was a rhetorical tool used for the purpose of sharing evaluative judgment based upon the supervisor's level of training and competence within the supervisory relationship and through the lens of gate-keeping responsibilities.

It is important to note that *feedback* is also used in a broader sense, to include wonderings or observations posed to elicit further reflection and to raise awareness and are likely to be experienced in the supervisory relationship. This broader use of the term *feedback* encompasses a wider range of communications; however, of the focus in this study was on feedback that was evaluative in nature.

For example, a supervisor may state "I had the sense that you were eager to follow up on the feelings expressed by your client" which encourages deeper reflection without an evaluative component. On the other hand, if a supervisor states "You appear defensive when your client expressed frustration in this interaction," there is a stronger evaluative component. This follows Yalom's (1995) findings that feedback often begins with

objective and observable behaviors with more direct and interpersonal feedback found further along the spectrum.

In addition feedback, from the supervisor's perspective, may be interpreted as intentional and overt; however, based on developmental levels of each party, feedback may also be unintentional and implicit based on power dynamics within the supervisory relationship. Therapists, through training and practice, provide reflective and observational feedback quite routinely in the course of treatment; however, feedback as a form of evaluative communication is an emerging skill for novice supervisors. Therefore, for the purposes of understanding early development as a clinical supervisor, feedback, as a form of evaluative communication that is understood through a lens of gate-keeping, was the primary focus of this inquiry.

Evaluation. Evaluation is the formal process for assessing the competence of trainees and is measured through formative and summative means (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). In training programs, where novice trainees and supervisors are positioned, formative evaluation may be reflected through informal, day to day feedback whereas summative evaluation is likely to be reflected through formal, competency based written evaluations. In this study, feedback was a component of the evaluation process and was studied as it emerged within the context of the supervision process. In early training, final evaluative

decisions are likely made by faculty or larger systems but it is important to note that novice supervisors are in regular contact with a licensed psychologist who provides supervision of supervision and therefore have specific access to faculty evaluators. As such, it is reasonable to assume that the novice supervisor's critical evaluation of her/his supervisee does weigh into the overall evaluative decision.

Gate-keeping. In its simplest conceptualization, gate-keeping may be interpreted as the ultimate summative evaluation. Gate-keeping is the evaluative component guarding entrance to the field and is based upon explicit criteria, due process, and informed consent (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Gate-keeping was not a primary focus of this inquiry because, as novice supervisors, this ultimate evaluation mostly lies with faculty/administration; however, as students and colleagues, the power and pressure of gate-keeping may take on personal salience, particularly when supervisors are also students within training programs. Also, as mentioned in regard to evaluation, novice supervisors have intimate access to their faculty supervisor and have ethical obligations to provide information and assessment regarding their supervisees' strengths and growth edges. Again, this speaks to an emerging difference between therapy and supervision. Therapists may conceptualize and explore strengths and growth edges of clients as interventions

are explored; however, supervisors do so with an increased awareness that there may be another layer of consequence for supervisees in a professional training program stemming from the role of informant to faculty supervisors.

Supervisee Perspective

The framework above was created to express the ways in which feedback, evaluation, and gate-keeping were interpreted for this study. It is also vital to note that the above definitions were based upon supervisor development. It is possible, and perhaps even likely, that supervisees have different interpretations of these words based on how they perceive and experience the supervisory relationship and power dynamics within, as well as being reflective of developmental differences in levels of training. Therefore, it is necessary to establish an understanding of learning and feedback reception for supervisees. In a well known book exploring their therapeutic relationship, Yalom and Elkin (1974) articulated and explored the ways in which their perceptions and experiences aligned and diverged throughout the course of their therapeutic relationship. This understanding, also set within the context of an interpersonal relationship, facilitated my perception of depth and meaning making regarding the feedback process between both individuals involved in the supervisory relationship.

Social relations model. Kenny’s (1994) Social Relations Model offers insight into the complexity that may be experienced within the supervision relationship. The Social Relations Model (SRM) specifically describes dyadic relationships within a social context. The supervisory relationship is an example of an intensive relation between two individuals who engage in complex interactions. The SRM can be applied to interpersonal perceptions, and outlines three main components that are found in every interaction. These include a perceiver effect (how the supervisor perceives other people in general), target effect (how the supervisee is generally experienced by others), and the relationship effect (unique perception of this supervisee by this supervisor once the perceiver and target affects are taken into consideration) (Kenny, 1994; Back & Kenny, 2010).

The SRM was not a focus of statistical analysis in this inquiry; however, it provided grounding for understanding the complexity that occurred within the supervisory relationship where “interpersonal perceptions and behaviors are directed toward others, they are two-sided, include meta- and self-perceptions, and vary depending on the social partner with whom one perceives and interacts” (Back & Kenny, 2010, p. 857). As such, experiences of supervisors and supervisees are likely to vary based on individual characteristics of each party and the way in which each individual engages with another.

Overview of learning process. The learning process itself is a rich, varied, and complex phenomenon well beyond the scope of this literature review. However, it seems important to provide a brief overview of major components of learning directly related to individual feedback and reflection. I believe, in part, that the supervisees' approach to learning is a significant target effect that warranted consideration as I explored the ways in which feedback occurred, or did not occur, within the supervision relationship.

Marton and Säljö (1984) proposed that students must engage in deep, not surface learning in order to become critical learners. As such there must also be an opportunity for students to reflect upon the experiences in order for deep and meaningful learning to take place (Quinton & Smallbone, 2010). Supervision itself is designed to provide a space for deep and meaningful reflection to take place in order for the supervisee to continue to grow and develop therapeutic and professional skills.

A key component of numerous models of learning appears to be the ability to use reflection based on self and other feedback to monitor one's progress toward goals (Hatton & Smith 1995; Mann et al., 2007; Moon , 2004). In fact, "each involves an iterative process in which reflection allows the elements of the experience to be revisited, analyzed and integrated into one's existing base of knowledge and understanding, as a basis

for future experience” (Sargeant, Mann, van der Vleuten, & Metsemakers, 2009, p. 400). In addition, growth is most likely to occur when supervisees are positive and open to receiving feedback, believe that change and growth regarding feedback areas are possible, and are determined to take action toward reaching goals (Hattie & Timperley, 2007; Smither et al., 2005).

In sum, understanding the process of reflection and learning, particularly as it relates to receiving and perceiving feedback, allowed for deeper analysis and meaning making as the supervisory relationship was explored in this inquiry. Thus, it was important to consider both supervisee and supervisor perspectives, and how supervisor communication style interacted with supervisee learning style, in understanding the role of feedback and relationship in supervision.

The Supervision Relationship

It has been long established that the relationship between supervisee and supervisor is one of the most critical components of the supervision process (Ellis, 1991) and is foundational to all commonly accepted models of supervision (Falender & Shafranske, 2010). As the relationship emerges and grows in supervision, the ability of the supervisor to balance ethical client care with her/his supervisee’s learning needs is essential (Copeland, Dean, & Wladkowski, 2011; Falender, 2010). The following subsections will articulate the importance of the

supervisory relationship, the working alliance within supervision, and feedback within the relationship.

Importance of relationship. Holloway (1995) posited that ignoring the supervisory relationship in the supervision process impedes supervisees from developing advanced therapeutic skills. It is no surprise then that a significant amount of research has further elucidated the importance of high quality supervisory relationships (e.g. Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Ellis, 1991; Henderson, Cawyer, Stringer & Watkins, 1999; Majcher & Daniluk, 2009; Reichelt & Skjerve, 2002). Several studies indicate that the quality of the supervisory relationship is higher when the relationship is an explicit focus of supervision (Ellis, 1991), supervisors are validating and supportive (Reichelt & Skjerve, 2002), there is an environment of trust, mistake tolerance, and clear feedback is facilitated (Allen, Szollos, & Williams, 1986), and there is an openness to process difficult feedback and experiences (Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001).

Working alliance. As found in the counseling relationship (e.g. Horvath & Greenberg, 1989, 1994; Horvath & Symonds, 1991; Horvath, Del Re, Flückiger, & Symonds, 2011), there is a consistent positive correlation between alliance and outcomes in the supervisory relationship (e. g. Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001; Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999; Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996; Patton & Kivlighan, 1997). The working

alliance between supervisor and supervisee, and therefore between supervisee and client, reflects the overall importance of collaboration and clear communication and is often established by working toward collaborative goals (Bordin, 1983). The strength of the emotional bond and working alliance is stronger when both parties feel that they can freely give and receive feedback in a collaborative, supportive, and challenging environment (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001).

Relationship and feedback. The ability to give and receive effective and honest feedback has been consistently correlated with the quality of the supervisory relationship (Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005) and, as such, supervisors who facilitate positive, honest relationships with supervisees may be able to manage difficult conversations more effectively. Barnett, Erickson Cornish, Goodyear, and Lichtenberg (2007) stated there were three components of effective supervision: a) feedback should be provided in a nonthreatening and supportive environment, b) supervisors should strive to be nonjudgmental and validating of experiences, and c) supervisees' experiences should be normalized.

The notion of "safety" can invoke a variety of responses within counseling psychology and is regularly cited as an important component of an effective supervision relationship (e.g. Barnett et al., 2007; Peake et al., 2002). Safety, in the

context of supervision, reflects an environment where individuals can openly discuss therapeutic work through honest and respectful communication. Smith (2011) captured the importance of respect and challenge with the statement that "within a frame of respect, however, is the need to challenge and to raise uncomfortable questions within a context of attempting to move things on in helpful ways" (p. 60). Not only are support and safety key components in supervision, so are challenge and honesty. Essentially, relational safety refers to critical thinking in a caring relationship (Hernandez, 2008). It was this apparent paradox of nonjudgmental support and evaluation that piqued my interest in this inquiry. I believe that these things can occur simultaneously and that a supervisor can provide critical feedback and where evaluation can be a tool for growth and development within a relationship of acceptance and support. In short, I believe that relational safety and connection allows for honest and often challenging growth to occur and as such, my journal and interview prompts were intended to provide a space to capture the intricacies of relationship and feedback through the lenses of those in novice supervisory relationships.

Intersectionalities and Multiculturalism

The concepts of intersectionalities and multiculturalism are intensely complex and, as reflected through the plethora of

publications within the field, foundational to counseling psychology. My approach to multiculturalism and intersectionalities within this study reflects a core value that I hold, partially borrowed from numerous social adages, that what matters most is what we do when no one is watching. In this context, I believed that if these values were foundational for supervisors (in particular as the power holders), they would emerge in the supervisory relationship through the process of feedback, both evaluative and observational. Essentially, I believed interesting findings might emerge related to multiculturalism and intersectionalities through an exploration of what individuals articulate when no one is specifically asking. I think a disadvantage of including a specific question regarding multicultural communication and feedback is that positing such a question reflects my value of multicultural competence as necessary for competence and as such becomes indicative of my value. By allowing it to emerge naturally, I would be able to determine if/how multicultural awareness was a value of the supervisors and/or supervisees.

Language. Language, particularly from a feminist paradigm, is identified as a powerful social construct. Since both the counseling and supervision relationship are steeped within social context, language warranted attention, albeit briefly, in the development of this study. First, we must be aware of the

subtle and potent effects of language, in particular the ways in which power and social injustice may unintentionally and unwittingly be reinforced and maintained (MacKinnon, Bhatia, Sunderani, Affleck, & Smith, 2011). Second, since language shapes what we perceive and experience as reality, it is critical to understand the ways in which language can both credit and discredit others (Copeland et al., 2011). The hierarchical structure of the relationship between supervisor and supervisee may be, intentionally or unintentionally, reinforced or discounted through language choice.

Power dynamics. An established understanding of supervision is that both individuals enter and engage in the relationship based upon their values, beliefs, and worldviews (Constantine, 1997). The artistry of supervision promotes a culture of curiosity where "supervisees can be interested in their own and others' views without having to compete for truth or feel as if they are entering into a debate over what is right and wrong" (Smith, 2011, p. 61). The art, then, for supervisors is to balance direct clinical feedback based on skills and observations with a sensitive understanding of the experiences and opinions of supervisees. This may be particularly challenging for novice supervisors and clinicians who are still developing the foundations of clinical judgment. Finding a balance between critical awareness and cultural humility

encourages growth, trust, and safety (Hernandez & McDowell, 2010).

Organic emergence in relationship. It has become established that “a key pedagogical endeavor is the constant exploration of how class, sexual orientation, ability, ethnicity, nation of origin, and gender intersect and socially construct varying dimensions of social inequality” (Hernandez & McDowell, 2010, p. 31). Given this understanding, language and communication regarding intersectionalities and multiculturalism were expected to emerge within the supervisory relationship. Gatmon et al. (2001) found that supervisors and supervisees who discussed similarities and differences within their relationship reported a higher working alliance. In addition, challenging power dynamics within the supervision relationship, clinical relationship, and within a general social context, provides tremendous opportunity to enhance and nurture relationship and awareness (Hernandez & McDowell, 2010).

With intent, this study did not include overt measures of cultural awareness and sensitivity. I believe, if multicultural awareness and complex understandings of intersectionalities have been measures of clinical competence (i.e. passing a measure of clinical competency prior to beginning training as a supervisor) then such conversations would organically emerge throughout the supervision relationship and would be observed in responses to

questions of safety, relationship, and feedback. Models for multicultural supervision are undoubtedly valuable and necessary; however, there is also a need to understand what the process of multicultural conversations look like within the supervisory relationship (Christiansen et al., 2011) and observing the emergence of said relationships throughout the course reflects an intentional observation of an organic process.

Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback, as a broad interpersonal exchange, is a widely accepted change agent (Yalom, 1995) and is critical in effectively overseeing client care, encouraging self-evaluation and reflection, and safeguarding the field (Heckman-Stone, 2003). Feedback, for both supervisor and supervisee, may be challenging and uncomfortable and may feel incongruent with values ascribed to therapy and the discomfort may be dependent upon whether the feedback is evaluative or observational in nature. However, the definition proposed by Hoffman et al. (2005) that supervisor feedback is “information that supervisors communicate about aspects of their [supervisees’] skills, attitudes, behavior, and appearance that may influence their performance with clients or affect the supervisor relationship” (p. 3) reinforces the value of honest and evaluative communication in the therapeutic relationship.

Another key component of feedback in supervision is directly linked to the evaluative process of gate-keeping. Client care is indirectly affected by the gate-keeping process (i.e. who is allowed to practice therapy) which, in turn, makes the responsibility to provide accurate feedback essential. Although evaluation and gate-keeping may be difficult, Ladany et al. (1999) found that failure to provide adequate feedback and evaluation was the subject of most ethical complaints filed against supervisors. According to a 2003 publication, Heckman-Stone identified balanced feedback, accurate feedback, and timely and frequent feedback as some of the issues supervisees perceived as most important in supervision.

Types of feedback. Given that clear feedback is necessary in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), then understanding different types of feedback often experienced in supervision will set the stage for further exploration of effective feedback, balanced feedback, and difficulty with feedback. A study by Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, and Frietas (2005) developed three categories of feedback which include easy feedback, difficult feedback, and no-feedback events. These categories, expanded upon below, lend support to the understanding that skills required of a supervisor are complex, multidimensional, personal, and interpersonal in nature (Safran & Muran, 2001).

Hoffman and colleagues (2005) classified easy feedback as feedback that was most directly given, was specifically focused on improving clinical work, clearly within the parameters of supervision, and objective and directly observed. In sum, easy feedback reflects observable skills and interactions that are concrete and measurable. This, metaphorically, resonates with me as the "grammar" component of writing—it is simple, clear, and based on an observable set of rules. Providing feedback regarding effective reflection of content and affect is one example of easy feedback.

Difficult feedback, on the other hand, was found to be given indirectly and related to clinical work, personal/professional issues, subjective interpretations, and pushed against the boundary between supervision and therapy (Hoffman et al., 2005). The difficulty in this process is based on the increased subjective, interpersonal nature of the experience and feedback. To continue the above metaphor, I perceive this as the "style" or "composition" of writing where there are certainly rules and objectives; however, they are often construed through artistic style and the author's purpose in the presentation of her/his composition. In short, style and composition are challenging to address because identifying what "it" is that does not quite work in the communication is based on a blend of objective and subjective understanding of the

subject. For example, feedback regarding a supervisee's level of frustration with a client who reminds her/him of a parental figure may push upon the boundary between therapy and supervision making the feedback process difficult.

Hoffman et al. (2005) also articulated a category of no-feedback events where supervisors reflected on feedback that they wanted to provide yet avoided completely in the supervision process. The no-feedback events addressed personal/professional issues and supervisors' reported concern that addressing the issue would cross the boundary between supervision and therapy if addressed. Metaphorically, this strikes me as the "voice" of a composition where the grammar may be appropriate, the style and composition acceptably organized but where there is simply something about the overall presentation that does not work. I use voice intentionally, not only for the writing process, but because voice itself is not just the work we do but who we are in the work. For example, a supervisor may opt not to give feedback to a supervisee experiencing difficulty with a client based upon interpersonal concerns that a supervisee has previously denied even though the supervisor may feel the information is relevant to the therapist-client relationship. Similar to feedback in the writing process, supervision must strive to provide balanced and effective feedback in order to support the growth of the supervisees as they undergo "a process

of change involving affect, insight, and a new understanding of the psychotherapeutic process" (Rubin, 1989, p. 387).

In regard to difficult and no feedback events, Hoffman et al. (2005) reported that supervisors, in retrospect, would have found a way to give feedback including addressing concerns earlier in the relationship, giving feedback in a more direct manner, and being more assertive when feedback was resisted. I would also posit that perceiver, target, and relationship effects, as articulated in the Social Relations Model, had an impact on the supervisor's (perceiver's) internal process regarding the decision regarding how s/he engaged in the feedback process.

Effective feedback. Given that supervisees may approach feedback with high enough levels of anxiety to inhibit learning (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), recommendations for effective feedback may provide a cornerstone for supervisory work. Several recommendations have been presented as foundations of effective feedback (Farnill, Gordon, & Sansom, 1997). The recommendations by Farnill and colleagues (1997) include feedback that is timely, experienced within a climate of trust, specific to behaviors the supervisee can control and change, and related to events that are observable and objective. I posit that a supervisor must be transparent and clear about what s/he is experiencing interpersonally (internally subjective) and through

the articulation and sharing of her/his process of the relationship or interaction, the feedback becomes, at least minimally, less subjective and more measurable (externally objective.

Balancing positive and corrective feedback can be viewed as a complementary practice and, as such, feedback about both expertise and growth edges are most beneficial to learning (Hahn & Molnar, 1991). Further recommendations by Farnill et al. (1997) include initiating self evaluation prior to giving feedback and providing positive feedback prior to corrective feedback. Self evaluation allows the supervisee to identify her/his own strengths and growth edges and providing positive feedback may decrease ambiguity and increase the working alliance (Ladany & Friedlander, 1995).

Yalom (1995), throughout his work with groups and group feedback, posited that although corrective feedback can be painful, it can also be useful when it is accurate and delivered in a sensitive manner. Furthermore, the importance of clarity when giving feedback is supported by research articulating that feedback that is too indirect may not be comprehended (Farnill, Gordon, & Sansom, 1997) and feedback couched in qualifiers may result in ineffective communication about clinical development (Hulse-Killacky & Page, 1994).

Difficulty with feedback. The above elucidation, I hope, conjures thoughts regarding the complexity and potential difficulty when giving evaluative feedback in a supervisory relationship. While there may be abundant reasons why difficulty with feedback may be experienced, I am going to briefly articulate several reasons that have been supported by research in the field and will follow with a brief articulation regarding the need for such conversations to occur within training and supervision.

One well-supported difficulty has centered on feedback avoidance out of concern for supervisees' self esteem (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Robiner, Saltzman, Hoberman, & Schirvar, 1997). Concern over damaging another's self esteem, coupled with socialization against freely remarking on the behavior of others (Yalom, 1995) may hinder the delivery of corrective feedback. Holloway and Wampold (1983) articulated that "dyadic interactions that include criticism are viewed as disconcerting by most individuals" (p. 232) which highlights the difficulty that may be intensely experienced by novice supervisors and clinicians.

It is understandable, then, that there has been an increased focus on "difficult conversations" which are categorized as "emotionally loaded" conversations where challenging feedback is experienced (Lichtenberg et al., 2007).

The growing emphasis on competency standards has created a demand for explicit handling of problems in professional competence (Kaslow et al., 2007). In fact, Jacobs et al. (2011) posit that difficult conversations are an ethical responsibility of trainers and supervisors when trainees are not meeting professional standards. In sum, regardless of the discomfort and challenge of providing feedback regarding problems of professional competence, such conversations must take place or one risks unethical practice.

Novice Supervisors and Clinicians

Supervision is clearly a multifaceted process within psychology requiring an intricate interaction between skills, values, and knowledge within an intentional and intimate relationship. In training programs, this relationship may be further complicated by supervisory relationships between novice supervisors and trainees. In this case, supervisor and supervisee can both be understood as functioning at specific developmental levels which affects the way in which they work through learning, expectations, and behaviors (Falender et al., 2004). Understanding the supervisory relationship, at its most foundational level, I believe, begins with further exploration of novice supervisory relationships.

The focus of this inquiry was not on the use of developmental models in supervision, per se; however, the

Integrated Development Model (Stoltenberg et al., 1998) provided an articulate overview of what a novice supervisor may experience upon entering a new supervisory relationship in which s/he transitions from the one being supervised to the one providing supervision. Stoltenberg et al. (1998) characterize the first developmental stage as one of role shock which may be experienced as imposter syndrome or an overall questioning of ability to perform the duties of supervision. Supervisors continue to develop through role recovery and transition which reflects a more accurate perception of self as supervisor along with increased confidence. Role consolidation follows and is reflected by increased consistency, realistic self and other assessment, and increased likelihood to address more challenging issues with supervisees. The final stage is role mastery which includes a sense of competence and increased likelihood of providing collaborative and challenging supervision. This model, I believe, elucidates some of the core challenges that may be experienced at a novice level of supervision where both parties may struggle with imposter syndrome, sense of competency and skills, and anxiety regarding the process.

Rationale for Current Study

In a recent publication, Tebes et al. (2011) stated "with increased national recognition of the dearth in clinical supervision training, there is a growing consensus in the

behavioral health field that relationship-centered supervision, while valuable, must be supplemented with training in supervisory competencies" (p. 191). Building upon this thought, there are two specific Recommendations for Competency-Based Supervision (Falender et al., 2004) that reflect both relationship and feedback. First, the "supervisor engages with the supervisee to facilitate development of a viable supervisory relationship, leading to the emergence of a working relationship" and second, the "supervisor provides ongoing feedback, verbal and written, and encourages and accepts feedback from the supervisee" (Falender et al., 2004, p. 238). The shift from a knowledge base to a competencies base (Nelson, 2007) demands that counselors must be able to apply knowledge in order to become competent. In this case, the provision of individual supervision requires a striving for competence as well as acquisition of knowledge. The present exploration of the ways in which feedback occurs, as well as impediments to the dialogue, both relational and other, has the potential to provide insight into further training development at the onset of supervisory and clinical training.

In a study of experienced supervisors' interventions with trainees experiencing competency problems, Siewert (2011) asked supervisors to articulate areas in which their trainees' struggles appeared to be grounded. The most commonly identified

areas included “conceptualization and intervention problems”, “boundary issues with clients and staff”, and “highly defensive or resistant attitudes toward supervision and supervisory feedback” (p. 79). In addition, Celano, Smith, and Kaslow (2010) posited that the lived experience within the supervision dyad serves as a medium for increasing the ability to utilize feedback.

In summary, I believe it is important to explore the development of feedback experiences within supervisory relationships organically, in the moment, and over the course of the supervisory relationship in order to better understand how feedback and relationship are simultaneously developed in a foundational process of supervision. I posit that boundary issues may be seen and identified in early supervision, particularly for novice supervisors, and may also allow for corrective remediation early in the development of a clinical career or for early gate-keeping interventions which help ensure ethical treatment of clients seeking services from members of this profession. This study allowed me the opportunity to explore and examine the development of the feedback process, within the context of relationship development, between novice supervisors and clinicians, the results of which may better facilitate our understanding of neophyte supervision relationship development. Therefore, I proposed this study to

extend the literature and understand the feedback process established within a novice supervision relationship and to understand the meaning undergirding feedback through a qualitative exploration of lived experiences of novice supervisors and trainees.

Chapter III

Methodology

Introduction

The purpose of this inquiry was to explore the ways in which feedback occurred, as well as potential impediments to the dialogue, within a developing supervisory relationship. This phenomenon was explored as it organically developed over the duration of the supervisory relationship in order to better understand how feedback and relationship develop simultaneously. Data were collected from novice supervisors and their supervisees in order to explore the ways in which communication, particularly that which may be construed and/or perceived as feedback, was experienced. The goal of this study was to better facilitate our understanding of neophyte supervision relationship development in order to develop teaching and training experiences that best address the unique needs of novices to further insure competence. A subsequent goal was to add to the literature base in supervision and training.

Research Questions

The research questions of this investigation were developed to establish an area of inquiry that was both manageable and focused on addressing an apparent gap in the supervision literature. Giorgi (2009) posited that an entire interest cannot be researched in one study; thus, the decisions I made as I

developed this project intentionally established parameters in my design. It was my goal that this project serves as a gateway to an area of research I may develop over the course of my career. As such, I posited five general questions as foci in this inquiry that were designed to support my overarching desire to understand feedback as formative evaluation within the emergence of a novice supervisory relationship.

The five questions that guided my relationship with this inquiry are:

- What is the relationship between perception of supervisory relationship/working alliance and articulation of feedback?
- When novice supervisors report corrective feedback has been given, do their supervisees' report hearing/experiencing the feedback? If so, what features (i.e. of the supervisee, supervisor, relationship, and/or context) are characteristic of feedback received by supervisees? What features are characteristic of feedback that is not received by the supervisee?
- What do novice supervisors articulate as barriers to giving feedback?
- How do experiences of diversity and intersectionalities enter the relationship and affect supervisors’ and

supervisees' perceptions of feedback in novice supervisory relationships?

- What types of feedback are left unsaid by novice supervisors and how is the exclusion of such feedback explained by novice supervisors?

Rationale for Qualitative Methods

The exploration of the lived experiences of supervisors, particularly during the initial transition from counselor to supervisor, is a complex and meaningful process which is appropriately explored qualitatively. Qualitative research focuses on the lived experiences of others in order to gain insight and understanding rather than predict or control those experiences (Saldaña, 2011). Although "neutral", "bias-free", or "objective" lenses do not exist for qualitative researchers, guidelines for credibility and trustworthiness have been established in order to facilitate the construction of a "vivid and persuasive" explanation for readers (Saldaña, 2011, p. 23).

As a feminist, tenets of equity and transparency govern my approach to research as well as practice. The focus of this particular inquiry was not on gender; however a feminist approach may be applied to any method (Moss, 2006). According to Creswell (2007), the goals of a feminist approach are to "establish collaborative and nonexploitative relationships, to place the researcher within the study so as to avoid

objectification, and to conduct research that is transformative" (p. 26). As such, I approached my relationships with my participants in an open, transparent manner in order to best explore their lived experiences as novice supervisors and supervisees.

Phenomenological approach. Phenomenology has emerged in the field of counseling and education as one of the most commonly applied qualitative methods (Hays & Wood, 2011) which implies increased acceptance of applied methodology within the field. According to Hays and Wood (2011), the purpose of phenomenology is to describe participants' experiences with depth and meaning. In addition, a phenomenological approach pays particular attention to the subjective experience of the participants (Hays & Singh, 2011) and to describing how participants make meaning of their experiences of a phenomenon of interest (Wertz, 2005).

Rationale. My goal, as a feminist researcher, psychologist-in-training, and emerging professional was to describe the essence and authentically capture the lived experiences of my colleagues in the most meaningful and accurate way possible while simultaneously owning my own experiences and understanding of the phenomena being studied as suggested by Giorgi (2009). Since counseling psychology is a field that highly values multiculturalism and diversity, it was essential that my chosen methodology reflects an understanding that the data must strive

to "thoroughly reflect participant perspectives" in a "contextually relevant" manner (Hays & Wood, 2011, p. 289.). As a phenomenologist, I was dedicated to bracketing my own assumptions (epoché) in order to understand the life-world (lebenswelt) of my participants who have direct, immediate lived experiences (Wertz, 2005) as novice supervisors and supervisees in order to understand both the essence of the collective experience as well as the variations within (Moustakas, 1994).

Researcher as Instrument

The concept of researcher as instrument in qualitative research necessitated the addition of a brief personal biography and articulation of personal assumptions prior to engaging in a relationship with participants and data. The biography and assumptions were intended to simultaneously own and suspend my own experiences in order to come to an "intimate awareness and deep understanding of how humans experience something" (Saldana, 2011, p. 8).

Biography. At the onset of this inquiry, I am a fourth year doctoral student in the field of counseling psychology, with a doctoral minor in gender and sexuality, who studies at a large mid-Western University. I have a Master's degree in Counselor Education, a Bachelor's degree in Sociology, and a post-Bachelor's degree in Elementary Education. Between the completion of my undergraduate degree and commencement of

graduate studies, I worked in social service administration and as a middle school public educator. At this point in my life, I also identify as Caucasian, cisgender female, partnered lesbian, middle class, and able-bodied. The combination of life experiences and personal identity shape the assumptions articulated below.

Assumptions. The process of setting aside biases, presumptions, and personal knowledge gained through my own lived experiences—known as bracketing or the phenomenological reduction—is essential in empirical phenomenology (Hein & Austin, 2001). In relation to my own understanding, I interpreted bracketing as a suspension of my views and values in order to better understand others; "setting aside", linguistically, implies that they no longer affect the process. I disagree that I completely removed myself from this inquiry; however, I do feel that I suspended and differently held my experiences and values in a manner that allowed my participants' experiences to take hold and develop as their own.

Bracketing was also an ongoing process employed throughout the research process in order to increase openness and awareness of self within the phenomenon and experience. The assumptions below reflect my initial bracketing and understanding of my own unquestioned assumptions about the way the world works, known as epoché (Husserl, 1954, p. 135, cited in Wertz, 2005) and were

intended to be an initial process of owning and bracketing my experiences and beliefs regarding supervision, training, and feedback.

The first assumption I own is my belief that psychologists and counselors are motivated to learn and grow and develop competencies as clinicians, researchers, and supervisors appropriate to levels of training. This belief is based upon my value that access to higher education is a privilege and should be engaged in as such.

My belief that the relationship between supervisor and supervisee is foundational for learning and growth is my second assumption. As a teacher, counselor, and supervisor, I believe that connection provides motivation, security, and dedication to growth. As a middle school teacher, this value came into my awareness based upon education and training specially focused on understanding middle-level development. I taught eighth grade in a system where our students travelled through “blocks” of core courses together and were only separated for elective courses. This approach emerged to ease the transition from traditional elementary schools (students with same peers and teacher) to traditional high schools (change of peers and teacher each period). The importance of relationship and connection was credited with increased success (i.e. grades and test scores), increased attendance, and feelings of connection to the school

based on district analysis of student performance. This belief has continued to develop throughout my tenure as a graduate student.

My third assumption is that feedback, both corrective and positive, is core to learning and competency development. Positive reinforcement facilitates the continued use and development of strengths while corrective feedback identifies growth edges.

The final assumption to present at this stage of research is my assumption that gate-keeping is a respectable, necessary, and complicated responsibility of licensed psychologists. I believe that clients, trainees, and students have a right to truly competent care by those who hold degrees and licenses within specialty fields. It is my assumption that individuals assume competence based on training and, as such, deserve to be protected by gate-keepers within our field.

A transcendental attitude (Husserl, 1962 as cited in Hein & Austin, 2001), or reduction, allowed my belief to be suspended in order to attend to the phenomenon as it was experienced by my participants. Similar to my initial assumptions above, bracketing was used throughout the duration of this study as I strove for data intimacy which Saldaña (2011) defines as ongoing interactions with the data corpus.

Design

The following sections provide an overview of participants, the ways in which participants were recruited, and the relationship I have to participants in this inquiry. I will also articulate ethical considerations that may arise and present steps that were taken to best ensure appropriate management of relationships, data, and findings.

Participants. Participants were recruited using purposeful sampling. According to Patton (2002) "The logic and power of purposeful sampling derive from the emphasis on in-depth understanding. This leads to selecting information-rich cases for study in depth" (p. 46). Information-rich cases, in this inquiry, reflect an intentional decision to recruit participants from the University where I am pursuing my doctoral degree.

Participants included four novice supervisors who were in their third year of doctoral training and enrolled in an introductory supervision course and six supervisees who were enrolled in their first year of master's training. Participants were enrolled as students in counseling and counseling psychology training programs at a large mid-Western University.

The participants ranged in age from 30-57 (supervisors) and 23-35 (supervisees). Supervisor participants consisted of two individuals who identified as people of color and two who identified as Caucasian and supervisee participants included two

individuals of color and four who identified as Caucasian. Eight of the total participants identified as heterosexual and two identified as sexual minorities. The four supervisor participants were comprised of two female and two male identified individuals and of the six supervisee participants, four were female and two were male identified individuals.

Participants were asked to identify their theoretical orientation or emerging theoretical orientation and responses provide an eclectic pool of approaches. The identified theoretical orientations include psychodynamic, interpersonal, multicultural, person-centered, feminist, narrative, CBT, and integrative.

The participant pool for this inquiry was limited; however I believe there was a significant corpus for examination based on Saldaña's (2011) argument that the number of participants that are enough "can depend on many factors, but as long as you have sufficient interview data, whether from one person or twenty, you'll then have a sufficient corpus for analysis" (p. 34).

Recruitment. Participants were recruited from two counseling psychology courses at the University mentioned above. Novice supervisors were recruited from a supervision course and supervisees were recruited from a supervised practicum course.

As part of existing course requirements, supervisors and supervisees were paired by course instructors and worked together for the duration of a semester. The supervisors were enrolled in a course which taught supervision theory, provided opportunities for supervision of other students, and included supervision of supervision with a licensed faculty member. The supervisees were enrolled in a course designed to further develop counseling skills in preparation for a second year external practicum placement. Supervisees provided approximately 10-12 hours of counseling to undergraduate student volunteers and received approximately 10-12 hours of individual supervision.

The instructors of the courses agreed to include a weekly journaling assignment relevant to my inquiry as part of their course requirements. Supervisors and supervisees were asked to complete an open-ended journal after each supervision session with a broad prompt with possible considerations articulated (Appendix D). Novice supervisors and clinicians were approached at the beginning of the course and were asked to consider allowing me access to their journals at the end of the semester, once their course had terminated. I believe transparency and trustworthiness was enhanced by proactively providing information about my research and articulating my future request to access their journals. By doing so, I believe participants

had ample time to reflect on experiences and to make participation decisions most deliberately. In addition, participants were invited to participate in an individual interview near the middle of the semester. The purpose of the individual interview was to capture and explore the ways in which novice supervisors and their supervisees were initially experiencing and making meaning of their supervisory relationships and experiences.

How feedback was taught as part of course content. Various aspects of feedback were taught in the supervision course and the clinical course in which the supervisors were enrolled. Developing further understanding of feedback and exploring ways in which feedback was given and received within the supervisory relationship was a through line of learning in the supervision course. Feedback was discussed and explored directly and as it related to other supervisory topics such as multiculturalism and evaluation. The supervisees, enrolled in a clinical practicum course, were taught specific skills related to giving and receiving feedback. The students in this course also participated in a group supervision experience within the class where giving and receiving feedback were core tenets of the experience and expectations. Suggestions for receiving feedback included being non-defensive and open and clarifying the feedback. Expectations for giving feedback included being clear,

specific, balanced, focused on observable behaviors, and owning the feedback as one's own.

Relationship to participants. As a fourth year doctoral student in the same program as my participants, I consider my participants to also be my colleagues. Care was been taken to consider ethical challenges as well as to design this inquiry in a manner that was appropriately transparent without disclosing information that may be perceived as leading. I have had more frequent interaction with the third year doctoral students throughout our program; however, I have not shared any supervisory relationships with any of the doctoral students. I have had very limited interactions with the first year master's students and my only professional contact with this group of students was as a guest presenter in an ethics course. The topic of the presentation was counseling the queer community and did not contain any component of supervision theory or application.

It is worth noting that I have varying levels of relationships with the doctoral students who participated in this study which necessitated a conscientious approach to epoché. The relationships I have with participants vary from casual collegial interactions to friendships. Although I found this to be ethically challenging, I believe that my goal to understand and describe the individuals' experiences accurately and authentically, without expectation for specific content,

increased trustworthiness. In order to further minimize these concerns, I bracketed at the end of each interview and after reading the data corpus at the end of the semester. In addition, when I met with participants regarding the research project, I articulated my goal of understanding their experiences in the process of novice supervisory relationships and emphasized the importance of each participant's perceived experience. I believe that these steps allowed for the emergence of descriptive and rich data that reflects the supervisors' lived experiences.

Ethical considerations. Identifying and addressing ethical considerations was essential. In the following paragraphs, I will identify potential ethical concerns and will articulate the ways in which I attended to ethics throughout this project.

The first ethical consideration to note is addressed above and involves the relationship I have with participants as part of our overall training program. I have taken care to not engage in any supervisory relationship with the master's students and have taken considerable care to not discuss my dissertation (with the exception of broad topical area) with my colleagues who are third year doctoral students. As mentioned previously, the closeness of relationships vary from casual acquaintances to friendship, as would be expected within a doctoral training program and, as described previously, steps were taken to manage relationships to ensure trustworthiness of the data corpus.

The second ethical consideration is that data (journals) were gathered as part of course requirements. In order to address this challenge, several steps have been taken. First, instructors had access to the journals for instructional purposes; however, I did not access the journals until the end of the semester, upon receiving consent from willing participants. Postponing formal consent until the end of the semester was meant to decrease potential for coercion and permit participants to provide fully informed consent (as they consented to the use of journals already completed for their courses for research purposes).

In regard to individual interviews, supervisors and their matched supervisees were asked to participate in an interview near the middle of the semester (Appendix E). Participants who agreed to participate in the interview were asked to sign a consent form for participation in the interview process. This consent was separate from their decision about whether to allow me access to their journal entries at the termination of the semester. In addition, supervisors were asked to participate in a follow-up interview which included final reflective questions as well as a request for feedback regarding the accuracy of my findings and understandings of their experiences (Appendix F).

In order to address potential concerns of participants, I met with each course, in the absence of instructors, to explain

the focus of my research. In order to be as transparent as possible, I let potential participants know that I would ask permission to access their journal submissions for research purposes and the end of the semester and would contact them individually to participate in the mid-term interview. I answered questions with transparency and authenticity while striving to protect the integrity of my inquiry. For example, I disclosed my focus on feedback in the supervisory relationship and provided the guiding questions found on the journal; however, I refrained from placing importance or value on the ways in which they give feedback and form relationships.

Although I acquired a relatively small sample, I took steps to protect individual identity to the highest extent possible. For participation credit, students submitted journals with identifying information. At the end of the semester, data were de-identified and codes were used to organize data. For example, supervisors were given codes of SPOR1, SPOR2, and their supervisees were given codes that reflect their relationship to specific supervisors such as SPEE1A, SPEE1B, SPEE2A, SPEE2B, etc. The original identified documents were destroyed and only the de-identified documents remained. This ensured that I was the only individual with identifying information for participants as analysis and meaning making commenced.

As expected, there was a risk to participants in this study that needed to be addressed. Due to the small course size, individuals within the department may be identifiable (to others in the department) despite removal of identifying information. This was addressed with participants in person and within the informed consent document (Appendices A and B). An option to de-identify participants further was to use broader categories of description (i.e. a person of color versus identification of specific race and/or ethnicity) to better mask participants. In addition, the risk articulated above is relatively common within small training programs in counseling psychology where self reflection, growth, and interpersonal experiences are part of academic training and evaluation.

Trustworthiness will be addressed in more detail below; however I believe that inviting participants to review and provide feedback regarding my understanding and themes also provided security and confidence regarding the handling of data reflecting their lived experiences as supervisors and supervisees.

Procedure

The following sections provide an overview of the research process from a phenomenological approach. I articulate the collection and management of data, the process of analysis,

potential researcher bias, steps to ensure trustworthiness, and potential limitations of this inquiry.

Data collection. For the purposes of instruction, journaling commenced at the onset of the semester. My formal request for consent to access journals came at the end of the semester. The initial step in data collection was an in-person meeting with potential participants. I made arrangements to speak to them in the courses detailed above in order to provide the rationale for my study, answer questions, request participation as an interviewee, and share my intent to ask for consent to access journals at the termination of the semester. It was important to me, through a feminist lens, that I clearly expressed my intent and desire to access their journals as my research corpus; however, to minimize any sense of coercion, participants were not formally asked for consent until the end of the semester. I also offered opportunities for individual contact if participants had further questions.

Once participants provided written consent (Appendix A or Appendix B), they were asked to complete a demographic form (Appendix C). The demographic form provided background information on participants. Demographic questions included identification of training level, race/ethnicity, gender identification, sexual orientation, SES, and other such data

providing insight into intersectionalities and identities that emerged as salient as I analyzed and worked with the data.

An open ended journal (Appendix D) provided space for articulation of supervision experiences and was completed between each supervision session. In order to facilitate depth of response, a broad prompt was supplied with potential considerations designed to spark reflection. The prompt for supervisors was "Use this space to reflect upon your experiences with your supervisee. Considerations may include your relationship with your supervisee, successful or challenging interactions in supervision, your identity development as a supervisor, etc." The broad prompt for supervisees was "Use this space to critically reflect upon your experiences as a counselor in training. Considerations may include work with clients, supervisory relationships, successful and challenging interactions, your growth and identity development as a counselor, etc. Think about your work with clients, in individual supervision, and in group supervision." Data were collected over the course of the semester long relationship and resulted in approximately 10-12 journals per participant.

Data management. Journal data was collected using Qualtrics, an electronic survey tool, available through the University and was stored through the University's server throughout the duration of data collection. A link was provided

to participants and available to them through course webpages. The link connected students directly to the journal. Upon completion data reports were exported and saved using Microsoft Office software. As described above, data were then de-identified, saved, and the original files were destroyed which provided additional protection and security for participants. The data corpus was saved on a computer hard drive and backed up on an external data storage device.

Interview data (videos) were collected using University interview/counseling space. Interviews were captured on DVD and/or micro-recorder and were stored in a locked file drawer. Transcripts were created from each interview and were also be locked in a secure cabinet. Recorded media will be kept for seven years, as recommended by the American Psychological Association, and will then be destroyed.

Analysis and interpretation. A composite of corresponding steps and processes from several phenomenologists were used to analyze and interpret my data corpus (e.g. Giorgi, 2009; Hein & Austin, 2001, Moustakas, 1994; Saldana, 2011). Single-person analysis was selected based upon my ability to fully immerse in the data in order to best understand and contextualize the experiences of the participants. The supervisors' feedback interviews were established and utilized in order to invite supervisor participants to essentially act as monitors of

accuracy regarding my articulation of essential perceptions of their experiences. As the interviewer, transcriber, and data analyzer, I was able to achieve a depth of analysis that may have been absent by utilizing a research team based on transcripts alone. Steps of analysis and interpretation follow.

Interview data. First, interviews were recorded onto DVD and/or micro-recorder. Second, I transcribed the interviews, and recordings were reviewed for clarification and accuracy. After completing transcriptions, a think piece or analytic memo was written to bracket my assumptions and to articulate initial conceptualizations. The interview data were then merged with journal data for further analysis and understanding of the experience as articulated beginning with the second phase of data analysis articulated below.

Journal data. First, the data corpus was read several times in order to develop a general sense of each individual’s experience. Data were organized and read as dyadic information in order to begin to understand the essence of the supervisory relationship. Data were also organized and read longitudinally for supervisors in order to begin to get a sense of the supervisors’ individual experiences. After reading each longitudinal dyadic record and after exploring each supervisor’s longitudinal experience, a think piece or analytic memo was written to bracket my assumptions as well as to conceptualize my

overall understandings, affective responses, and general thoughts.

In the second phase of analysis and interpretation, I used margin notes to capture emerging themes and essences. By intentionally not coding data, essences were allowed to emerge and “reveal their own thematic meanings” (Hein & Austin, 2001, p. 8).

Once marginal notes were created, they were clustered to create textural descriptions reflecting meaning and depth of the lived experiences. Direct responses were used to capture and elucidate individual experiences within textural structure being developed.

Next, a structural presentation of the data was created and transformed into what may be generalized. This allows the complexity and richness of the lived experience to be reflected in a format that may be read for broad understanding.

Finally, feedback was solicited from participants to discuss findings, check for accuracy, and receive feedback regarding the accuracy of my understanding of the essences of their lived experiences. Feedback was solicited from all individual participants via email and an invitation for follow-up interviews. Participating supervisors each participated in a one to two hour feedback interview which provided feedback regarding accuracy of their lived experiences. Questions for the

follow up interview (Appendix F) included feedback questions such as "In reflection, how would you describe the process of giving/receiving feedback throughout the course of supervision" and "What else should I know in order to better understand your experience regarding feedback in your supervision relationship?"

Trustworthiness. Trustworthiness has long been identified as a main component in the development of a valid qualitative study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). In order to increase the validity of this inquiry, I specific steps were taken to increase trustworthiness. First, the inquiry and subsequent research and journal prompts were developed based upon the most up to date, albeit somewhat limited, supervision research. Second, the use of open ended written journal prompts allowed for in-depth reflection which therefore allowed the data to emerge organically based on individual salience. Third, by employing a composite of analysis and interpretation methods from emerging leaders in phenomenological research, I strove to eliminate bias that may have developed through one researchers' experiences and understandings of the process. Fourth, soliciting feedback from participants allowed participants to share their reactions and opinions regarding the essences and themes that emerged from the overall experience. Finally, phenomenology itself was a natural fit with experiences of counseling and supervision and has been

identified as an appropriate approach for understanding individuals' common experiences (Creswell, 2007).

Summary

In sum, a broad empirical phenomenological approach was utilized to explore feedback as it organically emerged in novice supervisory relationships in order to increase understanding of the process novice supervisors may experience as they develop competence as supervisors. The data were collected and managed in accordance to ethical expectations and findings facilitate increased understanding of novice supervisor development in order to contribute to the supervision literature; including potential theory development and empirical evaluation of emerging theories.

Chapter 4

Results

The purpose of this research was to explore the ways in which feedback occurred within novice supervisory relationships. Although literature within the field of supervision appears to be on the rise, there is still relatively little research focused on supervision, particularly novice supervisory development. As competence continues to be a focal point within the field of counseling psychology, understanding the ways in which feedback is articulated—or not articulated—by those learning to supervise will provide valuable information to training programs.

The lived experiences of supervisors and supervisees in this study provided insight into strengths and challenges of feedback at this stage of development. Novice supervisors were identified as doctoral students who had successfully completed competency based criteria for clinical skills and were completing initial coursework and experiences as clinical supervisors. Novice clinicians were Master's degree students enrolled in their first year of clinical training and had brief experience with clinical work and supervision (approximately 10 hours previous experience of counseling and supervision) prior to the onset of the specific novice supervisory relationships reflected in this inquiry. Specifically, understanding what,

when, and how novice supervisors made choices about sharing feedback with their supervisees within their own experience of skill acquisition and competence was a driving force of this inquiry. The essential findings that follow were organized based upon the five guiding questions for this inquiry and have been reviewed by the supervisor participants and revised according to their feedback and experiences. The focus of the essential findings was situated within the supervisor perspective on feedback. The supervisee data provided corroboration, and sometimes contrasting views, to further illustrate the essential themes that emerged. The five guiding questions will be extrapolated upon in the following sections. Graphic representations were created as tools to reflect the lived experiences of the participants in a manner that may be interpreted and applied to other novice supervisory relationships, as appropriate.

Based upon the design of the inquiry and the articulation of results, supervisors will be identified by unique codes (SPOR1, SPOR2, SPOR3, SPOR4) in order to allow for the contextual understanding of the individual supervisor's experiences in response to the guiding questions. Supervisors, who all participated in final feedback interviews, were provided potential excerpts from journals and interviews and were given the option to identify any that they did not want included in

this document which further supports the decision to allow for coded identification of participants to be reasonably used. The exceptions to this presentation of results are: gender-neutral descriptors used throughout Chapter 4 and Question 4 where supervisors will not be individually identified. Gender-neutral descriptors (i.e. “s/he”, “hir”, “their”) were used throughout Chapters 4 and 5 to provide additional privacy regarding identification of participants. The decision was made based on my desire to fully capture the essence of experiences as reported by participants while providing as high of a level of anonymity possible, particularly in regard to sensitive situations and relationships experienced by participants. Due to the multicultural focus of Question 4, it would be less difficult to identify individual participants based upon specific expressions of identity which would then allow for identification of the individuals throughout the document. In order to best preserve participant anonymity, “supervisor” as a broad descriptor will be used in Question 4.

Supervisees, who provided auxiliary data, are represented generically as “supervisee” throughout the chapter. Since the focus of the inquiry was on the perceptions of novice supervisors, the supervisees’ data provided corroborative or contrary experiences and were used to further elucidate supervisor experiences. Due to the power dynamic as supervisees

as well as less direct involvement and feedback regarding specific excerpts, I do not identify individual supervisees, even by a code, in describing or quoting from their journals. An additional consideration supporting care in safeguarding supervisees' anonymity is that at the time of this writing supervisee participants were enrolled as second year Master's students within the department and continued to be monitored and evaluated by faculty, some of whom were on my dissertation committee. It therefore seemed prudent and ethically responsible to err on the side of protecting supervisee anonymity in sharing their journal reflections on their developing therapeutic skills, relationship with supervisors, and related training experiences.

In addition, my role as a researcher within the same training program as participants made the process of my own journaling and bracketing necessary in order to accurately identify essential findings based on the experiences of participants. Bracketing allowed me an avenue to express my own responses to participant data, some of which was positive and aligned with my own therapeutic and supervisory orientation and some of which challenged my orientation and views. The process of bracketing allowed me to freely express my responses and, then, to separate my experiences and responses from those of the

participants. I found bracketing to be integral to the overall process within a single researcher inquiry design.

As a precursor to my articulation of essential findings and experiences, it is important to note that although multicultural contexts appeared to permeate, at least to some degree, aspects of each question, the essences that emerged from Question 4 reflect those in which multiculturalism and intersectionalities of identity were overtly articulated. The prototypes that emerged from Question 4 reflect multicultural interactions that were explicitly observed as such whereas multicultural context often appeared as a sub-contextual process within the larger framework of the novice supervisory relationship.

In addition, particularly in reference to Question 1, it is important to understand my decision to use *facet* as a key descriptor of meanings arising from this inquiry. Although *process* may be a more apt choice in some ways, it also provided linguistic challenges based upon the myriad of ways in which *process* is used within the field. In articulation of specific models, *facet* will be used to reflect an aspect or phase similar to what one may experience as *process*, while also reflecting unique multidimensional complexity. It is important to articulate the overlap in conceptual understanding and the decision to use *facet* as an alternative for improved clarity and distinction of findings.

Question 1: Relationship and Feedback

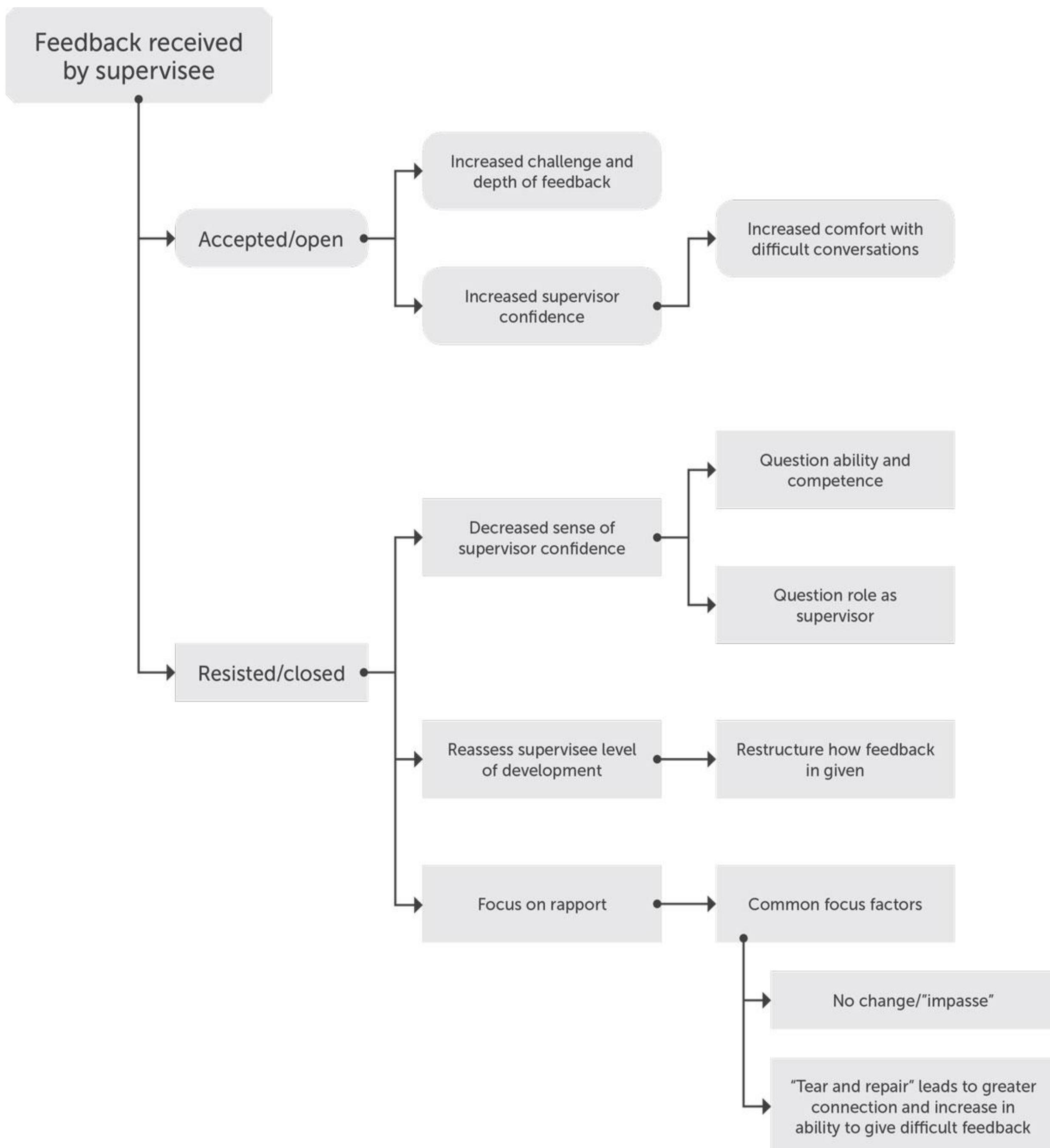
Question 1 explored the interconnections between the perception of supervisory relationship and the articulation of feedback. Essential findings indicate three separate yet interrelated and synchronous facets: attention to supervisee characteristics (and encompassing supervisor reactions), attention to the relationship, and attention to supervisor characteristics and internal process. The first facet reflects the supervisor's inferences about the subjective experiences of the supervisee; the second relates to the mutual experience of the supervisory relationship; the third reflects the subjective experience and responses of the supervisor—all in relation to feedback from supervisor to supervisee. Below, each facet will be individually represented graphically (Figures 4.1 to 4.3) and verbally followed by a summary including a comprehensive graphic (Figure 4.4) and explication of the interconnections among these three synchronous facets. The facets are ongoing and may be experienced simultaneously and/or consecutively.

Feedback received by supervisee. The first facet that emerged, and quickly diverged into sub-facets, was that of how supervisors perceived that the articulated feedback was received by their supervisees. Figure 4.1 represents the divergence between feedback which was perceived to be openly received by supervisees and feedback which was perceived to be resisted.

Positive (affirmative) feedback was not necessarily openly received, nor was constructive feedback necessarily resisted by supervisees. In short, supervisees’ receptivity to feedback was to some extent independent of the valence of the communication.

Figure 4.1

Attention to Supervisee Characteristics: Supervisor Perception of Supervisee's Reception of Feedback



Note. This figure represents one section of the relationship and feedback interaction and is interlinked with two other facets (Figures 4.2 and 4.3). Connections are shown through the integrated model in Figure 4.4.

Supervisors identified a relatively smooth and repetitive pattern of feedback that they perceived to be openly received by supervisees. Experiences of feedback that were openly received by supervisees were connective and deepened supervision, as articulated by SPOR2: “We are working well together, finding common ground and developing our alliance. I tell hir these things and offer positive feedback about hir skill development and my feelings of being connected.” Openly received feedback contributed to participants’ articulation of an increased ability to facilitate difficult conversations effectively. One supervisee shared an experience regarding a difficult conversation s/he had with her supervisor about fears of working with a new older male client:

> This is a lot that I am projecting on someone that I have yet to meet, and in all odds will not be a representation of my concerns. In order to work through this I am going to role-play a portion of the initial session in supervision. This will not only help me practice the areas I’m worried about, but it will allow me to practice with a male figure I feel comfortable with and work well with.

In addition, experience within the positive feedback facet also contributed to the supervisors’ sense of increased confidence in her/his abilities and increased competence as a supervisor. The increased supervisor confidence, also affected

by the interpersonal interactions within the relationship described above, directly impacted the way in which the supervisors continued to provide feedback. In response to experiences with feedback being received openly, SPOR1 acknowledged "I felt more confident in challenging [my supervisee] gently and asserting my expertise." Supervisors also reported that the gain in confidence had direct implications for their own sense of developmental competence and their ability to further deepen interpersonal communication with their supervisees.

Feedback that was resisted or reported as not received, initiated a complex interaction between supervisee growth and development, supervisor competence and confidence, and relational connection. At the forefront of the experience, supervisors shared feelings of decreased self-confidence and belief in their abilities as supervisors when feedback was provided and resisted by supervisees. The developmental challenge appeared to become salient when supervisors interpreted their supervisee's resistance to feedback as indicative of the supervisor's inability to provide adequate supervision. In addition, it is noteworthy to elucidate that supervisors regularly reflected upon lack of confidence and feelings of incompetence in response to negative perception of feedback, such as when SPOR2 reflected "During the supervision

session I thought I was perhaps not making process comments thoughtfully enough or was 'doing something wrong'". However supervisees, throughout journals and in personal interviews, never questioned their supervisors' competence or confidence or articulated any similar thoughts. This may indicate that the question of confidence and competence is much more of an inner experience than one perceived within the supervisory relationship. Due to the nature of the journals being written as part of a course requirement, it may also be possible that supervisees perceived some level of stigma against complaining about supervisor competence, however, which may indicate a more complex dynamic regarding perception of supervisor competence than outwardly appears in the data.

In addition to the supervisors' experiences articulated above, two patterns emerged in response to feedback that was perceived to be resisted. First, supervisors voiced a clear emphasis on reconnecting within the relationship through a focus on rapport and utilization of common factors. "I wanted to model what it can be like to process difficult topics in a therapeutic setting, and at the same time acknowledge that a sense of growth, accomplishment and increased competence can also emerge as a result of the process," as reported by SPOR2, reflects hir desire to both model and illuminate the connection between remaining connected and continuing to provide feedback.

Re-engaging in their relationship led to either an "impasse" where the feedback (about a specific issue) stalled or led to a "tear and repair" scenario that reconnected the dyad and allowed for feedback to continue.

At times the re-emphasis on the relationship led to a "tear and repair" situation as expressed by SPOR4 who reflected:

> I was very appreciative of my supervisee's willingness to take a risk with me in the room and to disclose information that was anxiety provoking. [My supervisee] and I endorsed feeling closer to each other as a result of this tear and repair experience.

If the "tear and repair" scenario occurred within the supervisory relationship, the feedback process would continue and re-emerge as openly received feedback. On occasion, the supervision dyad would again engage in the resisted feedback pattern. However, as the relationship continued to grow the duration and stress of the resisted feedback facet tended to decrease. This observation reflects the interplay between relationship and supervisee reactions. In essence, the stronger sense of relationship and connection experienced within the supervisory dyad, the less likely it was for feedback to be resisted and the more likely it was for the relationship to repair in a more fluid manner.

In contrast, experiences where no change was perceived regardless of the attempt to increase depth and connection within the relationship were also observed. One supervisor described this experience as reaching an "impasse" with hir supervisee regarding a specific topic. This impasse seemed to either reflect feedback that was "too intense for [the supervisee] to hear" or developmentally beyond the supervisees' capacity at that specific time. In considering this impasse, SPOR4 articulated, "I think I am starting to allow the process to slow down a little bit more and to spend less time focusing on an 'agenda' for supervision and allowing it to become more of an interpersonal process with my supervisee". When an impasse was reached the supervision dyad often returned to a relational focus and re-engaged elsewhere in one of the facets, as reflected by the supervisor above, or the feedback continued to be filtered through the lens of supervisee development.

The second pattern that emerged at this point was the supervisors' consistent reassessment of their supervisees' levels of development. When feedback was resisted or not received by supervisees, their supervisors reassessed the supervisees' developmental readiness to work with the articulated feedback. Dependent upon this reassessment of developmental readiness to receive the given feedback, supervisors either restructured the way in which the feedback

was given or backed away from the feedback that was resisted altogether. For example, in one instance SPOR1 shared feedback about the way in which the supervisee appeared to distance from the client through an avoidance of affect. When the supervisor provided feedback about distancing from affect, the supervisee was initially defensive and denied avoidance. After spending time examining the experience of the feedback, the supervisor acknowledged that the feedback was not developmentally appropriate at that specific time. However, several sessions later, the supervisor re-articulated similar feedback at a time when the supervisee was able to observe and reflect upon feeling distanced from the client. This example reflects a consistent pattern of assessing supervisee development and adjusting accordingly.

Although most instances of resisted feedback were corrective or critical in nature, there were several instances where supervisees were perceived to resist feedback that was affirming and supportive in nature. For example, SPOR3 spoke about the challenge s/he felt from one supervisee who "had a hard time hearing any positive feedback" and was perceived as being "incredibly hard on hirself". SPOR3 shared that his supervisee "didn't believe the positive feedback" based on previous life experiences. SPOR3 articulated a desire for the

supervisee to be able to "see what s/he is good at" in order to continue to improve hir skills.

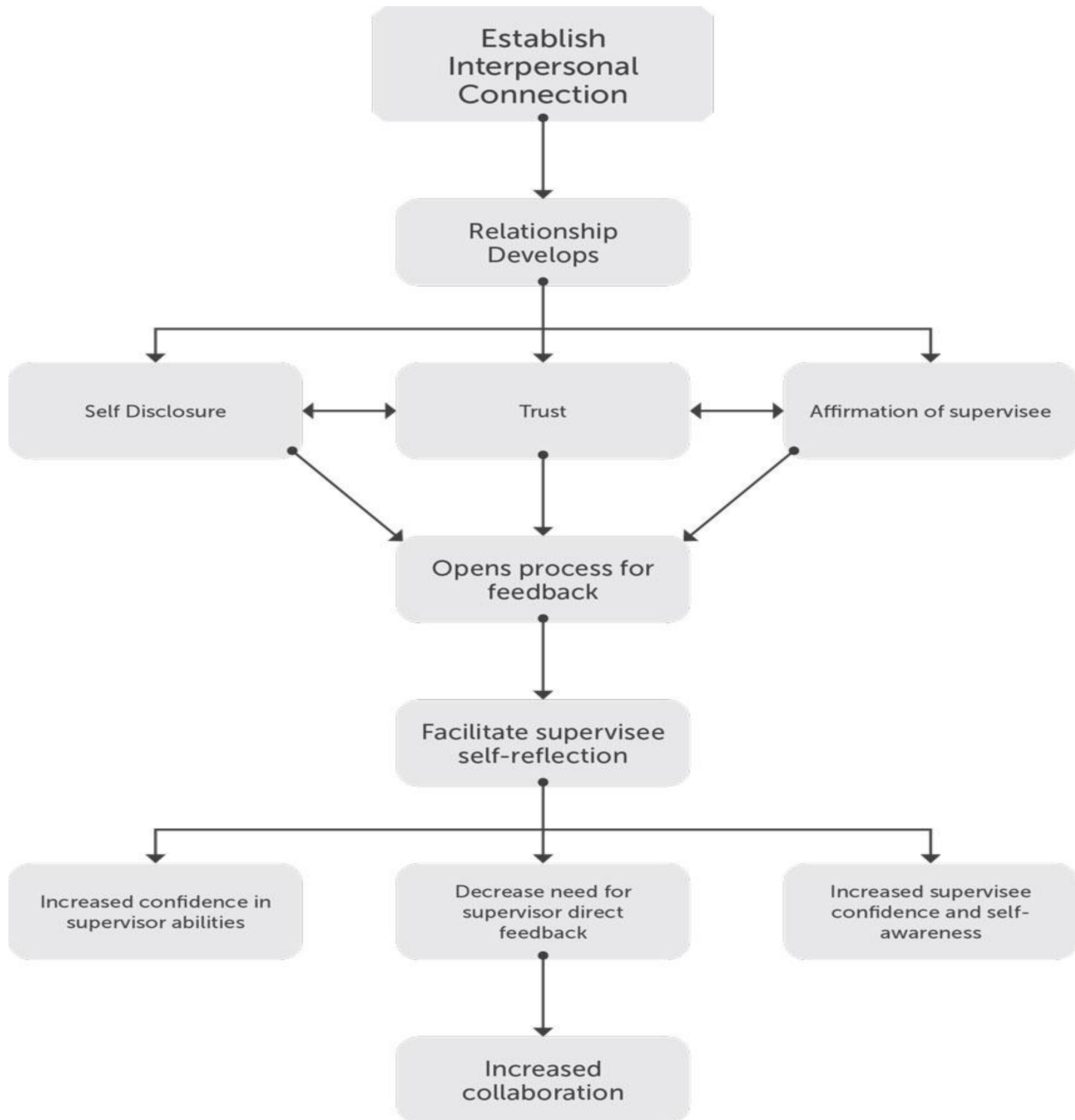
In sum, the emerging facets regarding supervisee perception of feedback reflected processes that were either accepted or openly received or resisted and closed. Feedback that was openly received allowed for increased depth and challenge, an ability to balance the focus of feedback, and an increased sense of comfort engaging in difficult feedback conversations. Feedback that was resisted spurred a re-emphasis on the supervisory relationship, restructuring of feedback provided, and assessment of developmental appropriateness for specific feedback. As stated earlier, the facets continue to be interrelated and synchronous with the dyad engaging and re-engaging in many simultaneously and/or consecutively.

Interpersonal connection facet. Supervisor awareness of interpersonal process, understood as the interactions focused on feelings and experiences within the dyad, emerged as a touchstone regarding the articulation of feedback based upon supervisor and supervisee articulated experiences. The touchstone reflects the supervisors' consistent reference of their relationship barometer in making decisions about how, what, and when to communicate feedback to supervisees. Figure 4.2 represents the facet of interpersonal connection experienced within the supervisory relationship and indicates a positive

link between the establishment of a connected relationship and the ability to provide and receive feedback.

Figure 4.2

Attention to Relationship: Interpersonal Connection Facet



The figure above reflects the participants' experience of interpersonal interactions within their novice supervisory

relationships. The themes depicted reflect supervisors' perspectives with corroborating evidence from supervisees to further elucidate the observed facet. The establishment of interpersonal connection, understood as formation of the supervisory relationship, provided one common manner of establishing the relationship. It is important to note that there is a focus within the participants' training department on interpersonal process development and, as such, it appeared to be the strongest manner of relationship development articulated by participants. SPOR3 at the onset of supervision, reflected on the importance of personal connection to a supervisee and stated "My supervisee expressed s/he was excited to work with me mostly because s/he could hear my investment in hir both personally and professionally." The importance of connection and relationship was shared by all supervisors and was linked to their beliefs and training as therapists as well as their own past experiences as supervisees.

The connection between supervisor and supervisee was, at least in part, based upon self-disclosure, affirmation, and trust. The intentionality behind self-disclosure was expressed by SPOR3 who stated "I did this [discussed inner conflict about being overly directive in a session] for both transparency and rapport, as well as to help model how to appropriately model self-disclosure in the room." The development of trust and

appropriate self-disclosure opened the process for feedback. One supervisee expressed:

> I used to think that because I valued critical feedback from people, that it would be easy for me to hear the sometimes negative things people had to say. I now understand, however, that in order to feel comfortable receiving feedback from someone I need to have a trusting relationship with that person and I need that feedback to also include something positive I have done.

Consistent focus on developmentally appropriate areas for growth can assist supervisees to attend to these areas automatically. For example, SPOR2 later proclaimed:

> We watched tape and my supervisee reflected on things s/he could have done differently before I could even give the feedback. At times I seem auxiliary, but perhaps that's the definition of good supervision—giving a trainee skills so s/he can modify therapy without someone telling them every mistake.

In this case, a positive supervision relationship also rendered some feedback as moot, as the trainee was more open to their in-the-moment realizations and was thus perceived as non-defensive about what was recorded on the tape.

The shared commitment to working together for the benefit of the trainees' clinical growth, or supervisory working

alliance, also facilitated increased confidence for supervisors and supervisees regarding their mutual development. Rapport also allowed for a sense of genuineness and authenticity from the perspective of supervisees, one of whom expressed "My supervisor is 'real' so I can then be myself in the room—to find balance between my professional and personal selves". Supervisors perceived that the supervisory relationship gained strength amidst difficult conversations, as exemplified by SPOR3's reflection that "I think it was one of the strongest moments I've experienced; we both realized we were in a place of discomfort and stayed there with one another."

Increased collaboration was observed as a result of increased self-confidence of supervisors and supervisees. SPOR3 shared hir perception of increased collaboration by stating "I want to acknowledge that this is largely attributed to [my supervisee's] willingness to be self-reflective as well as open to process the constructive feedback that s/he receives from me". Increased self-confidence was expressed by all supervisors. SPOR2 articulated a specific example of self-awareness regarding increased confidence:

> I think this supervision felt more powerful in that I was more comfortable with my expertise around offering [my supervisee] feedback based on hir work with the client. I feel that I could focus on that, believing that I have

> something to offer this novice therapist in how to work with the client.

Additionally, SPOR4 shared hir perception of work with a supervisee, articulating:

> I feel we do things together, like it's a parallel process, and I think that's where the bond comes in. So as we're working, I try to step back as much as I can and let my supervisee lead...I'll say no if I think it's wrong, but I really want to back up what s/he's doing—hir own process.

The cumulative effect can be observed in SPOR1's description of the interactions he engaged in with his supervisee over several sessions:

> It just took entering session with [my supervisee], being authentic about my feelings, considering their developmental stage as a counselor, and doing my best to be nonjudgmental. In the end, what I found was that s/he is going through some difficult circumstances in life. Further, my supervisee is not used to being open with emotions and therefore does not expect it from others. In addition to this, as s/he is careful about being emotionally transparent, s/he is also careful about asking others to do the same. Finally, while [my supervisee] acknowledged wanting to connect with clients, s/he felt that hir feelings regarding various personal aspects of

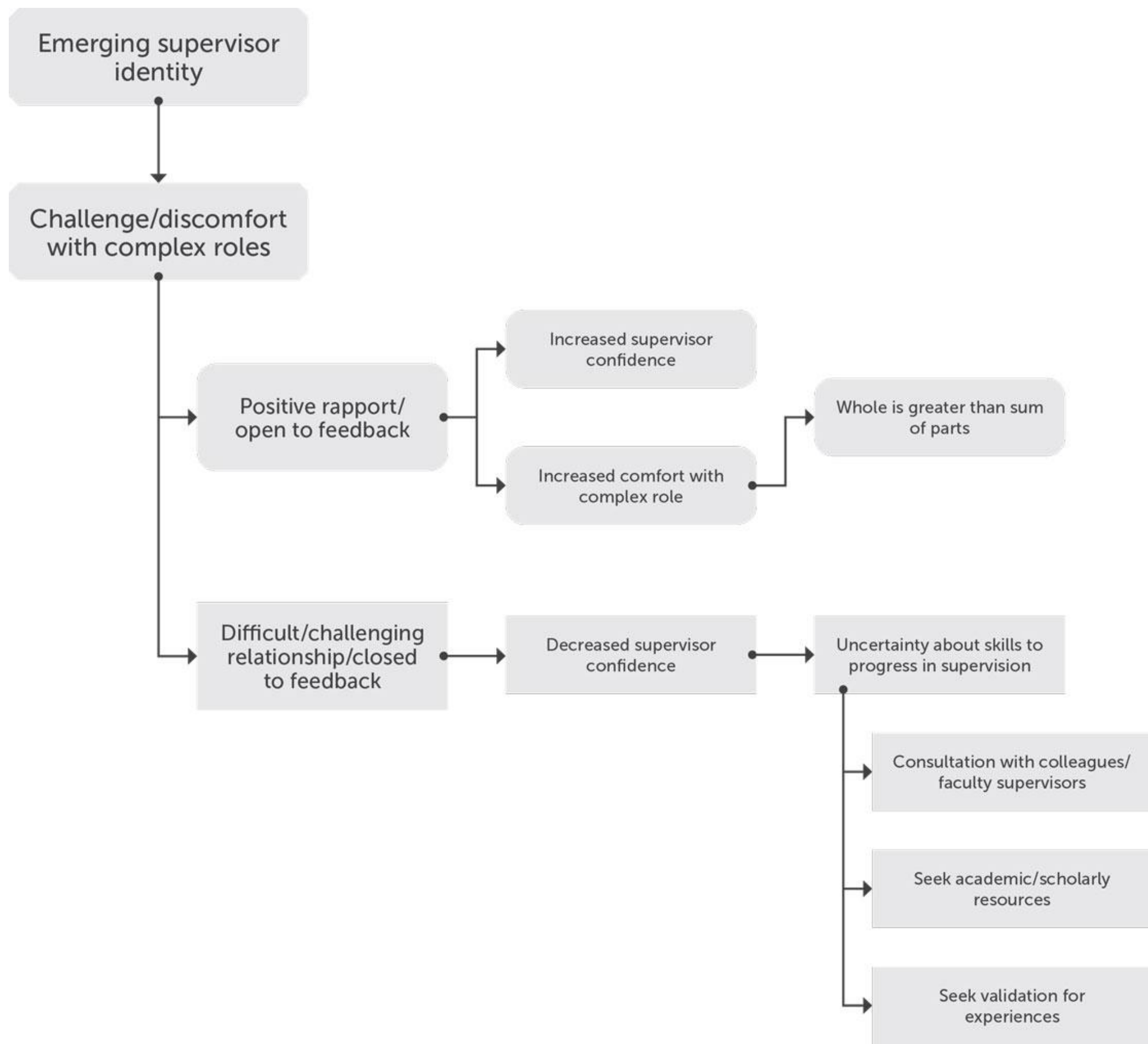
> personal life leave my supervisee unable to connect. All of this gave me further insight into how to help [my supervisee] with becoming the counselor that s/he wants to be. Further, our conversation enable me to tell hir that I feel that my supervisee's personal life may be affecting therapy, which enabled me to open up supervision as a means to process my supervisee's personal emotional difficulties in the context of doing counseling. The result, I feel, was that our conversation helped us deepen the supervisory relationship between us, and increased our potential to do good work together.

In sum, the establishment of a strong working alliance through the use of interpersonal relationship building contributed to the supervisors' abilities to provide feedback that was perceived as collaborative and beneficial by supervisees.

Emerging supervisor identity. The final facet that emerged regarding relationship and feedback was the development of supervisor identity. This developmentally emerging identity presented as a salient aspect throughout the novice supervisory experience and may be particularly important to make transparent to those training to become supervisors.

Figure 4.3

Attention to Supervisor Characteristics: Emerging Supervisor Identity Facet



Novice supervisors consistently reflected the challenge of supervising new trainees while simultaneously learning the skills of supervision as first time supervisors. SPOR1 stated "I began to feel a need to be hyper-organized in order to cast boundaries in the ambiguity. Ambiguity scares me when it exists

in contexts I have deemed important for my professional future." Establishing the supervisory relationship and defining to first-time supervisees the concept of supervision challenged supervisors to articulate and engage with the complex roles of supervision. At the onset of the supervisory relationships, supervisors shared feelings of doubt and confusion regarding the integration of roles such as teacher, mentor, evaluator, therapist, etc. and were more prone to doubt their capabilities when questioned about their roles as supervisors. For example, after the second supervision session with a supervisee, SPOR2 expressed:

> Overall I will admit that my anxiety was elevated in this supervision. Likely this was a combination of experiencing a parallel process of my supervisee's anxiety as well as a realization of heightened responsibility for supervision based on my supervisee's upcoming first session.

As the supervisory relationships continued to develop, supervisors consistently relied on perceptions of responsiveness to feedback as an indicator of the strength of the supervisory bond. The supervisor identity facet was, at least in part, based on perceptions of positive rapport/openness to feedback and difficult relationship/closed to feedback.

When supervisors perceived their supervisees to be engaged in a positive relationship with them, they articulated a greater

sense of ease regarding provision of feedback, both positive and growth oriented. As such, supervisors shared feelings of increased competence and self-confidence as expressed by SPOR2: “It’s amazing how feeling connected to [my supervisee] also made me feel more competent and helpful as a supervisor.” Supervisors also were able to better integrate multiple roles and shared sentiments such as “Mainly, I have learned that supervision is more, much more, than merely teaching, counseling, or consulting alone” (SPOR1) and “I believe I had a greater opportunity to integrate my skills as a mentor, teacher, and evaluator more than I have during my previous sessions” (SPOR3). The integration of multiple roles within supervision reflected developmental growth elucidated metaphorically as the whole being greater than the sum of its parts.

In contrast, when the supervision relationship was described as difficult or challenging and the supervisee was perceived to be closed or resistant to feedback, supervisor development appeared hindered. For example, SPOR4 described an ongoing struggle within hir relationship dyad and shared that s/he felt unable to provide corrective feedback because it was received defensively or dismissed. These interactions led to a myriad of questions and judgments regarding hir own abilities and competence as a supervisor.

To illustrate the complexity within the relationship, a reflection by a supervisee stated:

> Similarly, in individual supervision I tend to look for unwavering support and loyalty form my supervisor (i.e. starting with positive statements, couching constructive criticism, etc.) and I become uncomfortable when my own emotions come into the room and are magnified (confronted) by my supervisor. In other words, when something that the client brings to a session affects me and my emotions I am hesitant to bring my own emotions into the room for fear of it affecting my "achievement as a counselor" and of making my supervisor not "like" me or feel uncomfortable.

Often, in this and similar situations, supervisors reported consulting with colleagues and faculty supervisors, searching academic and scholarly resources for increased knowledge, and seeking validation of competence and experience from colleagues and faculty supervisors.

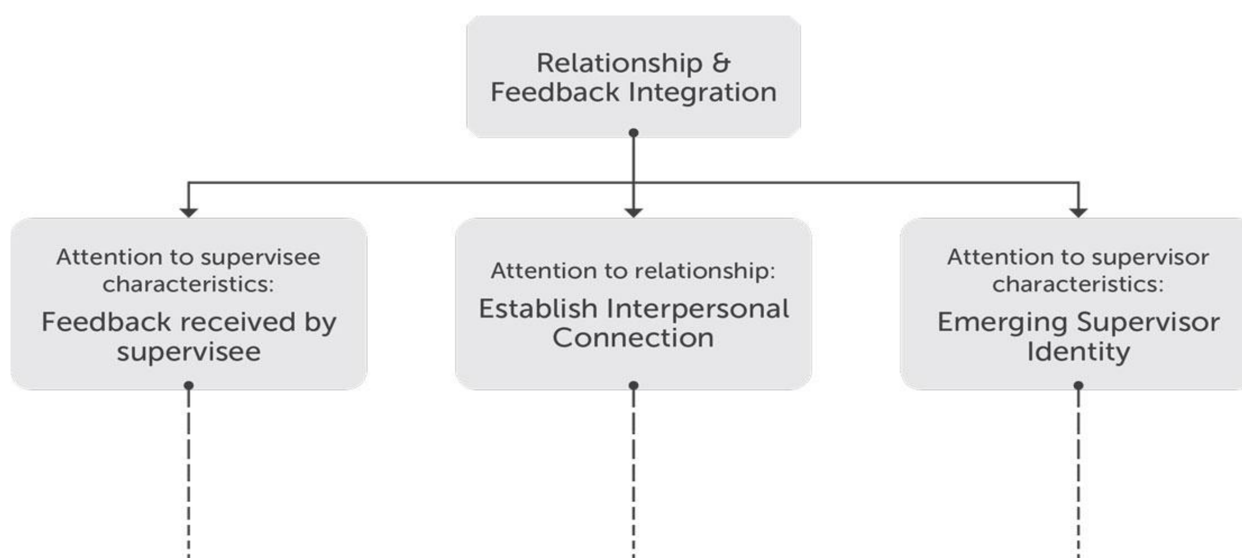
In sum, it appears as though the identity development of novice supervisors plays an intricate role regarding relationship development and articulation of feedback. Connected relationships and experiences of open reception of feedback facilitated increased feelings of competence and confidence which then allowed for a deeper integration of complex roles. Relationships that were described as difficult or challenging

were consistently linked to experiences of feedback perceived to be resisted by the supervisee which led to a decrease in feelings of competence and confidence. In turn, this contributed to supervision sessions that were “less effective” and “more focused on basics” than “deeper relationship skills”.

Interrelated and synchronous facets. As mentioned at the beginning of this section, the individual facets are separate parts of a broader and interconnected facet. Figure 4.4 illustrates the top layer of the integrated model. The facets represented in figures 4.1 through 4.3 graphically continue under the appropriate headings in Figure 4.4.

Figure 4.4

Relationship and Feedback Integration



Note. Figure 4.4 is a composite of Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3 graphically represented to illustrate the interconnecting facets of relationship and feedback in the novice supervision dyad. The dashed lines indicate a continuation of the graphics as fully represented in Figures 4.1, 4.2, and 4.3. The dyads may be situated within one or more facets as described above.

Summary. Supervisors and supervisees may be situated within one or more facets concurrently and/or consecutively pending the perception of relationship and feedback. The linked facets can be further understood as: supervisee openness and receptivity served as a marker for the relationship and connection which in turn enhanced supervisor confidence and efficacy. Numerous examples of this linkage emerged from the data and many previously articulated findings resonate within the larger linked facet. Several additional experiences reflect the ways in which the facets are directly linked.

SPOR3 shared a supervision experience that reflects the interconnections between these facets. S/he shared:

> I made sure to discuss the importance of countertransference and how it is not only important in the conceptualization of the client, but in the working relationship with the client as well. I am impressed by how quickly [my supervisee] welcomes any opportunity for self-reflection and growth.

This was followed with “Today’s session was used to build upon [our] developing relationship” and general feelings of excitement and confidence about viewing the supervisee’s next session and providing further feedback. Another example that reflected a linking of facets was expressed by SPOR2 regarding connection, openness to feedback, and supervisor confidence:

> Overall I felt more connection with [my supervisee] and believe s/he is starting to make more clear headway in recognizing hir struggle and where s/he may need to continue to develop as a therapist. My supervisee was more genuine in that for one of the first times s/he expressed a bit of doubt. S/he made some expressions in supervision and I noted that s/he seemed a little overwhelmed—my supervisee easily agreed and elaborated on some of the challenges with ambiguity (for example).

SPOR2 continued to describe the supervisee's responsiveness and connection during the session and ended by sharing "This was the best supervision to date." A further example illustrated SPOR3's feelings of confidence related to one supervisee's receptivity to feedback:

> Personally, I thought this was one of my best supervision sessions to date. I want to acknowledge that this is largely attributed to [my supervisee's] willingness to be self-reflective as well as open to process feedback s/he receives from me. My supervisee is not confrontational, yet s/he is able to defend hir conceptualization and process in session comfortably.

Although SPOR3 did not directly express relationship connection in hir journal, hir supervisee wrote that "supervision was more interpersonal process with us this week" and expressed feeling

"very connected" to the supervisor supervisor during the session.

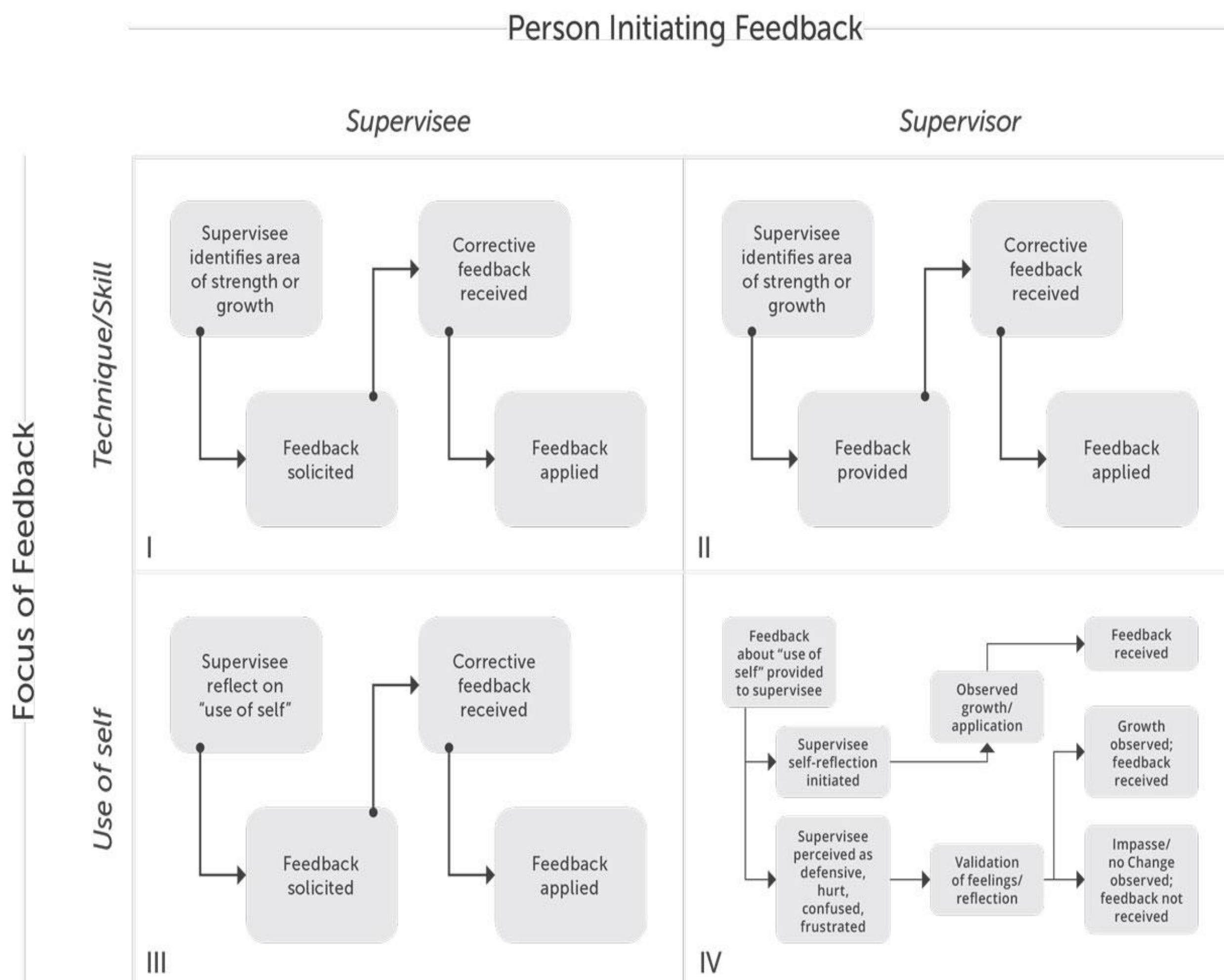
Question 2: Characteristics of Corrective Feedback Received

Question 2 explored the characteristics and patterns of articulated corrective feedback, as reported by supervisors, as well as whether supervisees reported receiving the articulated corrective feedback. Articulated feedback was primarily determined via supervisor reflection and was occasionally identified via supervisee journal reflections; however, the lens through which the essential findings were extrapolated is that of the supervisor. Therefore, the main data presented in this section are supervisors' perceptions of supervisees' experiences regarding corrective feedback within the supervision relationship.

Four quadrants were created to graphically represent the patterns of articulated and received feedback. The window represents four main patterns observed within this inquiry. The quadrant representing the intersection of the supervisor initiating feedback regarding the supervisee's "use of self" is further elaborated to include two unique patterns observed at this junction.

Figure 4.5

Corrective Feedback within Novice Supervisory Relationships



Note. Quadrants provide representations of the ways in which supervisors experienced their supervisees' responses to corrective feedback

Feedback solicited by supervisee. Quadrant I of the structural figure above exemplifies the experience, as perceived by supervisors, when supervisees directly solicited feedback about skills and/or techniques. Initially, the supervisee identified an area of growth based upon her/his experiences as a counselor, participation in group supervision, personal

reflection, or review of recorded sessions. One supervisee summarized hir feelings about the onset of supervision by sharing "I am hoping for a different experience with my new supervisor, one that is more critical, so I can become aware of the areas in which I need to improve" which indicates the supervisee's desire for growth and challenge. Further, a second supervisee stated "As I look forward to my first client session next week I am grateful for my two supervision sessions with [my supervisor] that have allowed me to prepare and reflect on my role as a counselor in training this semester."

Once feedback was solicited by the supervisee, change was observed in counseling sessions, group supervision, and individual supervision. For example, feedback was solicited from SPOR2 regarding how to handle intense client emotions in session. SPOR2 reflected:

> [My supervisee] did ask for direct feedback regarding some alternatives to what s/he said when the client cried and after I suggested s/he give it some thought, I also suggested sitting in silence, just acknowledging the client's pain by saying "Seems like this is really hard and you're experiencing a lot of pain right now".

Corrective feedback was also regularly documented in supervisees' journal entries as they reflected on client

sessions and their progress as counselors in training. To continue the example above, SPOR2's supervisee wrote:

> After identifying this link, my supervisor helped me come up with renditions of a simple response to use in sessions when I am feeling overwhelmed by the content and/or process being discussed; "That feels really hard." To this end, because the client usually continues speaking with just a verbal following response to me, this simple response will keep the session going, let her know I am listening, and also give me a chance to breathe and synthesize what is going on in the room.

Supervisees also articulated forethought about the use of supervision to address challenges. For example, as supervisees prepared to terminate with their first clients, one reflected upon hir future use of supervision and the complex feelings that had been the topic of earlier feedback and shared:

> I plan to address termination in supervision by discussing with my supervisor how I am feeling about terminating with this client. I will talk about what my hopes for the client are, my concerns for him, and explore how I am affected by the termination. I also look forward to observing how my supervisor approaches termination because it could provide me with possible ideas for my future work.

Another theme that emerged was the ability for supervisees to solicit feedback about their "use of self" as counselors, as shown in Quadrant III. The example below illustrated openness to feedback about "use of self" by a supervisee upon reflection of previously unsolicited feedback. SPOR1 articulated surprise at one supervisee's request for feedback about an area of interpersonal struggle previously resisted:

> In fact, s/he identified two most prominent areas for improvement that I had in mind for our upcoming work together—interpersonal process and empathy. What this showed me was that [my supervisee] has indeed been paying attention in supervision, something that I have questioned previously. Further, it showed me that my supervisee has been paying attention to hir progress throughout the semester.

After several more sessions, SPOR1 further articulated observations of the supervisee's progress.

> Further, review of my supervisee's tape showed obvious improvement in hir relational skills, including hir ability to use empathy and interpersonal process. I was most impressed with [my supervisee's] ability to use self-reflection in our supervision session, in which s/he accurately conceptualized the client and discussed hir own feelings surrounding the work they had done together.

In short, corrective feedback solicited by the supervisee was consistent and changes were observed by supervisee and supervisor. The pattern appeared to be fairly smooth and positively experienced by both members of the supervision dyad.

Unsolicited feedback about technique or skills. Quadrant II represents the experiences of corrective feedback given directly by supervisors without solicitation. This feedback was based upon information and experience gained from observed therapy sessions, individual supervision, and group supervision and was focused on technique and/or skill acquisition. Often cited as the simplest feedback by supervisors was that related to specific and direct skill development such as risk, assessment, time management, and other logistical skills such as "I did give my supervisee more direct feedback and thoughts pertaining to the risk assessment, again, feeling more like a logistic skill or knowledge rather than interpersonal development" (SPOR2).

Corrective feedback that could be more closely identified with interpersonal relationship building was also commonly experienced within this quadrant. Mostly, this appeared to be feedback about an area of growth of which the supervisee was unaware (or at least unaware of the potential clinical impact) yet seemed to resonate with the supervisee. Although potentially about "use of self", this feedback appeared to be processed more similarly to specific technique and skill based feedback. An

example provided by SPOR1 speaks to feedback that was given regarding observations of the supervisee’s struggle to stay connected and engaged during a session with a client. The supervisor shared:

> After spending more time on this particular feedback, I noticed a change in [my supervisee’s] affect. S/he seemed to become more receptive to the professor’s feedback, as well as seemed to become more engaged during the session with me. I was able to use this opportunity to reflect to [my supervisee] how hir ability to receive feedback plays an important role not only during supervision, but also when s/he engages with the client.”

Feedback was most often about specific behaviors and interactions although unsolicited feedback regarding symbolic presentation by a supervisee was identified by SPOR4, who shared a conversation about a prominently worn religious symbol.

> For [my supervisee], the conversation seemed to be a first step in some self-awareness, some beginning of a sense that a symbol that has tremendous positive value for hir might have tremendous negative value for someone else and, if that were ever to be the case, how would s/he negotiate that conflict?

Supervisor initiated feedback about “use of self”. At times interpersonal feedback appeared to be perceived by supervisees

as directly related to their sense of self which subsequently complicated the course of feedback. Some examples include one supervisee's discomfort with a client based on gender identity, one supervisee's judgment regarding alcohol use and promiscuity, another supervisee's conservative religious experiences, and another's resistance to affect. In many of these interactions, the supervision dyad was able to work through the connection to the supervisee's sense of self without halting the course of feedback, either by sparking supervisees' requests for feedback or by opening the door for supervisors to directly connect the perceived self-related feedback to specific clinical interactions. This was illustrated through SPOR2's description of ongoing supervision feedback about hir supervisee's growing self-awareness:

> But as we've progressed I realize that my supervisee is actually doing a lot of thinking about this and s/he shows this in hir work with clients – even if it's just a small change or small step towards a new intervention. This time, when s/he said s/he'd think about it, it was a quicker turn around. A few hours later in group supervision my supervisee asked about how others, manage bringing emotion into this room. I felt truly lucky to have watched this effort of my supervisee asking for help and for potential feedback around being genuine and checking in

> with the others about gender roles and emotion. Not only did s/he bring up this topic and try to engage others, when s/he received simple feedback saying they perceived hir as emotional (or specifically, "sensitive") s/he seemed frustrated. Later my supervisee directly asked for critical feedback and when s/he received it ("you seemed really intellectualized when I first met you – you used big words that I never use") s/he accepted it gracefully and I believe it will also positively affect hir development and understanding of hir impact on others, specifically clients.

As elucidated in Question 1, participants cited a positive relationship as integral to their ability to engage in difficult conversations. For example, a supervisee shared growing awareness regarding how hir experience losing a parent affected the work s/he was doing with a client experiencing a similar loss. The supervisee shared:

> More than anything, I am thankful for being enlightened to "my own stuff" with endings and after working through difficult emotions in supervision, I have come to realize the fact that I lost a parent and have "stuff" with endings which is an asset to my future work.

Similarly SPOR3 discussed the ways in which one supervisee avoided positive feedback regarding things that were handled

well which elicited feedback regarding clinical judgment and developing competence from the supervisor. After directly processing the supervisee’s personal response to receiving positive feedback, much of which was tied to experiences of culture and gender, the supervisor was able to validate hir experience and also connect clinical competence to the supervisee’s ability to acknowledge both positive and negative interventions. SPOR3 later shared:

> I thought that my supervisee displayed greater confidence and insight into hir own development this week than s/he has in previous weeks due to hir willingness to receive reiterate positive messages related to how well s/he appropriately handled a session that clearly pushed my supervisee outside of hir comfort zone.

Although a great number of feedback interactions were able to be processed in the moment and received through one of the aforementioned patterns, some corrective feedback perceived as related to self by supervisees appeared to hit a metaphorical wall. These feedback interactions were often perceived not only as related to self but also appeared to be experienced as intensely personal. Several participants, supervisors and supervisees alike, articulated surprise regarding the strength of the emotional reaction to feedback that occurred. When corrective feedback was presented to supervisees who perceived

it as intensely self-related immediate reactions most often reflected the supervisees' feelings of confusion, defensiveness, hurt, and frustration. Examples included things such as lack of empathy toward client experiences (one supervisee articulated having "too much going on" in hir own life to "really care about" the client's problems), and interventions based on personal values (a supervisee suggesting a client was "weak" for staying in her current romantic relationship) where supervisors perceived the supervisees to be frustrated by feedback related to their "use of self" in relation to the client. After a particularly difficult supervision session, a supervisee shared:

> I felt frustrated in supervision last week. My supervisor said on my evaluation that I needed to work most on my self-awareness. I did not think I was too bad in that area, so now I'm kind of concerned with what I may be missing. Then we talked about my client some, and my supervisor repeatedly said that s/he thought the client was getting frustrated in the room. I did not pick up on as much frustration, so now I feel like I can't see anything that's going on in that room.

S/he further shared feeling angry, hurt, and misunderstood and questioned hir ability to become a professional counselor.

Although there were times when the intensity of feelings regarding specific corrective feedback blocked further progress,

quite often the relationship was able to be repaired and progress continued. For example, the supervisee who observed hir client as “weak” (in a journal entry) later was able to connect hir personal response to issues within hir family of origin which then allowed hir to re-engage in the feedback process regarding “use of self” with the client. The supervisors’ focus on reconnection within the relationship and validation of the difficulty experienced by the supervisee were pivotal interventions within the supervisory relationship. Several sessions after feedback was given to the supervisee quoted above about hir level of self-awareness, SPOR4, the supervisor, observed:

> From the time I identified my supervisee’s need for increased self-awareness during the mid-term evaluation to the present, s/he has worked very hard to understand what it was I was talking about and to increase self-awareness in sessions. S/he also identified that that had been hard for hir, that that portion of our process was a “tear and repair” experience.

In this inquiry, the data suggested that the only resisted feedback appeared in Quadrant IV (supervisor initiated about supervisee “use of self”); however, it may be that this was the most salient experience and therefore the one articulated in journals and interviews. It is possible that a similar

resistance may be been experienced in other quadrants but not directly represented in the data.

In sum, feedback that was intensely self-related and resulted in feelings of anger, hurt, frustration, or confusion, although initially resisted, often became accepted later on with validation and reconnection within the relationship. When these events happened, the supervisee was able to move beyond the wall or impasse and show signs of growth and change directly related to the feedback received or were able to re-emerge and continue elsewhere in the model.

Question 3: Barriers to Feedback

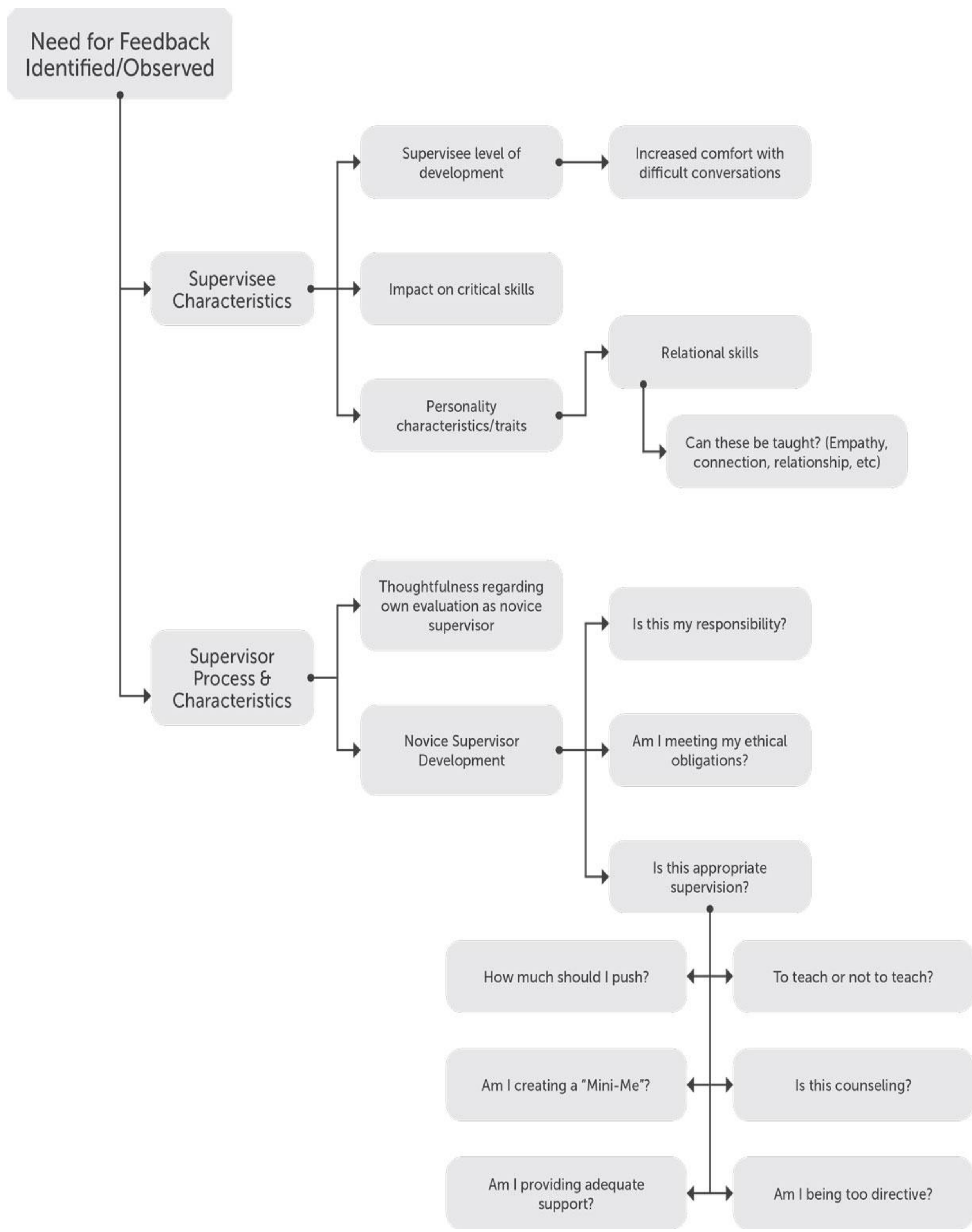
Question 3 explored the barriers to articulating feedback experienced by novice supervisors. Specifically, this question examined the overlap between identified need for feedback and articulation of reasons or barriers for providing feedback. Unlike unsaid/unspoken feedback examined in Question 5, barriers in Question 3 were often temporary allowing for eventual articulation of identified feedback. Findings regarding barriers to feedback are solely presented through the lens of the novice supervisor. Since the focus is on feedback left (temporarily) unsaid, data are supervisor reports of internal processes. In this section, *process* is intentionally used based upon the prevalence of the term used directly by supervisors in journals and interviews. As this reflects supervisors' internal

experiences, or processes, it appears to be the most accurate linguistic representation. Figure 4.6 represents the manner in which the interaction of characteristics of the supervisee and the process and characteristics of the supervisor resulted in barriers to the provision of feedback.

As stated above, this question explored barriers to feedback when the need for feedback had been identified by supervisors. Barriers, in this inquiry, reflect a point of “pause” prior to articulating feedback. Often the barriers proved to be temporary and allowed for supervisors to clarify and reflect upon the rationale for feedback, perhaps reflecting a “hurdle” one contemplated prior to jumping into feedback. Experiences indicated that the perceived characteristics and processes of the novice supervisor, such as sense of self-confidence, feelings of competence, and awareness of evaluation affected the perception of barriers to feedback. Developmental readiness and personality of the supervisee also affected the supervisors’ perceptions of barriers to feedback. It appeared as though supervisors’ processes related to feedback not only reflect their awareness of the development of their supervisees but also awareness of their own development as novice supervisors.

Figure 4.6

Barriers to Feedback



Supervisee characteristics. Similar to findings elucidated in Question 2, supervisee characteristics such as level of development and personality characteristics were taken into consideration by supervisors when feedback was contemplated. Supervisors articulated consistent desires to provide feedback that was developmentally appropriate, non-pathologizing to the supervisee, directly related to clinical work, and appropriately situated within the context of interpersonal competencies. For example, awareness of development was articulated through the example SPOR4 shared regarding hir internal response to viewing one supervisee's sessions:

> A couple of times we'd start our sessions and I'd say "What did you think about your session with your client?" thinking "Goodness, I can't believe some of the things that happened." And s/he would say "Fantastic!" and I just decided, in that moment, to start with that which was a very different way to say "Okay, that's my supervisee's perception so let's start with that because that is where s/he's at with strengths and what's beneficial".

Similarly, SPOR1 noted hir response when a supervisee was struggling with a strong emotional response to a client:

> My supervisee was distraught, angry, sad, embarrassed, anxious/worried, confused, and s/he cried often. I immediately felt sorry for hir, and wanted to help. My

> response as a supervisor was to pretty much drop everything and attend to my supervisee’s emotional state forgetting temporarily the notes I had made on how s/he can improve as a counselor and those on what s/he did well in session.

This example reflects the supervisor’s awareness of supervisee development and self (perhaps both trait and state) as well as hir desire to provide a supportive and non-pathologizing interaction. That is, SPOR1 may have prioritized addressing the supervisee’s present emotional state, but it could be that the supervisee is developmentally able to hear this feedback once s/he had processed hir immediate emotions. In fact, this dyad did explore the supervisee’s developmental and personal concerns regarding the gender presentation of this particular client for several sessions leading to an early termination of the clinical relationship, as stated in journal entries of SPOR1 and the supervisee.

The complexity of relational skills, impact on clinical work, and questions regarding the “teachability” of skills such as empathy and connection also emerged as barriers to feedback. SPOR1’s thoughts exemplifies this complexity:

> I felt that it would be helpful to process my feelings and how my supervisee’s emotional awareness and involvement with the client (e.g. empathy) connected to the quality of the therapy s/he conducts. While I wasn’t sure how this

> conversation would play out, or where it would end up, I figured that talking about things would be better than allowing my feelings to sit in my mind and guide things as they please via transference. It took me a while to figure out how I was going to go about talking with my supervisee.

During the midterm interview, SPOR1 discussed hir hesitation to share this feedback with the supervisee based on concerns that the supervisee's personality (perceived as self-centered) would not allow for this feedback.

In sum, novice supervisors described several characteristics of their supervisees when reflecting about perceived barriers to the provision of feedback including supervisee development and personality characteristics such as "low self-esteem", "rigidity", "perfectionistic", and "sensitive" as perceived barriers to providing challenging feedback. However, the most significant expressed barriers to the articulation of feedback experienced by novice supervisors were most often directly related to awareness of their own development as novice supervisors.

Supervisor development and characteristics. The most salient barriers to feedback perceived by novice supervisors appeared to be directly related to their own developmental processes. Supervisors reflected upon their competence as supervisors within a developmental context and articulated

thoughtfulness regarding their own evaluation within a doctoral program. Each supervisor, at some point, reflected upon her or his own past supervision experiences and the effect past experiences had on interactions with current supervisees. Supervisors shared both positive and harmful supervision experiences related to feedback received when in the role of supervisee and expressed desires to facilitate positive experiences and to not repeat experiences they perceived as personally harmful or detrimental. The experience of being both supervisor and supervisee simultaneously appeared to illuminate awareness of internal developmental processes, particularly in regard to articulating feedback.

One layer of questions that emerged as salient to the supervisors' development included: "Is this my responsibility?", "Am I meeting my ethical obligations to the client?", and "Is this appropriate supervision?" The desire to facilitate supervisee growth while upholding ethical obligations to clients was expressed by SPOR2 as being challenging "When I have to say, kind of a 'Don't do that'. And I get that's my ethical obligation. So I'm holding these two things and that feels uncomfortable." The question "Is this appropriate supervision?" appeared to be a springboard for further sub-questions as discussed below.

Several questions or wonderings emerged related to the articulation of feedback and were perceived as barriers, at least momentarily, by the novice supervisors. During both midterm and feedback interviews, supervisors described the questions as being consistently present and "in the background" during supervision sessions. The paragraphs below identify several of the recurring questions and provide relevant examples of supervisors' experiences to facilitate understanding of the barriers to feedback through the lens of the novice supervisor.

To teach or not to teach? Supervisors consistently questioned the role of teaching within the supervisory relationship. Often, this pertained to the complexity of experiential learning versus direct teaching. Supervisors struggled with the balance between allowing supervisee development to emerge organically and to explore specific topics or growth edges as they emerged and with the desire to directly teach their supervisees in a more traditional sense of education. SPOR2 articulated the struggle as:

> I believe, as a supervisor, as someone who identifies as a feminist supervisor, I don't want to be teaching, telling my supervisee what to do, pointing out these micro issues. I want to be kind of getting into the larger pieces around self-development as a counselor, where it's feeling more collegial and equal in the room.

At times, teaching was presented as a default or more direct skill base employed in response to supervisees' feelings of anxiety, overwhelm, or insecurity about their emerging skills. SPOR1 shared an early experience of feeling pulled to teach in response to a supervisee's feelings of anxiety. SPOR1 stated:

> In my second meeting with my supervisee the experience was more businesslike than I would have liked and in retrospect this might be a result of hir anxiety about hir intake session—and my inability to recognize that in the moment and address it—but rather do more "teaching" as a way to assuage my supervisee's anxiety.

Teaching emerged as a response not only to foundational needs regarding the employment of therapeutic skills but also as a response to uncertainty and anxiety expressed by supervisees.

Is this counseling? Apprehension about crossing the line between supervision and counseling was another consistently voiced concern that was perceived as a barrier to feedback. Supervisors expressed care for supervisees and a desire to provide support yet were hesitant at times when the support may be perceived as therapy happening within the supervisory relationship. For instance, SPOR1 disclosed:

> In short, I fear that I may come off like I'm merely doing therapy with [my supervisee] and that I am content in doing so. This is indeed not the case. However, when I began

> conducting supervision, I think that I was scared of being a therapist in the room. I think I was so scared that I missed opportunities to help my supervisees grow.

Another supervisor shared hir experience working with a supervisee whom s/he perceived to be struggling with concerns similar to those of the client. SPOR2 articulated a desire to provide support to the supervisee but not doing so out of fear of pathologizing the supervisee within their relationship. SPOR2 shared:

> I have wanted to check in about my supervisee's therapeutic support, and I do believe that s/he could benefit from exploring some of the family issues that surfaced this semester as s/he enters a new stage in hir life/career, but I didn't want my supervisee to feel pathologized or shamed for bringing up the topic in supervision.

As novice supervisors who were also being evaluated on their emerging competence as clinical supervisors, there was a clear need articulated regarding the appropriateness of maintaining boundaries between therapy and supervision. Supervisors also discussed instances with previous supervisors who either managed the boundary between supervision and therapy in a way that was perceived as safe and appropriate versus others who had crossed the line between the two in ways that

felt inappropriate and was experienced as a misuse of power within the relationship.

Overall, novice supervisors consistently reported care and concern for the growth and development of their supervisees and the connection between personal and professional identity development. It also appeared that the salience of the boundary between supervision and counseling remained at the forefront of development although the intensity regarding the fear of "crossing the line" seemed to lessen as supervisors became more comfortable within the supervisory role, as observed by decreased frequency in the data set.

Am I being too directive? The question about the level of direction given within supervision remained salient throughout the supervisory experience and seemed to relate directly to supervisees' wonderings regarding the way in which they approach clients. Within the context of an interpersonal therapy training model, novice clinicians often debate the appropriate level of directness within the counseling relationship and the same can be said of the novice supervisors. The sentiment "I know I experienced some conflict because I questioned whether I was leading the direction of the session too much through my own personal agenda" was expressed by SPOR3 as s/he reflected upon feeling directive during an interview. SPOR2 captured the

complexity within the process by giving an example to illustrate an experience with a supervisee:

> There is also a conflict I see in our work together that I am still reflecting on myself, which is my supervisee worrying and expressing that s/he's being too directive and not genuine enough in hir own therapy—and my fear that I am being too directive in telling my supervisee "Be more genuine and take risks!".

How much should I push? The question regarding appropriately pushing supervisees to facilitate growth emerged as a salient question, particularly in relation to the power dynamic within the supervision relationship. Supervisors readily articulated the similarity of "pushing" clients and pushing supervisees and all made reference to the client's ability to terminate the counseling relationship whereas supervisees did not have the opportunity to terminate supervision. The awareness of the power dynamic within the relationship combined with the perceived inability for the supervisee to terminate the supervision relationship reinforced the salience of "How much should I push?"

In illustration, SPOR2, quoted above regarding hir level of directness, continued to explore the same interaction and shared:

> I raised the awareness that my supervisee has brought up issues related to family of origin but perhaps I didn't make space for that to feel relevant...but suggested that I didn't want to "push" hir too hard—and now, thinking on it, I believe it's because my supervisee is so worried about being "too directive" or "pushing too hard" with hir client, and I felt that s/he was subtly telling me "I don't want to be pushed either".

Similarly, perceived responses to previous feedback affected the supervisors' perception of readiness and appropriateness for continued feedback. The prior responses, particularly when feedback was not perceived as being positively or openly received by the supervisee, increased the supervisors' perception of "pushing too hard" as a barrier to feedback. The complexity was exemplified by the following midterm interview response from SPOR1:

> Telling my supervisee is going to take far more finesse than some other kind of interpersonal process, some type of confrontational type of counseling, which I do feel is important at times. So, when I take that and I take the fact that we have four more sessions, I wonder while I think it's important for my supervisee to hear and s/he will hear it but coming from a drop in the bucket

> perspective, I wonder how important it is for me to do right now.

In short, as a perceived barrier to feedback, the concern of pushing too hard in supervision reflected an awareness of an evaluative power differential and lack of supervisee choice to terminate the relationship. The impact of this question seemed to be a cautious approach to the provision of feedback.

Am I creating a "Mini Me"? Although the articulation of creating a "Mini Me" was spoken in a somewhat lighthearted manner, the underlying premise of thrusting one's theoretical orientation and therapeutic style upon novice clinicians was expressed by all four supervisors. The need for extensive elaboration is unnecessary yet the persistence of the "Mini Me" question warranted acknowledgment as part of the developmental process regarding articulation of feedback. As surmised by SPOR3 "I want to be careful to not make my supervisees do what I do because of my theoretical orientation". This appears to capture the gist of awareness that novice clinicians may have a higher propensity to the influence of supervisors based upon their recent entry into the field of counseling itself.

Am I providing adequate support? An overarching belief in providing supportive supervision permeated supervisors' decisions regarding the provision of feedback. Concerns about being unsupportive to their supervisees were observed as

barriers to feedback throughout the supervision relationship. At the onset of supervision, providing adequate support was regularly articulated within context of a long term relationship such as “We have more sessions and s/he doesn’t need to get all of this right now. I think it’s really important for my supervisee to have a process s/he’s owning that s/he feels really good about and a part of—that I reinforce hir strengths” as shared by SPOR4.

As time progressed, providing support continued to be a barrier to corrective feedback; however, experiences within the feedback patterns explained in Question 2 allowed for the depth of feedback to expand. In addition, the increased self-confidence experienced by both the supervisee and supervisor allowed for supervisors to perceive feedback to be more developmentally appropriate. SPOR2 shared the realization of the supervisee’s own growing awareness as:

> It made me think that perhaps I’m not giving my supervisee enough credit—just because we don’t do something accurately in the moment, doesn’t mean we can’t reflect on what we want to change. Honestly, that had not occurred to me in supervision—as though s/he would think s/he did everything perfectly and I’d have to burst hir bubble!

This experience exemplifies the evolution of support from the beginning stages of cheerleading and confidence boosting to the

latter stages where support may also be the articulation of that which is corrective and growth directed.

Simultaneous novice development. In sum, the unique interactions between the development of supervisee and supervisor sometimes created barriers to the provision of feedback. The barriers were related to both the developmental level and personality of the supervisees and the emerging characteristics and development of the supervisors.

Initially, the questions represented in Figure 4.6 often stopped the supervisors from providing immediate feedback. However, as both parties gained confidence and competence, the questions appeared to be more quickly processed internally. Therefore, barriers to the overall provision of feedback decreased and were often temporary. For example, supervisors spoke regularly of consulting with their supervision colleagues about some of the questions above prior to engaging in feedback with supervisees. Further development allowed the supervisor to process these questions internally and return to the feedback within the session it originated.

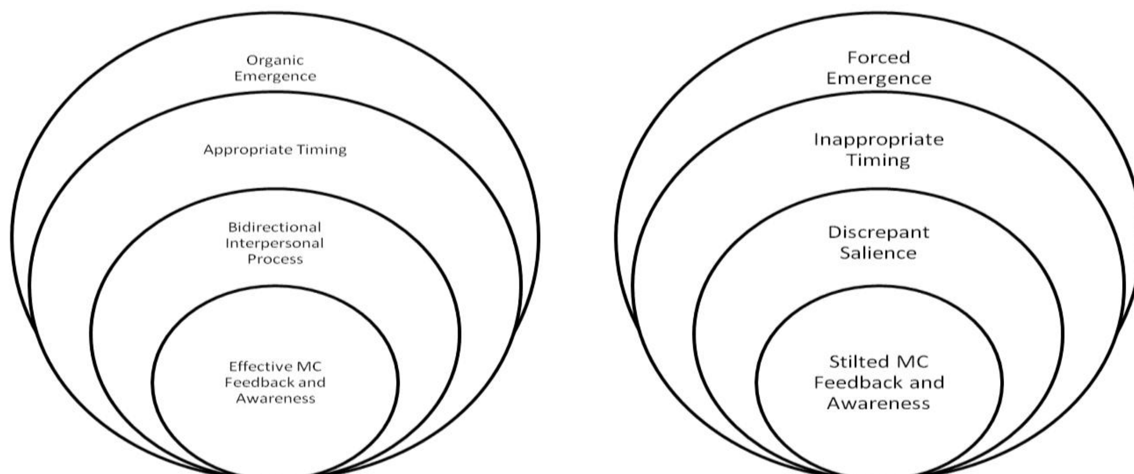
Question 4: Experiences of Diversity and Feedback

The fourth guiding question explored how experiences of diversity and intersectionalities entered the supervisory relationship and affected perceptions of feedback. Based upon my belief that data for this question would naturally emerge within

the supervisory relationship, direct questions regarding multicultural awareness were not specifically articulated. Question 4 focused specifically on multicultural interactions that were overtly articulated by supervisors as being specific to multicultural development. In short, the essential findings for this question reflect specific behavioral interactions that were noted and articulated within journals and interviews although, as mentioned early in the chapter, multicultural awareness and intersectionalities certainly provided a sub-context throughout multiple questions. Essential findings indicated that two prototypes were experienced based upon the way in which diversity and multiculturalism were initiated within supervision. Relationships, or interactions, may include features of both prototypes featured in Figure 4.7.

Figure 4.7

Relationship between Diversity and the Perception of Feedback



The need for multicultural competence has been clearly articulated in the field of counseling psychology and, as such, it was expected to emerge without prompting within the context of the supervisory relationship. Two patterns of feedback related to experiences of diversity and multiculturalism emerged from the data. The two patterns reflected organic and forced emergence of interactions about multicultural issues.

Organic emergence. Participants articulated numerous examples of times when multicultural awareness organically emerged within supervision sessions and was directly related to feedback, primarily that which was specifically related to clinical experiences with clients. One of the essential features of multicultural awareness and feedback was appropriate timing. For example, one supervisee experienced struggling with an older male client. Once this emerged within the context of supervision, hir supervisor reported:

> Rather, my supervisee's [fears and anxiety] were related to making mistakes in front of me—an older male who can be both competitive and dominant, and who holds a degree of power over hir. The discussion we had after this theory emerged was especially helpful, as I believe that it strengthened our working relationship, and facilitated growth for both of us as we learn to operate in our new roles as clinician and supervisor.

The supervisee, in hir own reflection, similarly articulated the organic emergence of gender within their supervisory relationship:

> Gender is important—two male clients and a male supervisor; how I relate differently to males as clients, in my personal life, in our supervision relationship; gender is not a big issue but we've touched on it. It is brought up and my concerns are invited regularly.

In this case appropriate timing allowed for bidirectional interpersonal process and led to effective feedback regarding multicultural awareness and gender.

Another illustration of effective multicultural awareness depicted in Figure 4.7 is self-disclosure of a supervisor's previous experiences as a person of color:

> This [conversation with my supervisee about my own experiences as a person of color] reflects similar experiences of having clients say offensive things, how to process it, how to make it fit my level of understanding and also letting my supervisee have hir experience without me coloring those experience through my lens.

In this illustration, the supervisee who identifies as a person of color, was struggling with hir response to an interaction with a client s/he was hesitant to address as offensive and disrespectful. The supervisor was able to validate hir

experience through the articulation of hir own experiences which allowed for continued conversation about race/ethniciy as therapists of color.

A final example of the organic emergence of multiculutral awareness and feedback referenced the necessity of appropriate timing. Another supervisor had previously articulated questions and reflections about hir supervisee's experiences of gender and had described prior interactions in which s/he considered addressing gender with the supervisee. Within a week or two the following interaction emerged:

> Finally, I felt I was able to illuminate this process and commend my supervisee for the work s/he had done. I also believe I was able to engage in a more true version of feminist therapy, using self-disclosure (I cry in supervision too!), attending to power differentials (I can imagine it's hard to cry in a public space with someone evaluating you) as well as directly bringing light to gender stereotypes and micro-aggressions.

These experiences also had a significant impact upon superviors' growth and development. During both midterm and feedback interviews, supervisors spoke directly about the ways in which they learned with and from their supervisees throughout supervision. One supervisor specifically shared that s/he thought a supervisee addressed a difference in race/ethnicity

with a client in such an amazing way that s/he decided to implement the same strategy in the future.

Forced emergence*.* Although the majority of feedback and interactions related to diversity and intersectionalities emerged organically throughout the tenure of the supervision relationship, instances where conversations felt forced were also observed. In this instance of "forced" as a descriptor, the force was either related to external messages of feedback received regarding the necessity of the conversation or was related to an internal pressure to "do the right thing" as novice supervisors also being evaluated.

One supervisor described embarassment over forcing a multicultural conversation regarding sexual orientation during the first supervision session. The supervisor expressed:

> A lot of it was based on this motivation to get the first session right and you have to bring out these multicultural and multi-issues and I felt kind of embarassed and bad and started off the relationship repairing things.

Forced emergence and inappropriate timing in this example led to discrepant salience and stilted multicultural feedback. When the conversation was forced or inorganic the disrepancy in level of salience, identified as highly salient to the supervisor but not salient, at that time, to the supervisee, appeared to diminish the effect of the intervention or feedback.

The following example highlights the discrepancy regarding level of salience between supervior and supervisee:

> I push my supervisee to consider other multicultural diversity and appreciation, as well as an effort to notice egalitarianism and how political is personal—all happening within our relationship. S/he nods but I'm not sure s/he gets it. I am considering offering to share more literature but not sure s/he cares.

As the relationship deepened, interactions and feedback regarding multicultural topics and intersectionalities that emerged organically increased.

In sum, feedback related to multiculturalism and intersectionalities was addressed throughout the supervisory relationship. For the most part, it appeared as though supervisors drew upon their cultural competence as clinicians and utilized similar skills and strengths to process feedback related to multicultural awareness as it emerged organically. Prototypcially, when the interaction emerged organically, it was experienced as appropriately timed, as a salient bidirectional interpersonal process, and resulted in effective feedback and awareness.

There were times, however, when supervisors appeared to be motivated by internal and/or external pressures to address a multicultural topic in supervision in a manner that felt forced

and inappropriately timed. The prototype representing inappropriately timed and forced emergence reflected the discrepancy in the salience of the topic—in this case, it was salient to the supervisor not the supervisee—which created a situation where multicultural awareness and feedback was stilted. The prototypes provide patterns of interactions regarding diversity and the perception of feedback. Dyads can experience both prototypes within their relationships and interactions.

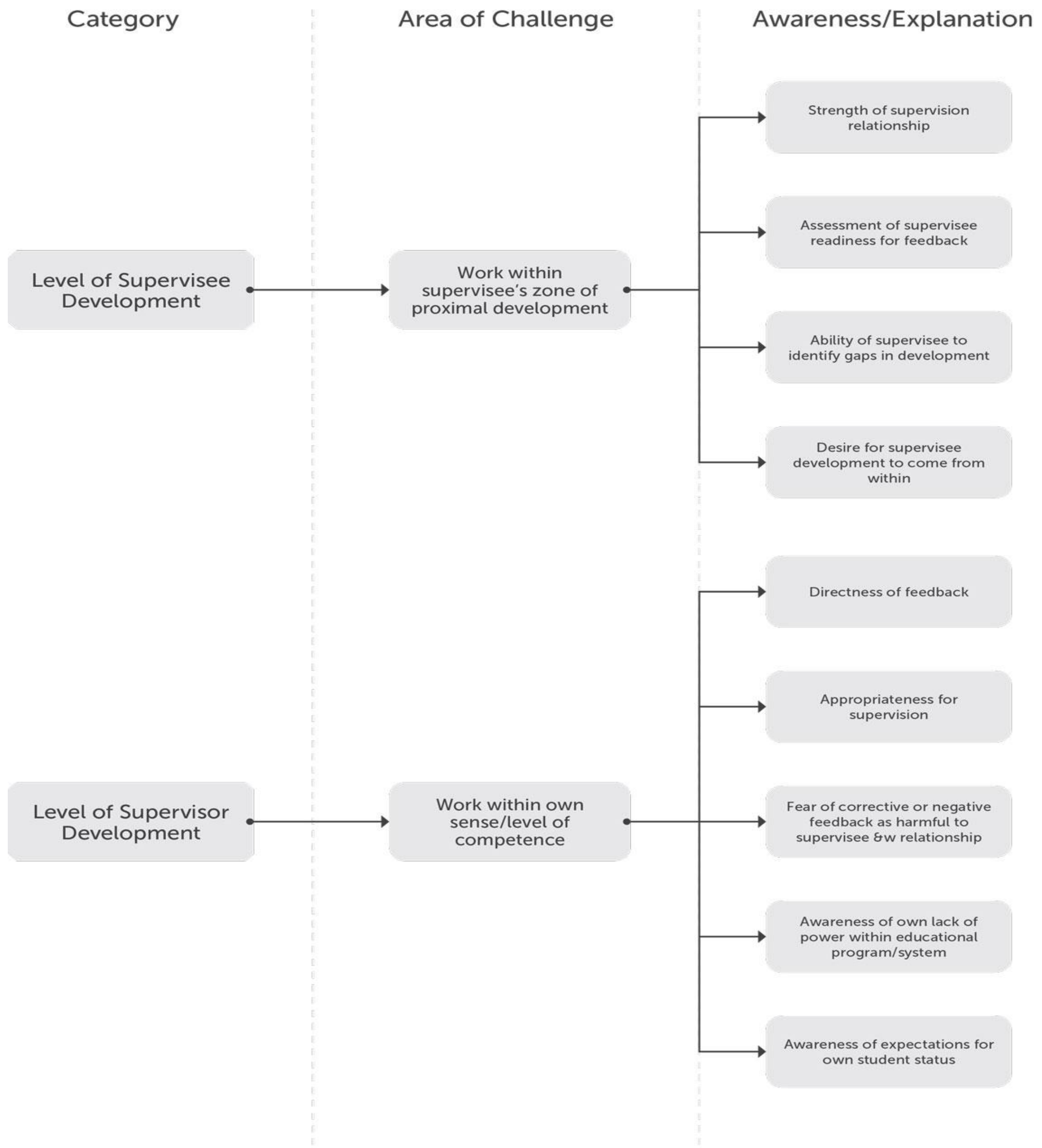
Question 5: Feedback Left Unsaid

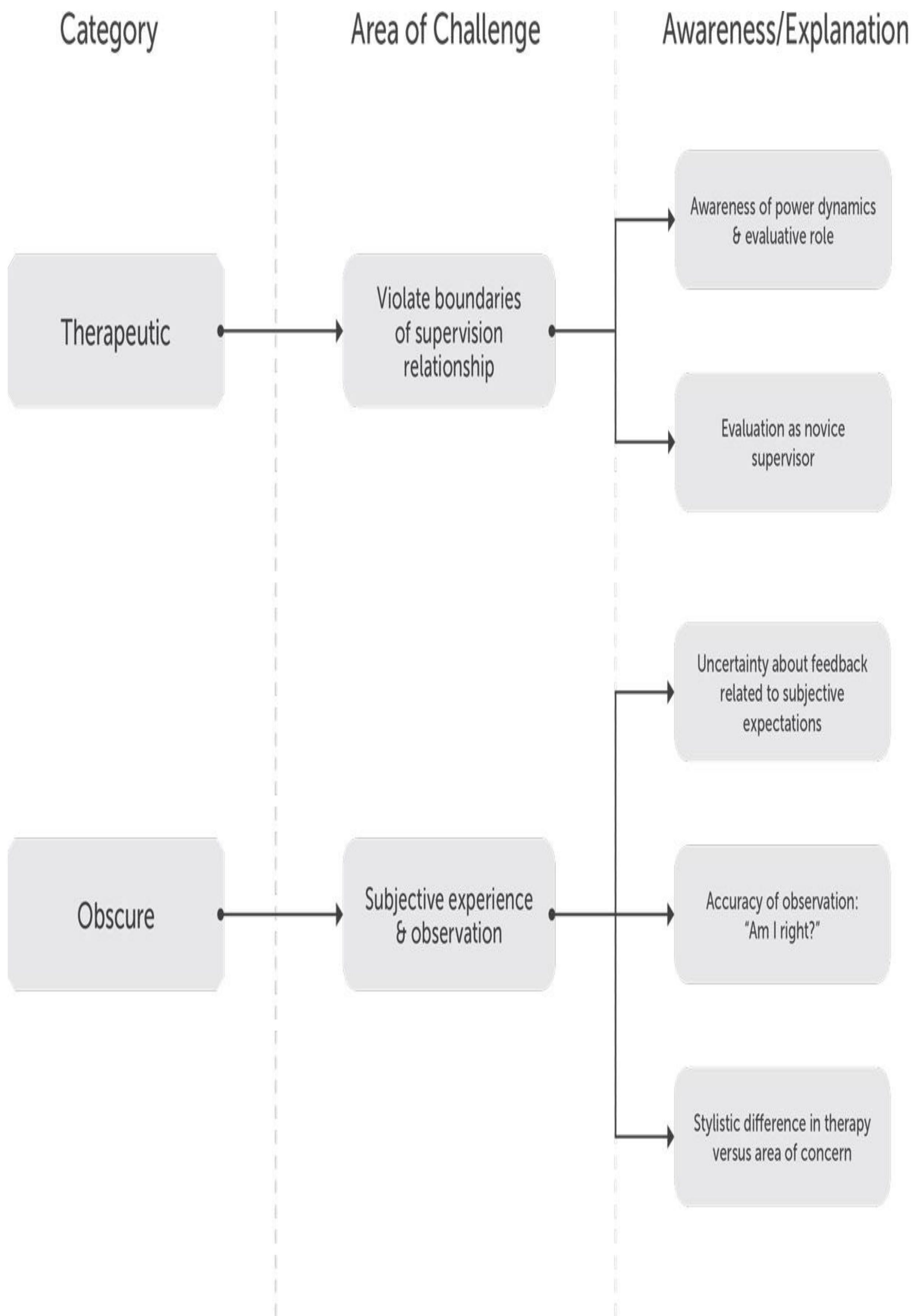
The final question explored areas of growth that were identified by supervisors but left unsaid within the supervisory relationship. Understanding novice supervisors' awareness and explanations regarding decisions to not give specific feedback illuminated the supervisors' inner reflective experiences in regard to making decisions about the overall articulation of feedback.

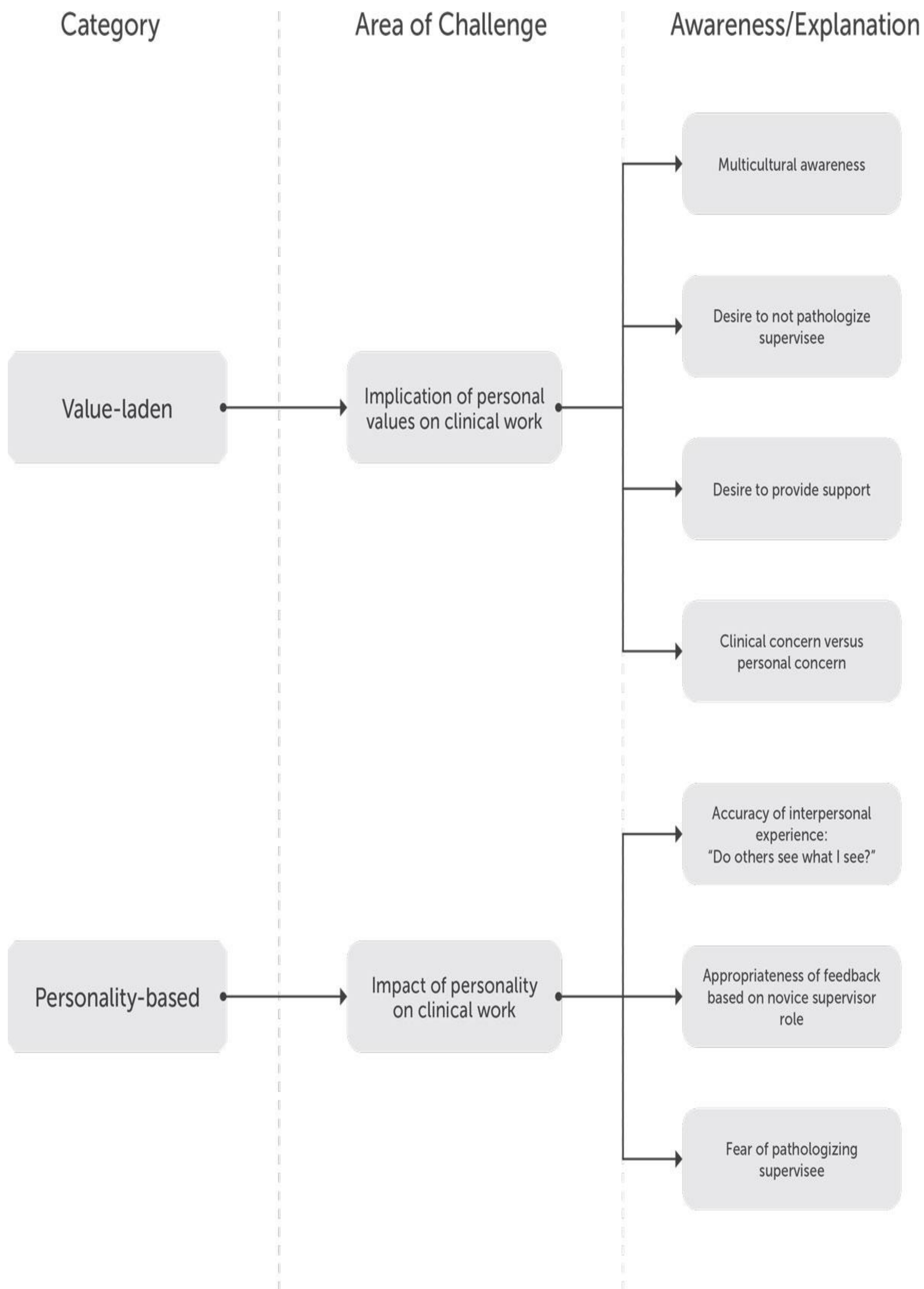
Supervisors' journals and interviews highlighted their inner processes about how decisions were made to either state or not state specific feedback. The pattern that emerged is represented below in Figure 4.8 and is arranged from the clearest/least complicated category to the murkiest/most complicated category. The level of complexity is reflected by the ease with which supervisors articulated the area of

challenge and their awareness and explanations of rationale for not providing specific feedback to their supervisees.

Figure 4.8
Categories, Challenges, and Explanations for Unsaid Feedback




Category
Area of Challenge
Awareness/Explanation
Therapeutic
Violate boundaries of supervision relationship
Awareness of power dynamics & evaluative role
Evaluation as novice supervisor
Obscure
Subjective experience & observation
Uncertainty about feedback related to subjective expectations
Accuracy of observation: "Am I right?"
Stylistic difference in therapy versus area of concern


Category
Area of Challenge
Awareness/Explanation
Multicultural awareness
Desire to not pathologize supervisee
Value-laden
Implication of personal values on clinical work
Desire to provide support
Clinical concern versus personal concern
Accuracy of interpersonal experience: "Do others see what I see?"
Personality-based
Impact of personality on clinical work
Appropriateness of feedback based on novice supervisor role
Fear of pathologizing supervisee

Level of supervisee development. The clearest and least complicated category of unsaid feedback was that which was categorized as related to supervisee development. General awareness of supervisee development was connected to the strength of the supervisory relationship, assessment of supervisee readiness for feedback, the ability of supervisees to identify gaps in their own development, and an overall desire for supervisee development to come from within.

Supervisors shared similar thoughts about working within their supervisees' developmental needs and readily identified feedback that appeared to be beyond the developmental level of supervisees at the time. For example, SPOR1 shared "So what I've done is I've shifted to fairly technical sides of therapy and I think that's appropriate to hir developmental level, working on case conceptualization right now".

Supervisors also shared experiences when the feedback was identified as key to further growth while not quite within the supervisee's level of development. SPOR2 shared an experience that reflected the cusp of development and need for growth through the following experience:

> My supervisee said all the right things and followed the "rules of therapy" well but it felt stilted and nearly uncomfortable. Watching hir in therapy was elucidating because it helps me to understand that s/he really seems to

> be not quite in touch with connecting to the client just as s/he has difficulty connecting with me. However I continue to feel unsure about how to address this and offer feedback that s/he could hear – since offering feedback and speaking with my supervisee about this potentially difficult subject is exactly what s/he doesn't seem to be able to manage.

In this example, the supervisor identified that the feedback needed was also the feedback the supervisee was unable to hear which illuminated the challenge of providing feedback that is developmentally appropriate to the supervisee as well as appropriately timed with client work.

Level of supervisor development. Novice supervisors consistently identified awareness of their own level of development and training; as such, unsaid feedback was also identified in relation to their own levels of development. The area of challenge for supervisors was for them to work within their own sense of competence.

Supervisors' explanations for unsaid feedback related to their own development were expressed as uncertainty about the directness of the feedback, appropriateness for supervision, fear of corrective or negative feedback as harmful to their supervisees and supervisory relationship, and a clear awareness of their own lack of power within the larger educational structure. Previous findings have elucidated many of the

supervisors' struggles regarding professional development as supervisors.

However, awareness related to their own status as students within the larger academic program appeared to become increasingly salient as supervisors reflected on decisions to leave feedback unsaid. This juxtaposition between power as supervisors and perceived lack of power as students created a complexity that all supervisors articulated in midterm and final interviews. Supervisors shared times when feedback was left unsaid because they were anxious or concerned with the feedback they, in turn, may receive from their faculty supervisors. Although this complexity is not surprising, it illuminates the challenge of simultaneous novice development within the supervision relationship.

Feedback described as therapeutic. The next category of unsaid feedback is that which was perceived to be therapeutic in nature, or at the very least had the potential to be perceived as such. The challenge within this category was violation of the boundaries of the supervision relationship. Supervisors articulated their awareness as both the evaluator and evaluatee as explanations for not articulating specific feedback. For example, SPOR2 shared a reflection regarding grief and loss experiences with one supervisee:

> However, this is a moment when I don't feel it is appropriate to say: you must talk about the death you have experienced- but I am aware that this does affect my supervisee and how s/he communicates. I believe s/he is managing a lot of sadness and a lot of caretaking behaviors and I believe s/he will need to address them at some point – and I'm not exactly sure what my role is in this.

In a later interview, the supervisor shared that s/he felt that the supervisee most likely needed to talk through hir loss as it was affecting hir clinical work but was simultaneously aware that the supervisee was being evaluated for readiness to apply for practicum and the supervisor's own awareness that s/he may be viewed as being "too therapeutic" with the supervisee.

Overall, supervisors articulated many feelings of concern and care for their supervisees and often expressed a desire to provide therapeutic support to supervisees as they grappled with personal issues impacting clinical work. As novice supervisors, they also shared common concerns that they would be critiqued as slipping into the "role of therapist." It appeared, particularly early in supervision, that supervisors shied away from the therapeutic boundary to ensure clear distinction as a supervision relationship instead of a therapeutic relationship with their supervisees.

Subjective feedback experienced as obscure. The fourth category of unsaid feedback was labeled as obscure to reflect the inability for supervisors to “put their finger on” the specific concern they experienced based on their perception of their supervisees’ interactions and/or clinical work. These interactions were often subjective in nature and supervisors additionally expressed uncertainty about the accuracy of their perceptions of an interaction or incident.

Perhaps indicative of the obscure nature of this feedback category is the dearth of specific examples provided by supervisors. Although specific examples were lacking, supervisors described “something happening” that was perceived as “not quite okay”, “odd”, or “interpersonally awkward”. There also appeared to be distinct discomfort with the words used above while also expressing an inability to provide “better descriptions” for what was perceived. Further complicating this challenge was an awareness that perhaps what felt “questionable” about the intervention or interaction was a stylistic difference in the way their supervisees worked versus “something” that warranted feedback and attention.

Value-laden feedback. The complexity behind unsaid feedback appeared to be most salient when feedback was directly perceived as value-laden or related to the personality characteristics of the supervisee. Unsurprisingly, this finding is congruent with

earlier articulation of experiences regarding supervisees' "self" in relation to perceptions of clinical work.

The area of challenge regarding value-laden feedback was the extent to which the values appeared to impact clinical work. Supervisors described awareness of their supervisees' cultural experiences and worldview and articulated desires to support their supervisees as unique multicultural individuals. A strong desire to not pathologize supervisees appeared to increase the juxtaposition of individual support for their supervisees' multicultural identities and concern for clients' clinical experiences.

SPOR4 shared an ongoing struggle with balancing personal support for hir supervisee with concerns regarding the potential negative impact of the supervisee's symbolic expression of values within the counseling relationship. The supervisor shared hir plan to consult with colleagues about "how to advise the supervisee on sharing hir faith and spirituality with clients given his decision to wear a religious symbol in a prominent way" and about the "need to establish a strong relationship with the client". The supervisor further articulated hir desire to support the supervisee's values, and articulated sharing similar personal values, while also wanting to ensure s/he understands the potential ramifications of hir decision to "display the

religious symbol prominently" with his current and future clients.

SPOR1 shared an experience with hir supervisee regarding race/ethnicity within the supervisee's clinical relationship. The supervisor spoke about hir perceptions of the supervisee's feelings about working with White clients as illustrated by the following reflection:

> I did find that I became uncomfortable as s/he spoke. While I hesitate to call my supervisee's thinking around the issue irrational, it seemed to me that over-generalizations and all-or-nothing thinking drive hir opinions about White people. I am at a loss currently about how to address this and whether-or-not I should address it.

The supervisor further reflected:

> I found it interesting that my supervisee did not bring up race in our session together despite the concern s/he expressed in the previous week. While I did indeed reflect my surprise, I did not push the issue. In reaction to my reflection, my supervisee said something along the lines of, "He didn't make me feel my race, so it wasn't a problem." As for me, I have to admit that I am uncertain as to whether or not this is a problem.

This exemplified the complexity experienced within the supervisory relationship. The supervisor clearly identified and

articulated an area of concern regarding the values s/he perceived through the interactions with the supervisee, concern about the potential impact of values upon the supervisee's clinical relationships, and the desire to not pathologize the supervisee.

Feedback based on personality characteristics. The final, and most complicated, category of unsaid feedback is that which is perceived to be reflective of the supervisee's personality. The area of challenge within this category was the potential impact of personality on clinical work. Supervisors provided rationale for not stating specific feedback as uncertainty about the accuracy of the experienced or perceived interpersonal interactions ("Do others see what I see?"), the appropriateness of giving personality based feedback within their roles as supervisors, and ongoing fear about pathologizing their supervisees.

The challenge of providing feedback about one's personality also appeared heightened by the uncertainty that the personality characteristic was changeable. The complexity was also reflected in more existential thoughts about whether or not personality could/should be changed and, if not altered, further question about the individual's ability to competently develop as a clinician emerged. The power and challenge of unsaid feedback at this level of complexity was illustrated through the following

example of one supervisor's inner process regarding personality centered feedback and clinical work:

> Working with my supervisee has been tough. I find that I have mixed feelings towards hir in a number of ways. There are indeed times where I feel close to hir, and where I feel good about the work we've done. There are other times where I feel like I don't really like my supervisee. It's odd to feel like this. I can't help but wonder if it's really important to like my supervisee. Part of me wants to say, "Who cares?" We're not friends, after all. There is another part of me, though, that sees the importance of liking hir. The negative feelings I feel for my supervisee are engendered by an apparent (to me at least) lack of interest/enthusiasm, narcissism, lack of openness. If the relationship in therapy is indeed as important as we think, then these qualities that have led me to not like hir will hinder hir efficacy as a counselor."

This example also indicates one source of ambivalence about interpersonal feedback: The challenge of translating one's own reactions, especially negative reactions, to another person into feedback about a specific characteristic that is relevant to skill as a therapist and can be a focus of change efforts.

Understanding the pattern. In sum, experiences of unsaid feedback were observed to fall within several categories. The

categories of feedback that emerged also reflected experiences that were less complicated, such as those based upon supervisee and supervisor levels of development. More moderate categories of feedback were those that were therapeutic or obscure. The most challenging categories of feedback were those interpreted as value-laden or based upon personality characteristics. Unsaid feedback in the less complicated categories often became spoken feedback as supervisee and supervisor development and relationship deepened. The more moderate categories of feedback, at times, remained unspoken for the duration of the supervisory relationship and at other times were articulated as the connection between the personal/therapeutic concern and the clinical impact became more visible or the obscure nature of the feedback solidified. Unspoken feedback about the most complex categories most often remained unspoken or was only articulated after consulting with faculty supervisors and colleagues regarding the appropriateness and potential options for articulating feedback.

Moving Forward

The continued move toward competence, for both supervisees and supervisors, reflects an ongoing need for articulation of corrective feedback within early development. The patterns of unsaid feedback articulated above highlight the complexity of feedback within novice supervisory relationships. Essential

findings that emerged from this inquiry provided further insight into the importance of the supervisory relationship, articulation and implementation of corrective feedback, barriers to giving feedback, multicultural awareness and development, and the categories of identified but unspoken feedback experienced within the novice supervisory relationship. The emerging subtext based upon the essence of the overall experience point to an underlying question: Do I have what it takes to be a competent supervisor? This question appeared to permeate the supervisors' experiences within this process, whether overtly observed and articulated or implicitly identified in relation to the provision of feedback within their novice supervisory relationships. The heightened awareness of gatekeeping dimensions appeared to both reflect their roles as evaluators and their roles as novice supervisors who were also being evaluated.

The following Chapter will identify essential extrapolations from the guiding questions, posit training and research implications, identify limitations regarding the generalization of these findings, and provide suggestions for further training and research.

Chapter 5

Discussion

The purpose of this inquiry was to provide insight into the experience of feedback within novice supervisory relationships in order to better understand training and development at the onset of supervisory and clinical training. There is a clear understanding within the field regarding the importance of the supervision relationship (e.g. Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Ellis, 1991; Henderson, Cawyer, Stringer & Watkins, 1999; Majcher & Daniluk, 2009; Reichelt & Skjerve, 2002), yet there was relatively little understanding of the training process within early supervisor development. The purpose of this chapter is to provide a broad overview of the essential findings that emerged and were articulated in Chapter 4 in order to provide a synthesis of overarching themes within the context of current supervision literature.

In conducting a qualitative phenomenological inquiry, my goal was to synthesize and articulate participants' lived experiences as novice supervisors and supervisees. The inquiry primarily focused on the development of novice supervisors and their perceptions of the feedback process within the supervisory relationship. Through the identification of essential findings, it became apparent that feedback that was "new" and/or "difficult" emerged as a primary focus of consideration for

participants in this inquiry. The feedback process, as a whole was consistently identified as salient to novice supervisors, yet the complexity of new or difficult feedback was articulated most often within journals and interviews. The essential findings are not necessarily transferable to all trainees although it is my belief that similar processes may be experienced by novice supervisors across training contexts.

The sections below provide contextual delineations and implications for training and research for each guiding question. A theory regarding the overall development of feedback within the novice supervisory relationship is also presented within the framework of common factors and the Social Relations Model and is meant to provide further synthesis and integration of findings. Finally, limitations of the inquiry are addressed and brief points of consideration for trainees and training programs are presented.

Question 1: Relationship and Feedback

Three major facets emerged from data regarding the relationship between perception of supervisory relationship/working alliance and the articulation of feedback. The three facets, understood from the novice supervisor perspective, included attention to supervisee characteristics, attention to the relationship, and attention to supervisor characteristics and internal process. Facets may be engaged in

concurrently and/or consecutively throughout the supervisory relationship. The link between relationship and feedback at the novice supervisor developmental level reflected the integration of therapeutic alliance through the lens of supervision. As found in previous research, trust, support, acceptance, and understanding are consistently articulated in both therapeutic and supervisory relationships (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Hutt et al., 1983; Worthen & McNeill, 1996) insofar that Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth (1982) implied that the supervision relationship is essential to supervision in much the same way that the therapy relationship is essential to therapy. Aligned with previous findings regarding a positive correlation between supervisory relationship and outcome (e. g. Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001; Ladany, Ellis, & Friedlander, 1999; Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996; Patton & Kivlighan, 1997), this inquiry further implies that effective feedback may be considered a mediator of the alliance-outcome association. For example, supervisors shared numerous examples where provided feedback directly affected observable outcomes such as SPOR2's report of one supervisee integrating feedback within the context of group supervision where s/he directly asked for subsequent feedback on how others perceived hir interpersonally. Further reflection from SPOR2 indicated that the feedback, both from hir and from the supervisee's peers, impacted the way in which the

supervisee was relating to current clients. Subsequent reflections from SPOR2 indicated not only a change in clinical effectiveness but increased feelings of connection and closeness within the supervisory relationship, as well.

Feedback supervisors perceived to be openly received by supervisees had several characteristics in common: articulation of a connected and trusting supervisory relationship, ability to engage in interpersonal process within the relationship, self confidence in supervisor development and competence, and supervisee willingness to engage in self reflection and feedback. The emphasis on relationship is aligned with Ellis's (1991) position that the relationship was one of the most critical aspects of supervision. Further, findings support research citing positive relationship as essential to the creation of an environment of trust (Allen, Szollos, & Williams, 1986), and that working alliance and relationship facilitate willingness to engage in difficult feedback experiences (Gray, Ladany, Walker, & Ancis, 2001).

Feedback supervisors perceived to be resisted by supervisees also had several common characteristics: inferred difficulty and challenge within the supervisory relationship, feelings of distance or disconnection, decreased self-confidence in supervisor development and competence, and struggle to overcome incidents of impasse. This implies that the

aforementioned positive impacts of connected relationships are increasingly important based on the potential resistance to feedback linked to experiences of disconnect and difficulty within the novice supervisory relationship.

In addition, decreased-self confidence of neophyte supervisors indicated that challenges within the supervisory relationship may hinder supervisory development by increasing the time a supervisor needs to progress through stages of supervisor development. For example, Stoltenberg et al. (1998) described stages of supervisor development in their Integrated Development Model. Initial stages describe role shock (imposter syndrome) and questioning of one's ability to provide effective clinical supervision prior to transitioning to role recovery based upon increased experience and confidence. Decreased or halted supervisor self-confidence may contribute to stagnated relationship development and provision of feedback.

Supervisors' perceptions and experiences suggest that factors of change regarding how feedback is received by supervisees are: strengthening and repairing the interpersonal relationship, assessing supervisee development for feedback readiness, seeking resources to build supervisor competence, and commitment to reengagement in the relationship and feedback processes. Patterns that emerged from Question 1 reinforced the three components of effective supervision posited by Barnett et

al. (2007): feedback should be provided in a nonthreatening and supportive environment, supervisors should strive to be nonjudgmental and validating of experiences, and supervisees' experiences should be normalized. Supervisors' experiences reflected in Question 1 support the assertion that supervisee's experiences should be validated and normalized within a supportive relationship.

Implications for training. Novice supervisors and clinicians may benefit from transparent and explicit understanding of their supervisory relationships within the context of specific training programs. This would allow for further exploration regarding the implicit and explicit duties and responsibilities of both novice supervisors and clinicians. For example, the training program where participants were enrolled has an interpersonal process focus within the Master's program which also undergirds the doctoral training program. In this case, understanding the complexity of roles as well as the focus of the supervision process may be beneficial as dyads engage in relationship building and the feedback process. Unique to novice development, supervisors and supervisees are simultaneously being evaluated for competence which may directly affect the ways in which they both provide and receive feedback thus accounting for some aspects of social relations within specific training contexts.

In addition, emphasizing the working alliance and supervisory relationship as essential to the eventual provision of feedback may allow novice trainees to utilize a skill set (i.e. relationship development and therapeutic alliance) with which they have increased levels of competence. Essentially, emphasis on relationship development and working alliance may decrease anxiety and uncertainty regarding how to "do supervision".

Implications for research. Research may benefit from continued exploration regarding novice relationship development within training contexts. Foci may include longitudinal exploration of the cycle of supervision (i.e. exploring the ways in which doctoral students understand and perceive feedback within supervisory relationships beginning as supervisees and culminating with roles as supervisors) or a case study with one supervision dyad (i.e. dyad is part of research process that includes viewing and reflecting upon supervision sessions together in order to better understand the feedback process with immediacy). The aforementioned foci may contribute to a growing understanding of feedback and relationships within the novice supervisory development process and provide further support and/or additional evidence regarding novice supervisor development.

As a continuation of this study, an inquiry designed to evaluate the efficacy of training new supervisors within the three facets identified in this study would provide further insight into novice supervisor development. For example, supervisors (and supervisees to the extent appropriate) could be presented with the three unique facets of relationship and feedback as well as the composite and interrelated model. Preparing novice supervisors, at least cognitively, for the potential complexity of feedback provision within novice supervisory relationships may facilitate increased understanding of the importance of a solid and connected relationship and their own potential developmental facets (challenges and strengths). This, in turn, may facilitate novice supervisors' confidence and competence, increase feelings of connection, and lead to the provision of feedback that is perceived as openly received by supervisees. This area of focus may potentially have a positive domino effect on the perception of corrective feedback, barriers to feedback, multicultural interactions, and unsaid feedback.

Question 2: Characteristics of Corrective Feedback Received

The quadrants used to reflect the perception of corrective feedback within novice supervisory relationships provided insight into the potential patterns experienced within the dyad. Experiences indicated that corrective feedback, whether

initiated by supervisee or supervisor, was often perceived to be openly received by the supervisee. In addition, feedback that was based on techniques and/or skill development was consistently received and observed as part of a smooth process; feedback that was about "use of self" was also often perceived openly, particularly when directly linked to observations of clinical work. The above findings are important; however, the most salient finding in this process is that regarding the ways in which supervision dyads worked through situations when the feedback was perceived to be resisted by supervisees.

At times, feedback that was initiated by supervisors about supervisees' "use of self" appeared to hit a metaphorical wall that at least temporarily stopped the course of feedback. Findings indicated that focusing on the supervisory relationship, validating the supervisee's feelings and experiences, and re-engaging with the process were integral to continued growth and development. I posit that the continued growth and development were bidirectional and impacted by increased confidence and competence that arose from successfully engaging in difficult conversations within the relationship allowing for increased depth and relational connection.

Essential findings for Question 2 both align with and emphasize the challenge of providing effective feedback. The recommendations presented by Farnill, Gordon, and Sansom (1997)

identified effective feedback as: timely, experienced within a climate of trust, focused on specific and changeable behaviors, and related to observable and objective events. In this case, feedback that was openly received and feedback that was resisted aligned with the recommendations above. For example, SPOR1 provided feedback to a supervisee regarding perception of countertransference in hir work with an older male client at the time when the supervisee expressed concern regarding hir clinical skills with the older male client. Feedback regarding the supevisee's relationship and interventions, identified via observation and recordings, were subsequently used to provide feedback about specific behaviors (i.e. sense of "lack of confidence" and "deference" toward the male client) and to identify strategies for further interventions. In this case, the supervisee terminated with the client prior to the end of the pre-arranged number of sessions. SPOR1 articulated that s/he "did not feel that termination was necessary" yet identified the importance of respecting the supervisee's own sense of development and continued to share "I did not want my opinion to guide supervision in such a way that I forced my supervisee out of hir comfort zone". The dyad continued to discuss issues of gender and power dynamics related to work with an older male throughout much of the supervisory relationship in a manner that allowed for the supervisee to express increasing confidence

about hir ability to counsel older male clients. This example illustrated the ways in which timing, trust, behavioral observations, and observable events were used to facilitate feedback about clinical work that was identified as effective by both supervisor and supervisee. In contrast, examples where feedback was either untimely, not delivered in a relationship with adequate trust, vague, or unobservable were often resisted. For example, SPOR2 shared attempts to engage in interpersonal feedback early in the supervisory process where s/he perceived one supervisee to "not engage" and to "continue to talk about how it affects my supervisee and hir mentors and future clients instead of bringing it into our relationship". As time progressed and further trust was built, the supervisee above increasingly engaged in interpersonal feedback and was able to change specific behaviors in counseling (i.e. either being too directive or too passive) as s/he developed skills to appropriately provide meaningful interventions with clients (as observed and noted in subsequent journals). Another example that was articulated in Chapter 4 was SPOR4's supervisee's frustration with getting feedback about self-awareness in supervision that left the supervisee feeling unsure about hir ability to counsel and uncertain as to what exactly s/he could work on in order to improve hir skills. The complexity of "use of self" or personality related feedback may be perceived as

unchangeable or may also have been articulated within a relational context where feelings of mistrust were present.

Implications for training. The implications for training regarding difficult conversations and interactions may include further understanding of the potential process, as represented graphically in Chapter 4, which may provide a better understanding for novice supervisors as they begin to engage in supervision relationships. For example, during the feedback interviews for this inquiry, supervisors shared similar feelings about findings of this question (expressed as "That would have been good to know" and other similar remarks) as potentially useful prior to engaging in the role of supervisor. Therefore, an implication for training may be previewing potentially challenging feedback conversations and creating opportunity for pre-reflection. This may then allow for supervisors to feel more confident and competent facilitating "use of self" feedback and reactions in the moment.

In addition, discussing criteria for effective feedback, as articulated above, may facilitate novice supervisor's competence to provide effective feedback when it is timely, specific to a changeable behavior, and observable, all within a climate of trust. Further training regarding the facilitation of an effective feedback experience may prepare novice supervisors for

the ways in which neophyte clinicians may perceive feedback based upon the manner in which it is presented.

Implications for research. Many implications for research emerge from this question. One implication is the need for further research into the supervisee perspective regarding corrective feedback in order to explore the ways in which supervisors' perceptions may be similar to and/or different from that of the developing clinician. This may be particularly important regarding the provision (and therefore reception) of effective feedback.

Research may also benefit from the inclusion of client participation as it relates to the observation of applied change based upon reports of feedback given and received within the supervision relationships. Client participation may also allow for further understanding of the "use of self" types of feedback based upon her or his experiences within the therapeutic relationship. Further understanding of "use of self" within the therapeutic relationship may also expand aspects of the feedback process reflecting changeability of behaviors and objectivity of observed behaviors. This may provide further understanding of these two components (malleability and observability) as core criteria for effective feedback.

Continued research focused on deciphering the complexity of "use of self" at the novice clinician level may also elucidate a

better understanding of the way in which neophyte trainees understand and make meaning of their own "sense of self" within a therapeutic context. The potential increased "sense of self" may positively impact the clinician's ability to understand the relevance of "self" as a therapeutic tool which, in turn, may allow supervisees to feel comfortable taking risks to address "self" related feedback within a clearer professional structure.

Question 3: Barriers to Feedback

A salient finding that emerged from this question illuminated the inner process reported by supervisors about the questions that gave them pause regarding interventions and interactions with supervisees. The questions that were processed (i.e. "To teach or not to teach?", "Is this therapy?" "How much should I push?") indicated a reflective and intentional process. The complexity of multiple roles emerged as a "barrier" to feedback; however, the pause created by this inner process may indicate a more thoughtful and intentional approach to the provision of corrective feedback.

The pause, articulated above, emerged from an expansion of my initial guiding question based upon the ways in which experiences were described by participants. I expected, prior to conducting this inquiry, that "barrier" would describe the times in which supervisors stopped themselves from providing feedback to their supervisees. I hypothesized that the process of

stopping themselves from providing feedback would be experienced as a barrier—an obstacle to overcome. What I learned from my participants is that the experience was much more indicative of a "pause" in the feedback process. The duration of the pause varied throughout the process (although the internal process did appear to decrease in physical time as supervisors gained more experience and confidence). Longer pauses were often identified from the current supervision session to the following session and supervisors described self-reflection, consultation, and further exploration of the purpose and accuracy of the perceived need for feedback. Shorter pauses often occurred within sessions and appeared to be marked by an internal process of sifting and winnowing.

The notion of sifting and winnowing demarked the process by which supervisors seemed to sort potential feedback into that which was spoken and that which was unspoken (as described in Question 5, the range of unspoken feedback included feedback deemed inapplicable or inappropriate at a given time to feedback described as murky or perceived to be reflective of personality). Subsequently the pause allowed for supervisors to sift and winnow information and perceptions in order to determine appropriateness and applicability of feedback. It also appeared that culture, worldview, and identity were salient within this period of pause. It was not explicitly labeled as

such at all times; however, journal and interview data identify awareness of the whole of the person and consistent desires to know and understand supervisees through a broad and multiculturally competent lens. This may be indicative of both emphasis on multicultural competence within the larger field and of the more intimate focus on self in relation to others emphasized in the training program itself. In addition, the pause reflected a stronger internal process that was most often self imposed versus a barrier that may be perceived as externally imposed. There appeared to be a level of ownership within the process that reflected supervisors' intentionality around utilizing time to sift and winnow feedback that further supported the concept of pausing versus being stopped by an external force or barrier. In this case, the pause may encompass the experience of barriers; however, it further encompasses a broad range of intentional and internal process regarding the articulation of feedback within the supervisory relationship.

Hoffman and colleagues (2005) classified feedback as one of three types: easy, difficult, and no-feedback events. Some key aspects of difficult feedback included feedback that is personal/professional, impacted clinical work, situated at the boundary of supervision (i.e. boundary between supervision and therapy) and increasingly subjective in nature (Hoffman et al., 2005). The experiences that emerged as barriers to feedback may

be well situated within the context of difficult feedback events and, as such, the temporary pause in the provision of feedback experienced by novice supervisors may reflect intentionality and thoughtfulness regarding the ways in which difficult feedback events were processed. At times, supervisor development was observed as an impediment to the provision of feedback as were supervisee characteristics and development; however, it is possible that the pauses during interactions were beneficial to the overall strength and development of the supervisory relationship. The questions supervisors asked of themselves regarding areas of feedback identified as necessary and important may also reflect a larger pause in the learning process where novice supervisors are transparently exploring the appropriateness of interventions within emerging supervisor identities.

Implications for training. Supervisors may directly benefit from consultation or supervision of supervision support that would allow for in-depth exploration of barriers and decision making processes incorporating the inner questions articulated in Question 3. These questions may provide a framework for contemplating the intentionality and potential implication of corrective feedback, particularly for difficult feedback events. Consultation or supervision of supervision may provide a space

for transparent reflection about the feedback process and moments of pause.

An additional implication that arose from feedback I received about findings indicated that novice supervisors' experiences as supervisees directly impacted the inner experiences illustrated in this question. All supervisors articulated that their own experiences as supervisees, both positive and challenging, impacted the way in which they grappled with the complex questions about their roles as supervisors. This may be particular to the training context of these participants yet warranted voice in the larger context of emerging competence. As with clinical work, exploration of transference and counter-transference within the supervision relationship may facilitate novice supervisors' confidence regarding the ways in which they provide feedback and establish relationships with supervisees.

Implications for research. Although the inner process regarding barriers to feedback is articulated specifically in relation to novice supervisor development, a similar internal process may be experienced by supervisors across developmental levels. Further exploration of this internal process may provide valuable insight into the ongoing process of supervision competence regarding the provision of feedback. It may be useful to interview veteran supervisors to ask if similar internal

processes (sifting and winnowing) are experienced overtly (and simply not recorded as part of the current research) or if the internal process perhaps becomes automated to the level that it appears invisible in reflection. Simply stated, perhaps the pause becomes minimal enough to not register as a stop-point for veteran supervisors or perhaps the inner process raised above becomes a standard inner process that is automatic enough as to not register as separate from that of the greater feedback interaction.

Question 4: Experiences of Diversity and Feedback

Within this inquiry, multicultural and intersecting identities related to relationship and feedback within the novice supervisory relationship were predicted to emerge organically based upon the overall movement toward multicultural competence within the broader field (Hernandez & McDowell, 2010) which aligned with the organic emergence experienced within the novice supervisory relationships represented in this inquiry. The major finding regarding overtly observed and articulated diversity and feedback was the emergence of two prototypes of interaction: one organic in emergence with an outcome of growth and one forced in emergence with a stilted outcome.

The most salient finding that surfaced from exploration of Question 4 is, quite simply, that the multicultural conversations that were allowed to emerge based upon shared

salience and relevance to the supervisor and/or clinical relationships were expressed as positive, growth oriented, and connective. This implies that individuals may well engage in challenging and personal conversations regarding identity when they feel it is personally and professionally relevant. In contrast, individuals may experience frustration and disconnection when topics about multiculturalism and identify feel forced or in response to an external expectation or pressure. Although this finding is based upon a limited participant sample, the prototypes that emerged aligned with the expressed need for better understanding of multicultural communication within the supervisory relationship (Christiansen et al., 2011).

Implications for training. The most salient implication for training that arises for me, given the experiences articulated above, is the need for authentic, genuine, and challenging conversations regarding all aspects of multiculturalism and identity throughout training programs. If conversations regarding diversity and multiculturalism indeed become "easier" and more authentic as personal reflection and awareness develops, then it seems reasonable to assert the need for continued development of competence that allows for confidence about trainees' abilities to engage in these conversations when

they do arise within the context of the supervision (and clinical) dyad.

Implications for research. Due to the rationale presented for not explicitly inquiring about multicultural interactions, further research directly examining this aspect of the feedback and relationship impact would be beneficial. In addition, the supervision dyad is often accepted as a representation of modeling and relationship development in therapeutic dyad such as that experienced as a parallel process (McNeil & Worthen, 1989) between client and clinician and clinician and supervisor. Further research focused specifically on multicultural development within the supervisory relationship may therefore have implications for competence within supervisees' clinical relationships.

Question 5: Feedback Left Unsaid

Feedback that was unsaid throughout the duration of the supervisory relationship ranged from clear (i.e. directly tied to developmental readiness for feedback) to that which was murky in some way (i.e. related to personal values and/or perception of personality characteristics). Decisions to leave feedback unsaid based upon the supervisee's developmental level comported with previous research indicating that in order to be effective the supervision process must be developmentally appropriate (Falender et al., 2004). In addition, current experiences

aligned with previous findings that concern for self-esteem (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Robiner, Saltzman, Hoberman, & Schirvar, 1997) and general discomfort with critical conversations (Holloway & Wampold, 1983; Yalom, 1995) impact engagement in feedback.

Perhaps the most pertinent message I received from supervisor participants was the personal and professional challenge felt when feedback was based upon the murky and person-centered observations. Hoffman and colleagues (2005) described feedback that was identified by supervisors but left unsaid within the supervisory relationship as no-feedback events. No-feedback events were directly linked to personal/professional observations yet were perceived by supervisors to cross the boundary of supervision (Hoffman et al., 2005). The experiences of the novice supervisors mirrored this finding as they articulated potential feedback perceived as being based on personality-related characteristics and value-laden feedback categories as the most complex and challenging areas of unspoken feedback. In particular, feedback based upon what was perceived as characteristic of personality (or even potentially characteristic of personality) appeared to reflect further tension regarding the changeability or teachability of interpersonal skills. In this case, feedback about perceived personal or interpersonal skills may have felt like a critique

of supervisees' personality or personal style which may have further stopped feedback from being articulated. In addition, research also indicates that the field itself has had difficulty identifying and defining specific behaviors and characteristics of "good therapists" and has acknowledged that "nonspecific" characteristics are implicitly difficult to define and measure (Heckman-Stone, 2003). Although there continues to be growth regarding supervisory competencies (e.g. Falender & Shafrasnke, 2004; Fouad et al., 2009; Kaslow, 2004; Nelson, 2007; Roberts, Borden, Christiansen, & Lopez, 2005), there still continues to be ambiguity regarding decision-making and conveyance of feedback about personal and interpersonal skills of clinicians in training.

The complexity of subjective interpersonal experiences seemed to be amplified by the supervisors' own evaluative and training process. During this inquiry, supervisors were also preparing for preliminary examinations regarding supervisory competence. As such, the training program required novice supervisors to prepare, present, and defend a supervision case to three representative members of the training faculty as a milestone for completion of the doctoral program. In the instance of unsaid feedback, there may be a clear implication that supervisors' evaluation processes contributed to decisions to not engage in more ambiguous feedback interactions. In the

context of the process of sifting and winnowing identified previously, this may indicate novice supervisors sifting through a myriad of experiences and observations and winnowing spoken feedback to that which feels more objective and less murky. The evaluative context of the novice supervisory experience may reduce the supervisors' willingness to pursue initially murky insights. In essence, the potential for feedback regarding one's own provision of feedback based upon subjective criteria may have further impacted novice supervisors' decisions to present feedback that felt risky or subjective.

Implications for training. As the demand for systematic definition and assessment of competence continues to gain momentum, providing training at novice levels that explicitly provides support regarding the complexity of evaluation may be beneficial to supervisors (and, I posit, to their supervisees). For instance, supervisors may benefit from receiving consultation or supervision of supervision from an advanced supervisor or trainer who does not have evaluative power over the supervisor. A non-evaluative dynamic may allow for novice supervisors to share concerns and struggles they experience without concern about potential ramifications from a faculty member who may have a dual role as a preliminary examination committee member. I posit the implication for training not as a protective measure from evaluation but as a measure that would

potentially allow for unspoken feedback to be processed in a way that then allows for it to be articulated, as appropriate, within the supervision relationship. Movement toward appropriately delivered feedback around the most challenging topics and observations would adhere to the assertion of Jacobs and colleagues (2011) that difficult conversations are an ethical responsibility of trainers and supervisors.

Implications for research. As mentioned above, the competence movement has created a need for clear, appropriate, and effective feedback. Research focused on better understanding unspoken feedback would provide further insight into how to transition that which is unsaid to that which is said. This implication furthers the need for better understanding regarding the kinds of subjective feedback that do, in fact, need to become more explicit versus that which is appropriately left unsaid. This category is perhaps one of the most relevant for further growth in the field as suggestions have been made that supervision that does not explicitly address areas of concern through feedback may be interpreted as unethical.

Expanding Facets: Feedback within the Supervisory Dyad

The findings articulated in Chapter 4 and the discussion in Chapter 5 inspired a theory regarding the integration of common factors and the Social Relations Model within novice supervisory relationships. The sections below describe the common factors in

psychotherapy and the framework for the Social Relations Model. Each model is expanded to encompass the supervisory relationship and is then integrated to address the multi-faceted and complex interconnections of individuals and relationship. Feedback, as a key aspect of supervision, is used to exemplify the integrated theory.

Common Factors in Psychotherapy. Common factors in psychotherapy have become a standard context for understanding efficacy and effectiveness within a complex therapeutic relationship. Four key factors have been identified and have become standard: extratherapeutic factors, therapeutic relationship, technical factors, and expectancy (e.g. Lambert, 1992; Wampold, 2001; Drisko, 2004). In brief, *extratherapeutic factors* reflect client factors (i.e. intelligence, motivation to change, capacity to trust, resilience), client context (i.e. social support, family support), and agency context (i.e. availability, cultural sensitivity, environment of respect and care). *Therapeutic relationship* refers to caring, warmth, empathy, mutual affirmation, goal consensus, support, etc. within a central and positive relationship. Theoretical orientation and therapeutic approach/interventions represents *technical factors*. *Expectancy* is denoted as the change due to the knowledge that one is being treated (in and of itself noted as helpful and restorative). Prior research indicates that each

factor represents a proportion of change within the psychotherapeutic relationship: extratherapeutic factors (40%), therapeutic relationship (30%), technical factors (15%), and expectancy (15%) (e.g. Lambert, 1992; Wampold, 2001).

Social Relations Model. The Social Relations Model (Kenny, 1994) describes dyadic relationships within a social context and includes nonindependence as a construct for understanding relationships. Nonindependence denotes that members of a dyad share some commonalities and are therefore not uniquely independent (in a statistical sense) as would be two individuals not within a dyad (Kenny, Kashy, & Cook, 2006). The SRM presents three levels of explanation for dyadic perceptions: perceiver effects, target effects, and relationship effects. The *perceiver effect* reflects how the perceiver generally sees others. The *target effect* describes the target's tendency to be perceived similarly by all persons. The unique combination of the members within the dyad after accounting for the perceiver and target effects is the *relationship effect* (Kenny, 1994; Back & Kenny, 2010).

Contextual Development of Supervisory Relationship. I posit that the novice supervisory relationship (as a precursor to the provision of feedback) develops within the context of common factors and the social relations model. These two unique and independent constructs provide a conceptual understanding that

allows for the multi-faceted supervisory relationship to be understood. I will articulate the ways in which common factors and SRM interact to highlight different facets of supervisor, supervisee, and the supervisory relationship and will then describe feedback within this context.

Common factors in the supervisory relationship. The common factors within the psychotherapy relationship may be applied to the supervisory relationship. Although the proportion of effect may vary from the proportion of change identified within therapeutic relationships, the common factors themselves appear to be experienced within the novice supervisory relationship.

E-Factors. The extratherapeutic factors (E-Factors) reflect the supervisee context, supervisor context, and educational context. These factors are based upon characteristics and findings that emerged from this inquiry. Supervisee factors include developmental level, motivation to grow, capacity for trust, and engagement in a working alliance. Supervisor factors include developmental level and competence, skills to facilitate a working alliance, ability to engage in self-reflection, and commitment to relationship and development. Unique to the novice supervisory experience, educational context factors such as program climate and evaluation processes contributed to the cumulative E-Factor effect. In this inquiry, the emphasis on

therapy and supervision within a larger interpersonal relationship context is an example of program climate.

Supervisory relationship. Similar to the importance of therapeutic relationships as a factor of change, the supervision relationship appeared to be essential to the experiences of feedback within the novice supervisory relationship. Participant experiences suggest that empathy, care, trust, investment in supervisee growth, and encouragement were central to connected relationship development. Plus, the ability to recover from mistakes (i.e. "tear and repair" situations) and remain connected was critical to ongoing facets of accepted and open feedback.

Technical factors. In the context of novice supervisory relationships, it appeared that the theoretical orientation and approach and the emerging theoretical orientation of the supervisee were underlying considerations. For example, supervisors articulated the lenses through which they contemplated feedback and interventions as well as their understanding of their supervisees' emerging theoretical orientations.

Expectancy. I posit that expectancy, in this emerging theory, reflects the supervisees' understanding of supervision as a useful process. This may be based upon previous experiences and/or the presentation of supervision as a beneficial tool for

growth and development based on research and departmental values.

Interrelated Facets. These facets, when linked as a larger process, provide insight into the ways in which common factors in psychotherapy may be expanded to understand novice supervisory relationships. Similar to research focused on common factors, this inquiry provided phenomenological support for the significance of E-Factors and supervisory relationship as primary factors for effectiveness within the dyad.

In psychotherapy, these factors account for 70% of the efficacy of treatment. The experiences shared by participants in this inquiry indicate that E-Factors and the relationship contributed to the ways in which feedback was experienced.

Social Relations Model in the supervision dyad. As a dyadic relationship within the social context of education and training, the SRM provides a lens through which we may better understand the interconnectedness of "I", "we", and "you". Consistent with the entirety of this inquiry, the theory below is reflective of supervisor perceptions within the novice supervisory relationship. This theory posits that the three main components in this inquiry are: "I"-perceiver effect (how I, the supervisor, generally perceive others), "you"-target effect (how my supervisee is generally experienced by others), and "we"-the

relationship effect (my unique perception of my supervisee above and beyond the individual perceiver and target effects).

Connected Facets. The integration of the models above provides a lens through which to view the novice supervisors' perceptions of the development of the novice supervisory relationship. In this case "I" identifies the way in which the supervisor generally perceives other people. I theorize that this is impacted by the supervisor's E-Factors and the way in which the supervisor perceives her/himself to engage in the supervision relationship. For example, a supervisor who generally perceives others to be motivated to grow and interpersonally comfortable is likely to (at least initially) perceive her/his supervisee as such. To continue this example, if this supervisor's E-Factors include a strong sense of confidence in skills, belief in her/his ability to facilitate a connected relationship, and openness to engage in self-reflection (combined with the aforementioned perceiver effect), this may result in a supervisor who enters the novice supervisory relationship with a positive perception of her/his supervisee's abilities, the perception that her/his supervisee is motivated to learn, and commitment to providing a connected and meaningful supervision experience.

The supervisee ("you") also enters the dyad within a larger social context. The way in which the supervisee is generally

perceived by others, along with the supervisee's E-Factors, also contributes to the overall experience within the novice supervisory relationship. For example, a supervisee who is generally perceived as distant or disengaged from others who has E-Factors such as below-average skill development and a tendency to not trust others in positions of authority may be resistant to feedback.

Finally, in this context "we" is represented as the unique supervisory relationship and can be understood as the facets remaining after accounting for the "I" and "you" effects. To continue with the previous example, when the supervisor and supervisee mentioned above engage in a novice supervisory relationship, the facets of each individual plus the facets of the relationship merge. By understanding the supervisor's perception of self ("I") and supervisee ("you"), the supervisor may be able to perceive the relationship in a unique light. The relationship between the aforementioned supervisor and supervisee may reflect, for example, the development of a working alliance where the supervisor provides care, support, and encouragement which is initially resisted by the supervisee. As the relationship develops, the supervisee, who is generally perceived as distant, may engage in a vulnerable relationship with her/his supervisor. In this case, the supervisor's perceptions of self (what do I contribute to this relationship

that is reflective of my general interactions?), perceptions of her/his supervisee (how do others typically perceive my supervisee?) and the relationship (what is unique to our relationship that allows for growth once “I” and “you” are accounted for?) interact to facilitate an increased understanding of the working alliance. An implication of the SRM, from the perception of the supervisor, is that the supervisee’s behaviors (with me) can be partly unique to our relationship. Therefore, it is important to look for evidence that interpersonal and behavioral patterns occur with clients (and perhaps in other contexts) before concluding that these patterns are part of the “you” domain rather than “we” or even “I”.

The above point highlights the importance of relationship monitoring for supervisors, which appeared to be a frequent activity for supervisors who participated in this study. Relationship monitoring facilitates increased awareness of relationship effects within this context. The SRM, as applied in this context, also includes subjective perceptions of the perceiver, target, and relationship effects due to the utilization of the model through the lens of the supervisor/perceiver.

Increased understanding of self (as supervisor) and supervisee (through observation of behaviors and interactions)

may illuminate facets of the complex relationship dynamic in a way that facilitates growth (in this inquiry, through the provision of feedback) in an individualized and more effective way.

Feedback within a supervisory relationship. Feedback, as a core component of this study, is central to supervisee growth and clinical competence. The theory elucidated above provides a lens through which to view novice supervisors' perceptions of the development of the supervisory relationship. Increased understanding of common factors through a social relations model may improve the overall effectiveness of the feedback process. For example, the model suggests that supervisors use of their perceptions of the relationship as a guide for whether or what to communicate (e.g., how much to "push") may be warranted through the common factor context of the supervisory relationship.

Self-reflection and consultation may facilitate novice supervisors' awareness of their "I" and E-Factors which may therefore increase their abilities to understand their supervisees' "you" and E-factors. In and of itself, this awareness may facilitate the overall process of feedback in a way that allows for more engagement in facets of openly received feedback, decreases barriers, facilitates multicultural growth, and diminishes the amount of unsaid feedback.

In addition, increased understanding of “I”, “you”, and E-Factors may further provide clarity regarding the relationship (“we”) itself. Improved understanding of “we” and the relationship effect emerging from common factors may illuminate areas of relational strength and growth which would also affect provision and reception of feedback.

This model may also provide further insight into the ”pause” experienced within the context of feedback provision, as articulated earlier in the chapter. The pause, in this context, may reflect a space where the supervisor’s sifting and winnowing process provides structure for determining the appropriateness and applicability of feedback. Within the pause, supervisors may be able to incorporate feedback that is suitable to “you” and not solely reflective of either “we” or “I”. I assert that the SRM may provide a framework for novice supervisors to better identify feedback that is transferable and relevant to clinical work versus feedback that is perhaps best understood as an event within the supervisory relationship (“we”) or directly related to the novice supervisor’s own development and characteristics (“I”). Sifting and winnowing within the moments of pause may facilitate the provision of germane and therapeutically effective feedback which in turn may lead to increased clinical competence and confidence for supervisee (and supervisor).

In sum, determining “How much to push” (for example) may be directly connected to perception of common factors and relationship development. Determining “What” (the content) is pushed may be identified by sifting and winnowing perceived interpersonal and behavioral patterns through the SRM. Together, the integrated model may provide a framework for depth of feedback *and* focus of feedback in a manner that resonates as germane and applicable.

Researcher Reflection

As I planned this inquiry, I knew that managing complex multiple roles would be an ongoing consideration. Although I considered soliciting participants from outside programs, research and consultation indicated that I may obtain the most honest and ”raw” data regarding feedback within novice supervisory relationships from participants with whom a level of trust may be granted based on my role(s) within the training department.

Initially, my most salient focus was on the collection of data that was genuine, explicit, and appropriately distanced from my own training roles. For example, at the time in which I gathered data, I did not supervise any of the participants and was mindful of personal relationships with the supervisor participants. Outside of data collection, I did not engage in

conversations with any participants regarding their experiences in order to protect the quality of data.

Perhaps the most challenging navigation of roles emerged during the year in which I was writing and defending this inquiry as part of my doctoral requirements. During the second year (post completion of data collection), I did supervise one participant during a practicum placement and was on a supervision of supervision team with a clinician who supervised another participant. It was challenging, at times, to navigate the boundaries of these relationships and I continued to utilize bracketing throughout the process of analysis and writing. I also spoke with both participants about their roles in my research and in the training capacity at their practicum site. I spoke openly about my desire to maintain appropriate boundaries regarding the information I had gleaned as a researcher and the information I continued to glean as a supervisor (or as part of the supervisory team). In the context of my individual supervision with a previous participant, the participant and I openly discussed hir experiences and s/he expressed feeling that it ended up facilitating trust and closeness in our relationship because s/he inferred that I understood hir in a unique and meaningful way. Over the course of my year analyzing and writing this inquiry, I regularly revisited the conversation with both participants as either party felt it was salient.

As stated in Chapter 3, one of the supervisor participants was also a close friend. Throughout the analysis and writing portion of the second year, we continued to not discuss anything specific to my dissertation. Only at the time where all supervisor participants were contacted to provided feedback interviews was the conversation broached with this participant.

Overall, the success of this inquiry was based on establishing transparent and respectful boundaries with all participants and, just as importantly, success was greatly supported by participants' respect for boundaries to protect the integrity of the data. It was a privilege to work with participants who shared feeling that the research itself was important and necessary to the broader field and trusted the integrity of the work—supervisory, clinical, and research.

Limitations

There are several limitations worthy of articulation in this study. First, the generalizabilty and transferability of findings must be interpreted with caution based upon the qualitative nature of the study and the number of supervisor participants. The four supervisor participants provided in-depth journals, midterm interviews, and feedback interviews which resulted in a significant amount of data which aligns with the intent of this phenomenological inquiry to describe and bring forth representations of meaning based on participants; lived

experiences. Although it may not be applicable to all training contexts, the lived experiences of the supervisors, and their supervisees, provides valuable insight into novice supervisor development.

In addition, the specific training focus of the department from which participants were recruited may not reflect other training programs and therefore other novice supervisory experiences. Within this context, it is important to rearticulate that I was also enrolled in the aforementioned training program at the time of the inquiry. There are ways in which my within group researcher status may have been beneficial (i.e. participants may have trusted me with their experiences based upon my role within the department) and ways in which it may have limited the interpretation of the data (i.e. viewed and interpreted within a similar lens to the overall training model of participants).

Finally, as mentioned previously, the faculty instructors also provided supervision of supervision for the participants and were also potential committee members for their supervision preliminary exams. Although this is not necessarily unusual for smaller training programs, the dual relationships experienced within the model may have impacted the freedom with which participants expressed themselves in the context of this inquiry.

Conclusion

The participants' willingness to share their lived experiences regarding feedback within novice supervisory relationships allowed for a deeper understanding of novice supervisor development. The in-depth articulations of findings in Chapter 4 along with the contextual delineations presented in Chapter 5 were written to share participants' lived experiences within the broader field.

It is clear that novice supervisor development is complex and strongly impacted by the training context. The essential findings provided a deeper understanding about the use and perception of feedback in novice supervisory relationships. Table 5 presents condensed insights that may be beneficial to trainees and training programs alike.

Figure 5

Brief Points of Consideration

Trainee Information	Training Program Information
• Strong and connected supervisory relationships facilitated the positive reception and implementation of feedback • Increased confidence and competence in abilities as supervisor facilitated the feedback process (and positive feedback processes increased feelings of competence and confidence) • Difficult feedback situations were often repaired by re-engagement in the relationship and validation of supervisee experiences • Multicultural and identity related conversations that emerged organically within the supervisory relationship were most often interpreted as growth inducing and beneficial • Unspoken feedback related to values and personal characteristics are challenging and often left unsaid. Consultation with peers and supervisors may facilitate articulation of important feedback previously left unstated.	• Transparent and explicit understanding of the supervision process facilitated emerging supervisor confidence • Opportunities for consultation, supervision of supervision, and personal reflection positively affected supervisors' ability to engage in increasingly difficult feedback incidents • Barriers to feedback were often temporary and reflective of supervisor's internal identity development • Multicultural and identity related conversations that were identified as salient and appropriately timed were reported as positive growth experiences. Creating expectations and opportunities for multicultural growth throughout the training program will likely facilitate engagement and salience. • Non-evaluative consultation or supervision of supervision experiences may increase novice supervisors' abilities to articulate previously unsaid feedback

In sum, feedback in novice supervisory relationships is directly impacted by the strength of the relationship, developmental levels of supervisor and supervisee, internal reflection and external consultation regarding identified

feedback, organic and salient multicultural interactions, and the perception of support within training contexts.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Consent Form for journals

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Understanding Feedback as Formative Evaluation in Weekly Supervision Sessions: An Exploration of Relationship and the Process of Novice Supervisory Communication.

Dissertator: Stacie L. Fishell, M.A.
Email: fishell@wisc.edu

Dissertation Chair: William T. Hoyt, Ph.D.
Email: wthoyt@education.wisc.edu

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research study about feedback and relationship development in novice supervisory relationships.

You have been asked to participate because you are either a novice supervisor who recently completed an introductory supervision course or you were being supervised by a novice supervisor who recently completed an introductory supervision course.

The purpose of this inquiry is to explore the ways in which feedback occurred, as well to explore impediments to the dialogue, within a developing supervisory relationship.

Research will be conducted and accessed via Qualtrics, an electronic survey tool, available through the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

If you agree to participate in this research your consent will provide me access to journals completed and submitted throughout your supervisory relationship. In addition, you will be asked to complete a brief demographic questionnaire.

Journal completion is expected to take approximately 30 minutes for each supervision session (although this time may vary based upon your level of course participation). Regardless of your consent to allow me access to journal entries, the journals are required for course participation. Additional time in this phase of research is the demographic questionnaire which will take approximately 10 minutes to complete and is completed only once.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

Due to the small size of the selected sample for qualitative research, identifying information will be gathered in order to analyze data both individually and within supervisory dyads. In order to protect your interests, your journals will be handled as follows:

1. Journals, with identifying information will be saved onto my hard drive.
2. Journals will be de-identified and coded according to supervisory dyads. For example, supervisors' journals will be coded as SR1, SR2, etc. and supervisees' journals will be coded as SR1/SEA, SR1/SEB, SR2/SEA, SR2/SEB, etc. It is important that dyadic relationships are maintained for purposes of analysis and meaning making within relationships.
3. Coded and de-identified data will be saved on my hard drive and to a back-up server.
4. Original identified data will be destroyed.

Due to the nature and size of the Department of Counseling Psychology, it may be impossible to completely de-identify information. Faculty members, as well as other students directly involved in this research, may be able to identify individuals based upon previous relationships and broad categories of identification. However, this risk will be lessened by broad categorization of identifying information (i.e. describing a person as a minority versus using specific race/ethnicity).

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

Research participants may benefit from increased self awareness throughout the supervision process. In addition, participants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on my conceptualizations and understandings of this experience which will provide a chance to clarify understandings as well as to learn from the study itself.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

As stated in the section above regarding risks, confidentiality will be kept to the highest degree possible. Although your initial journal will be linked to your name, codes will be assigned to each participant to best maintain overall confidentiality. In the case of potential publication, neither you nor the University of Wisconsin will be named.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you should contact Stacie Fishell, M.A. (fishell@wisc.edu) or Bill Hoyt, Ph.D., (wthoyt@education.wisc.edu).

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education Research and Social & Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.

Your participation, regarding my access to your journals, is voluntary. If you decide not to participate or to withdraw from the study it will have no effect on your course grade of preliminary exams (if applicable).

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and consent to participate. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

____

Name Signature Date

Appendix B: Consent Form for individual interviews

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON
Research Participant Information and Consent Form

Title of the Study: Understanding Feedback as Formative Evaluation in Weekly Supervision Sessions: An Exploration of Relationship and the Process of Novice Supervisory Communication.

Dissertator: Stacie L. Fishell, M.A.
Email: fishell@wisc.edu

Dissertation Chair: William T. Hoyt, Ph.D.
Email: wthoyt@education.wisc.edu

DESCRIPTION OF THE RESEARCH

You are invited to participate in a qualitative research study about feedback and relationship development in novice supervisory relationships.

You have been asked to participate because you are an advanced supervisor supervising a trainee at the same level of training as supervisees working with novice supervisors.

The purpose of this inquiry is to explore the ways in which feedback occurs, as well as potential impediments to the dialogue, within a developing supervisory relationship.

Research will be conducted via a one hour semi-structured interview near the middle of the semester and a one hour semi-structured interview to provide the researcher feedback once analysis is complete. You may opt to participate in the midterm interview, the analysis interview, both interviews, or neither interview.

WHAT WILL MY PARTICIPATION INVOLVE?

Participation will involve the following:

1. A one hour semi-structured interview regarding your supervision process to date. Interviews will be recorded onto DVD and transcripts of the interview will be used in data analysis.

2. A one hour semi-structured interview regarding your feedback on my analysis and meaning making regarding the supervision experience. Interviews will be used to check accuracy of my interpretations and meaning making of your experiences of your midterm interview and/or journals.

Participation in the midterm interview does not necessitate participation in the follow-up interview. This consent form will be reviewed and signed prior to each interview.

ARE THERE ANY RISKS TO ME?

Due to the small size of the selected sample for qualitative research, identifying information will be gathered in order to analyze data both individually and within supervisory dyads. Due to the nature and size of the Department of Counseling Psychology, it may be impossible to completely de-identify information. Faculty members, as well as other students directly involved in this research, may be able to identify individuals based upon previous relationships and broad categories of identification. However, this risk will be lessened by broad categorization of identifying information (i.e. describing a person as a minority versus using specific race/ethnicity).

ARE THERE ANY BENEFITS TO ME?

Research participants may benefit from increased self awareness throughout the supervision process. In addition, participants will be given the opportunity to provide feedback on my conceptualizations and understandings of this experience which will provide a chance to clarify understandings as well as to learn from the study itself.

HOW WILL MY CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?

As stated in the section above regarding risks, confidentiality will be kept to the highest degree possible. During transcription, codes will be assigned to each participant to best maintain overall confidentiality. In the case of potential publication, neither you nor the University of Wisconsin will be named.

WHOM SHOULD I CONTACT IF I HAVE QUESTIONS?

You may ask any questions about the research at any time. If you have questions about the research after you leave today you

should contact Stacie Fishell, M.A. (fishell@wisc.edu) or Bill Hoyt, Ph.D., (wthoyt@education.wisc.edu).

If you are not satisfied with the response you receive, have more questions, or want to talk with someone about your rights as a research participant, you should contact the Education Research and Social & Behavioral Science IRB Office at 608-263-2320.

Your participation, regarding my access to your journals, is voluntary.

Your signature indicates that you have read this consent form, had an opportunity to ask any questions about your participation in this research and consent to participate. You will receive a copy of this form for your records.

____

Name Signature Date

Appendix C: Demographic Questionnaire

Name____Date_______________

Please provide information for the following prompts. The responses are intentionally blank to allow you the flexibility to describe yourself and your experiences in the way that choose.

General:

Age: ___________________

Gender Identity: ________________

Sexual Orientation: ________________

How would you describe your social class background?
____

Education:

Bachelor Degree: Major(s)__________________________________

Minor(s) _________________________________

Master's Degree(s): _______________________________________

Other Degrees/relevant training_____________________________

Professional:

Briefly describe your theoretical orientation.
____
____

Appendix D: Journal Prompts

Supervisors:

Name________________________________Supervisee__________________

Use this space to reflect upon your experiences with your supervisee. Considerations may include your relationship with your supervisee, successful or challenging interactions in supervision, your identity development as a supervisor, etc.

Supervisees:

Name________________________________Supervisor__________________

Use this space to critically reflect upon your experiences as a counselor in training. Considerations may include work with clients, supervisory relationships, successful and challenging interactions, your growth and identity development as a counselor, etc. Think about your work with clients, in individual supervision, and in group supervision.

Appendix E: Midterm Interview Protocol

Introductory script:

I want to thank you for agreeing to talk with me and for allowing me to ask questions about your experiences in supervision. I will be taking notes as we go along but would like to record our discussion today so that I do not miss anything. Will this be okay with you ?

Our interview will probably last about 60 minutes. If you would like to take a break at any time, please let me know and we can surely do that.

I have a small number of questions developed to faciliate the interview process ; however, my primary goal is to understand your experience as a supervisor (supervisee) at this point in the semester. The questions I ask may not necessarily address specific experiences you might want to share and I encourage you to articulate the experiences you perceived as most salient.

Reflection Questions:

1. How would you describe your overall experience of your supervisory relationship thus far?
2. At this time, how would you describe your approach to supervision? (supervisor question only) At this time, how would you describe your supervisor's approach in supervision? (supervisee only question)
3. Please describe any successful or challenging interactions you have experienced with your supervisee/supervisor. How have you made sense of those experiences?

4. What else should I know in order to better understand your experience in your supervision relationship?”

Appendix F: Follow-up Interview Protocol

Introductory script:

I want to thank you for agreeing to talk with me and for allowing me to ask questions about your experiences in supervision. I will be taking notes as we go along but would like to record our discussion today so that I do not miss anything. Will this be okay with you ?

Our interview will probably last about 60 minutes. If you would like to take a break at any time, please let me know and we can surely do that.

Reflection Questions:

5. In reflection, how would you describe the process of giving/receiving feedback throughout the course of supervision?
6. How would you describe your overall experience of your supervisory relationship?
7. Please describe any patterns regarding giving/receiving feedback that you observed and experienced in your supervisory relationship.
8. What else should I know in order to better understand your experience regarding feedback in your supervision relationship?”

Accuracy of Data Questions:

1. What are your initial impressions and thoughts regarding my preliminary analysis and meaning making?
2. Please describe/show me any areas where you feel I missed something or did not accurately capture your experiences. How might I more accurately describe your experiences.
3. What feedback do you have regarding my observations and analysis thus far?
4. Please describe any further meaning you made regarding your own experiences after interacting with the data I presented thus far.