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Article 32

Supervision in Online Counselor and Education Programs: An Account From Multiple Perspectives

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Abstract

Enrollment in online counseling and counselor education programs presents unique challenges and considerations for the educators charged with student development. Explorations of these benefits and challenges, as well as strategies to address these challenges are addressed. Case examples are inclusive of multiple participant roles including counselor educator, supervisor, and student.

Keywords: supervision, online supervision, counselor, counselor education

According to the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP; 2014), only two fully online programs are currently accredited to offer doctoral degrees in counselor education and supervision (CES); however, numerous other institutions are in the process of seeking accreditation or integrating virtual opportunities into their curriculum. Given the relative infancy of programs offered through online means, numerous questions and concerns exist regarding ways to effectively deliver supervision to ensure doctoral students are adequately prepared to be effective counselor educators and supervisors. The absence of literature regarding these unique considerations invites an open dialogue among and

between the individuals involved in the supervision process. Focusing on experiences within the online supervision model for doctoral students in counselor education and supervision courses in an online environment, the authors, who represent the roles of counselor educator, doctoral student, and master's degree practicum and internship advisor, discuss the implications of conducting virtual supervision, including case examples. In an effort to comprehensively address supervision in relation to the virtual environment, the role of supervision, types of supervision, benefits of supervision, and challenges to supervision are discussed. These examples serve as an opportunity to begin the discussion necessary for developing supervision models among those programs seeking accreditation.

Role of Supervision

According to Bernard and Goodyear (2009), supervision is an instrumental and necessary process in which individuals with more experience provide support to newer members of the profession. The opportunity for senior members of the profession to share knowledge gained through practical experiences with less experienced counselors fosters professional development and strengthens the ability to mature into ethical and effective clinicians. Specifically, the ongoing process of supervision promotes ongoing counselor self-awareness and self-assessment by supervisees. Although Nelson, Nichter, and Hendrickson (2010) noted that historically supervision has facilitated development through face-to-face modes, the authors asserted that regardless of the setting in which supervision is delivered, the purpose is the same.

Types of Supervision

While the purpose of supervision tends to be consistent regardless of setting, Nelson et al. (2010) noted that supervisory styles and approaches are likely to differ based on the supervisory philosophy or preferred model employed by the supervisor. In addition to the diverse options for supervisor orientations (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009), supervision delivery may also take the form of individual, triadic, and/or group approaches. In comparing the types of supervision, one of the greatest differences lies in the ratio between the number of supervisees and the supervisor. Linvi, Crowe, and Gonsalvez (2012) mentioned that outside of this difference, the fundamental effectiveness of supervision, regardless of whether it was individual, triadic, or group, was based on the relationship between the supervisor and supervisee.

Supervision Guidelines in CACREP CES Programs

In establishing the requirements for supervision of doctoral students in a counselor education and supervision program, CACREP (2014) Standard III.C identifies guidelines relative to practicum and internship experiences. This code provides information regarding the frequency and type of supervision required, but does not specify the setting in which this supervision should be delivered. In addition, CACREP pinpointed even more uncertainties associated with differential requirements for supervision necessary both for state licensure as counselors as well as supervisors

providing licensure supervision. While some states require face-to-face supervision, which restricts supervision through technological interfaces, others welcome the integration of technology in supervision as they have welcomed the incorporation of technology in the counseling relationship.

Benefits of Online Supervision

Kolowich (2012) noted that online programs present the potential to recruit nontraditional students who may have been otherwise unable to pursue educational endeavors given the potential rigidity of land-based institutions. The recruitment of diverse individuals and the integration of technology provide the means for individuals anywhere around the world to "log in" to join the supervision discussion. In fact, Nelson et al. (2010) examined numerous studies that explored student perceptions of the availability of communication for both practicum and internship online supervision. Results from these studies indicated that flexibility and convenience were among a host of factors that were identified as benefits of this approach. Online environments provide the opportunity for educators, students, and counselors to participate in the supervisory process from any location, allowing for access regardless of geographic location and only limited by Internet access. As noted by Kolowich (2012), one attraction for nontraditional students may be the easy accommodation through online supervision given the flexibility of approach. Virtual environments empower programs that serve individuals from all over the county and even the world to participate in synchronous supervision.

Benefits of convenience and flexibility offered in online environments are accompanied by other benefits identified by Renfro-Michel, O'Halloran, and Delaney (2010). These researchers noted that adult learners, in particular, enhance the learning experience due to their unique contributions to the classrooms. Lived experiences, diversity, and increased collaboration were identified as some noteworthy additions adult learners bring to the learning environment. The diversity is not only enhanced through the contributions of adult learners but further enriched with the diverse experiences that individuals across the globe can add. As noted previously, because individuals from diverse cultures can be joined synchronously to a classroom, an individual from a rural town in Mississippi can collaborate with an individual in the heart of Manhattan to share experiences working with diverse clientele. This exchange of information is more likely to occur with the means provided in an online environment.

Beyond the areas discussed above regarding the benefits of online supervision, other practical issues can be inferred. For example, the ability to connect from the confines of one's home, business, or other places in the individual's environment reduce the potential interruptions caused by some life occurrences such as engine trouble, the need to be home at a particular time, or the competing demands of being at two distinct locations at one time. Lengthy commutes and financial barriers associated with the transportation costs of driving to supervision can also be avoided. Convenience, flexibility, ease of access, and cost effectiveness of online supervision are a few of the more obvious benefits of an online mode to supervision. Butler and Constantine (2006) noted an additional, less apparent benefit of increased collective self-esteem. Utilizing a group of school counselor trainees, participants in a 12-week peer-supervision course reported an increased collective self-esteem associated with the online supervision

process such as strengthened positive regard for being a school counselor. Stronger case conceptualization skills were also a reported outcome. Overall, the authors concluded that Web-based supervision served as a valuable tool in the supervision process and should be integrated in counselor training programs as a way of enhancing this phenomenon.

Challenges to Online Supervision

Despite offering unique benefits that might not be available through face-to-face means, online supervision is not immune to challenges and opposition. One frequent concern with online supervision is the issue of confidentiality. According to the American Counseling Association (2014) *Code of Ethics* as well as the *Best Practices in Clinical Supervision* (Association for Counselor Education and Supervision [ACES], 2011), counselors and supervisors must demonstrate appropriate care to ensure the confidentiality of their students and clients. According to the International Society for Mental Health Online (2010), the use of technology requires unique considerations in maintaining confidentiality, which may not be present in face-to-face learning environments. In addressing these needs, the Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (2011) adopted in its *Code of Professional Ethics for Rehabilitation Counselors* expectations of confidentiality specific to online communications. Understanding the limitations of specific programs relative to encryption and privacy is therefore instrumental in the delivery of online supervision.

Further complicating the issue of confidentiality in an online supervision environment, Vaccarro and Lambie (2007) illuminated the complexity associated with the availability of multiple types of supervision. Virtual supervision could include synchronous means of communication such as computer-based teleconferencing, chat rooms, and computer-assisted live supervision, as well as asynchronous means of communication such as e-mail and electronic mailing lists. Beyond ethical considerations, Vaccarro and Lambie raised concerns that despite the enormous potential of technological means of supervision, each mode of communication requires specific skills for individuals to be able to navigate. For example, online modes, which require the use of a computer webcam or video recorder, require an individual to be educated and prepared to set up the necessary components to participate.

Although a lack of technological savvy may serve as a potential challenge to online supervision, human error is only one technological interruption that may occur. According to Nelson et al. (2010), technological failures are a major factor stunting the growth of online supervision. As with all technology, the potential for breakdowns or failures is present. Individuals may lose connection, experience adverse weather conditions, or experience any number of dynamics disrupting connectivity. Even synchronous communication may be disrupted due to lag time between communication devices.

The numerous forms of online supervision lacking a visual component require unique considerations with regard to the amount of nonverbal cues that are available to the supervisor or supervisee. Mallen, Vogel, and Rochlen (2005) noted that nonverbal cues, which are typically evident in a face-to-face supervision session, may be lost in the transition to the virtual setting. Furthermore, the external dimensions of cultural identity

(Arredondo et al., 1996; Carteret, 2011), that may provide information about age, physical disability, or gender, may also be unavailable due to the absence of visual cues.

As with any supervisory relationship, consideration of benefits and challenges must be thoroughly considered in order for strategies to be developed to maximize the potential for success. While recent research (i.e., Renfro-Michel et al., 2010) has targeted the use of online supervision in developing clinicians, the research regarding the use of these means in developing supervisors fails to provide proof of their effectiveness. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to demonstrate the use of various strategies in overcoming some of the more common challenges of online supervision in a CES program through the use of case examples. These illustrations, which are composites of the experiences of the writers, accompany each strategy to illustrate their implementation.

Strategies for Developing Connections and Cultural Understanding

The lack of personal interface that may occur in virtual supervision (Mallen et al., 2005) results in numerous potential concerns as to what information might be lost in the translation of information via virtual means. Many technologies such as Skype and Adobe Connect offer the capacity to videoconference and thus are inclusive of a face-to-face element. However, teleconference remains a common route of delivery for online supervision. With telephone communication, visible cultural characteristics (Arredondo et al., 1996; Carteret, 2011), which may provide a sense of identity for participants (e.g., age or gender), are not necessarily noticeable. Although individuals may be able to pick up on dialects associated with potential geographic areas, it is often difficult to interpret, and there is little confirmation of these assumptions. As cultural competence is an ethical responsibility and the supervisee's cultural identify has huge implications for the supervisory process, supervisors are charged with being proactive and creative to learn the supervisee's cultural identity. As such, acknowledgement of these limitations must be coupled with opportunities to compensate. According to ACA (2014) and ACES (2011), counselors and supervisors must provide informed consent for clients, students, and supervisees that explains the purpose of the relationship, roles of the individuals involved, and the parameters of the roles. Since individual states may be governed by additional rules and regulations, this information should be shared among participants. However, while informed consent may initiate dialog between supervisors and supervisees, supervisors taking a proactive approach to exploring the cultural identity of supervisees are likely to enhance the learning experience and increase interactions necessary for effective communication.

Case Example

Dr. Michaels is a faculty supervisor assigned to work with a new student supervisee, Sam. Sam is a student enrolled in Dr. Michaels' clinical supervision course. Sam has been assigned to co-facilitate group supervision for a section of a master's level practicum course and Dr. Michaels will provide weekly teleconference supervision of Sam's supervision of the practicum students. During the first supervision of supervision call, Dr. Michaels makes an effort to get to know Sam. Sam describes herself as a single mother of two children, which defeats the first assumption that Dr. Michaels made prior to the call—assuming that Sam was a man, based on her name. Dr. Michaels inquires

about Sam's clinical experience. Sam indicates that after a career working in a middle school setting for more than 20 years, a decision was made to return to school and pursue a doctoral degree. Dr. Michaels asks for an overview of Sam's experience within the school setting and learns that Sam is both a certified teacher and has a school counseling degree. Sam has worked in both roles at different points in her career; however, the school counseling degree was only obtained in the last 5 years. This defeats the second assumption that Sam is an experienced clinician after the initial report of a multi-decade career. It takes a good deal of interaction before Dr. Michaels has a good sense of Sam's depth of clinical experience, her fund of knowledge, and level of self-awareness. This is important information in relation to providing developmentally and culturally appropriate supervision and could have had negative consequences if Dr. Michaels had not been proactive in her pursuit of gaining clarity about Sam's cultural identity.

Overall it is clear that supervisors must be careful not to make assumptions regarding a supervisee's identity, and the absence of visual clues only serves as reinforcement for intentional relationship-building exercises.

Strategies for Building a Therapeutic or Supervisory Relationship

Fleming, Glass, Fujisaki, and Toner (2010) established unique concepts associated with group supervision, including the simultaneous experience of diverse perceptions. Understanding the distinct needs of members of the group is therefore potentially important in the relationship between the counselor educators, doctoral supervisees, and counseling students. As such, open and effective communication must be established. Based on the experiences of the authors within this framework, strategies for developing an effective relationship between participants included the need to establish the opportunity for participants to share information, encouragement of interaction among members through verbal prompts, and prioritization of response to asynchronous communication. In addition, Chapman, Baker, Nassar-McMillan, and Gerler (2011) established the importance of the supervisor in initiating communication with individuals who may appear to be struggling.

Case Example

Dr. Rogers is a counselor educator supervising a group of doctoral-level students enrolled in an internship course. The enrolled students are each earning hours towards internship working in various settings across a broad geographic expanse. As the quarter begins, Dr. Rogers uses a structured approach to the group supervision calls. The first session is spent reviewing the expectations and requirements as well as establishing the ground rules for the supervisory process.

After several weeks of calls, the group has established a fairly consistent structure for each call. Each student provides a brief, general overview of the week's activities followed by a presentation of one specific item for discussion. The students are earning hours in a variety of domains including teaching, counseling, and supervision. Thus, the individual presentations are associated with one of these areas. Examples of supervisee presentations include clinical case consultation, curriculum development questions, and proper application of supervision models. Every student has an opportunity for feedback each week, and there is little resistance to participate. Dr. Rogers consistently affirms

students for sharing their own experiences, and students are encouraged to provide feedback to peers. There is a clear balance between supportive encouragement and positive challenge that promotes critical thought. The group has a climate of safety and positive regard for all members. Throughout the quarter, all students are actively engaged. Dr. Rogers sends a weekly group e-mail following every session with a summary of the major points covered in the supervision session; a recommendation for an evidence-based resource, and typically some sort of motivational quote. At the conclusion of the quarter, all students are overwhelmingly positive in their feedback regarding their experience.

There are a number of qualities about this process that contribute to the development of the supervisory relationship. From the very beginning, Dr. Rogers is very clear about expectations. In spite of being on a teleconference, this helps standardize the experience for all participants. In addition, establishing ground rules such as putting your phone on mute when you are not speaking, a no tolerance policy for disrespectful language, and the expectation that each student would participate every week, set the tone for the entire process. In addition, the supervisor demonstrated an interest and commitment to the students with the weekly e-mail that included both professional resources and personal encouragement.

Strategies for Tracking Nonverbal Cues

Yaffe (2011) identified that before addressing issues of nonverbal communications, the belief that only 7% of communication should be attributed to verbal words, while another 38% attributed to voice tone and inflection, and the remainder attributed to an individual's body language, must be dispelled. Yaffe noted that these conclusions have actually been drawn from a gross misrepresentation of a previous study. In fact, the fundamental experiment that serves for this often recited statistic focused on the perceptions associated with the identification of a single word portrayed by a woman's voice. Although no study found to date establishes any more concrete clarification as to the amounts of communication that are verbal as opposed to nonverbal, the fact that individuals with sensory deficits communicate effectively lends credence to the fact that in spite of the absence of either verbal or nonverbal means of communication, individuals can develop compensatory strategies. As teleconference supervision is absent of specific nonverbal cues, it is important to obtain clarification. Strategies effectively employed in the supervision experience of the authors include modeling the use of emotions through verbal means such as articulating feelings that might go unspoken within a face-to-face exchange (e.g., "I am frustrated"). In addition, playing close attention to verbal cues or spoken words (e.g., conflict in statements) and requesting that supervisees provide verbal or written communication to clear up any potential uncertainties. Another practical strategy that has the potential to improve telephone dialog includes speaking slowly. Faculty supervisors that take their time to say things out loud and do not rush through conversations set a good example for students to do the same. Secondly, supervisors should make it a practice to notice the things they hear and bring it into the conversation. For example, if the supervisor notices a tone of frustration or can audibly hear a student sigh when they are speaking, practicing immediacy and addressing those observations as part of the supervisory process will not

only add depth to the supervisory exchange, but will also promote supervisee self-awareness. Finally, choose your words carefully. Conciseness is not limited to scholarly writing. Faculty supervisors should be aware of their vocabulary and practice communicating as accurately as possible. If supervisees seem to be struggling to find words to express thoughts or feelings, it is important for supervisors to be patient and check in with students to verify accurate interpretation of information that has been presented.

Case Example

Anna is a first quarter doctoral internship student who is participating in triadic teleconference supervision as a requirement of internship. Austin is enrolled in his second quarter of internship and also participates in the weekly calls with Dr. Cook, the faculty supervisor. The calls are scheduled for a set day and time and scheduled to occur throughout the duration of the quarter. Each week Dr. Cook initiates the discussion and has clearly established an expectation that Anna and Austin will each provide a weekly overview of their internship activities as well as any questions or concerns. Austin is very verbal and typically initiates the discussion each week. He readily and willingly provides an overview of his week and routinely requests feedback on his clinical skills or solicits suggestions for how to strengthen his work as a teaching assistant at a local university. Each week, Dr. Cook must invite Anna to participate. She is slow to provide information and there are frequently long pauses after Dr. Cook attempts to engage her in the discussion. On several occasions, Anna's voice breaks as if she is crying during her efforts to make case presentations. One particular day, Anna is even more reluctant than usual to talk. Dr. Cook has little success in engaging Anna in the discussion and virtually the entire hour becomes dedicated to Austin's internship work. Dr. Cook specifically inquires about Anna's well-being, but she reports that everything is fine. There are consistent efforts to redirect the conversation to Anna without success. Because Dr. Cook cannot see Anna, there are no clues beyond the silent, non-participation to inform a response. At the conclusion of the call, Dr. Cook expresses concern for Anna and reminds her that she is available should Anna need anything.

After the close of the session, Dr. Cook writes Anna an e-mail to check in with her. The e-mail is a balance of both encouragement and a friendly reminder that it is a requirement for Anna to participate. Following the e-mail, Anna responds to Dr. Cook and a one-on-one phone call is scheduled to address the concerns. While Dr. Cook is concerned for Anna's well-being, there is also a responsibility to be a gatekeeper both for the course and the profession.

Ultimately, the one-on-one meeting provides a bit of a breakthrough. Dr. Cook is able to engage Anna through expressing concern for her and the use of immediacy. Dr. Cook describes her experience of working with Anna during triadic supervision. She extends a balance of concern and gentle confrontation regarding Anna's disposition and for what has, at times, come across as apathy or indifference. This one-on-one conversation, in addition to the foundation of a safe, consistent supervisory relationship with Dr. Cook, facilitated a more open response from Anna. Dr. Cook then discovered that there were a number of issues occurring simultaneously. First, the more advanced, assertive student she is paired with intimidated Anna. She feels reluctant to talk and is suffering from imposter syndrome. Secondly, Anna has a number of issues going on in

her personal life and while Dr. Cook does not explore the details, learning that Anna is experiencing some medical challenges provides insight into her quiet disposition. What had been perceived as disinterest was in fact, chronic fatigue. Ultimately, the opportunity to have a one-on-one communication, clear the air, and clarify the misinterpreted silence served to strengthen the supervisory alliance. Dr. Cook was able to facilitate engagement in the calls much more successfully with increased understanding of the student's needs. This case serves as a good reminder that to choose the best strategies requires attention to detail and individualized interventions.

Strategies for Effective Management of Risks

According to ACA (2014) and ACES (2011), the ethical and legal statues associated with the duty to protect or duty to warn governs all professional counselors, supervisors, and counselor educators. This requirement is not waived in virtual or telephone supervision modes. Therefore, counselor educators and supervisors in this process must ensure appropriate steps are taken to prepare for incidents that involve an established risk. Since participants may either be joining supervision remotely or may be communicating asynchronously, special considerations should be taken, such as gaining participant contact information (e.g., phone number, home and/or business address, and general location that they normally call from), establishing a list of community resources (e.g., local crisis agencies, hospitals), and communicating a back-up plan (especially between the master's faculty and doctoral student) as to what to do in the event of an emergency. As noted previously, informed consent must also be established to address the incidents that may require a breach of confidentiality.

While concerns related to the emotional and physical safety of clients are abundantly discussed in the research body (e.g., Gehring, 1982; Hays, Craigen, Knight, Healey, & Sikes, 2009), less attention has been placed on the potential implications of risks associated with the emotional or physical safety of supervisees (e.g., Mcglothlin, Rainey, & Kindsvatter, 2005). No study was found, however, that focused on the implications of supervisee risk management in an online, forum despite the International Society for Mental Health Online (2010), which offers the opportunity for individuals to seek credentialing as a distance professional counselor, noting its importance.

Case Example

After 3 weeks of dominating the supervision call, Jenny, a master's degree student completing her practicum, had an emotional breakdown during the call, which was being co-facilitated by John, a doctoral student and Dr. Smith, the master's practicum instructor. Jenny's tearful expression of a desire to harm herself presented significant concerns for both Dr. Smith and John given the fact that Jenny could hang up at any time. Had the incident occurred in face-to-face group supervision, Dr. Smith would have excused herself and met individually with Jenny in order to process her thoughts and emotions contributing to her breakdown. Because the supervision was occurring via teleconference, Dr. Smith asked Jenny to stay on the line and provided an alternate line for the remaining students to dial back in and complete the remainder of the supervision call with the doctoral co-supervisor, John.

Although the outcome of this particular circumstance was positive and Jenny was safely deescalated and referred for additional support, supervisors must be prepared for less than positive situations. As a supervisee in a face-to-face scenario could have walked out of the session, so too, could the student exit the call. In this event, it would, therefore, be imperative for the supervisor to have contact information for the counseling student or the capacity to contact local resources, which may be able to intervene. Collecting basic contact information such as demographic information, phone numbers, and an emergency contact would also be best practice. Furthermore, informing the doctoral student of all emergency protocols prior to co-facilitation of supervision is critical so the student is aware of procedures if needed.

Strategies to Ensure Confidentiality

The ethical guidelines regarding confidentiality of client records and communications (ACA, 2014) and confidentiality of supervisee records (ACES, 2011) are further compounded by the federal establishment of laws governing student records (Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act [FERPA] of 1974) and privacy of health records (Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996 [HIPAA]), which provided additional regulations regarding how protected information must be stored and safeguarded. Understanding the intricacies of these laws is not only important in face-to-face supervision but also in online modes of supervision.

When considering supervision in an online environment, there are a number of technology options that require consideration. Supervisors routinely have a telephone or answering system (e.g., voice mail) and readily give supervisees a number where they can be reached or leave a message. It is imperative that supervisors inform their supervisees of any boundaries related to the message systems including who has access and whether the system is secure. Supervisees should be cautioned not to leave identifying client information when leaving messages. In this digital age and particularly in an online environment, supervisors routinely and frequently communicate with supervisees via e-mail. E-mail has become an acceptable and oftentimes, preferred, method of communication. However, e-mails have an inherent vulnerability as computers and the information they contain has the potential to be accessed by others and compromise the confidentiality of any records or communication. It is recommended that supervisors use informed consent with supervisee that outlines the risks to privacy. Finally, we would be remiss if we did not mention text messages when addressing issues of technology and confidentiality. Texting is being used more and more frequently and is often the method of choice for brief communication as opposed to phone calls. As with e-mail, supervisors should use caution and include the threats to confidentiality related to text messages within the informed consent process.

According to the International Society for Mental Health Online (2010), protections should be made to ensure compliance with state and federal mandates including developing passwords for accounts used in correspondence as well as saved files. Furthermore an establishment of encryption capabilities of specific software is necessary to ensure that the software meets these federal mandates. Best practice also includes a firewall, virus protection, and backup system. Supervisors are encouraged to establish a list of laws governing each professional counselor's location, communicate

with the supervisee's internship or work sites to ensure understanding and compliance of guidelines, and make sure to maintain appropriate documentation of all correspondence or concerns.

Case Example

Debra is a doctoral student in her final quarter of internship who is actively writing her dissertation and preparing for graduation. She is finishing the last of her supervision hours to complete her final course requirements. She has been delivering supervision at a local community mental health center to several practicing clinicians and a number of pre-licensure professional counselors who are logging supervised hours of experience. Debra is a conscientious and dedicated supervisor. Her own faculty supervisor is impressed by her commitment to excellence and has noted that Debra keeps meticulous notes and very carefully documents each supervision session. Late one Saturday night, Debra's supervisor receives a text message requesting a phone call. Simultaneously, an e-mail arrives with the same message. Debra has never reached out to her faculty supervisor after hours. The faculty supervisor calls Debra assuming there is an emergency with a supervisee. Debra answers her phone and is sobbing hysterically. Her supervisor can hardly understand her because she is out of breath and clearly bordering on frantic. After attempting to soothe Debra and finally having some success in helping her calm down, Debra explains that she has dropped her laptop and had a total system failure. Her entire hard drive is lost and cannot be recovered. Debra has lost all documentation of the supervision she has provided throughout her internship. Not only has she lost the evidence of her work, but she has also lost the documentation of the content of her sessions. Her computer was not backed up on an external hard drive or a cloud.

This case example serves to remind supervisors and supervisees alike that choosing to utilize technology to deliver services or maintain documentation holds risk. It is imperative that the implications for technological failure are clearly understood and incorporated into informed consent. In addition, supervisors are charged with being fully informed of the state and federal guidelines that apply to every supervisee. In an online environment, this adds a distinct element of responsibility for every supervisor. It becomes an ethical responsibility to master the use of technology, including options for backing up electronic records. Portable hard drives or virtual environments that allow for saving items and having access from any computer, such as Drop Box, are options that supervisors should explore and become competent to use.

Conclusion

Counselor educators are charged with providing competent and ethical supervision to doctoral students. Working within a virtual setting can provide flexible and portable opportunities to accommodate supervision requirements for students. This greatly increases the accessibility of the supervisory process. However, the online environment also results in unique challenges regarding the use of technology, building supervisory relationships, exploring cultural identities and facilitating accurate exchange of information, all while adhering to the state and federal guidelines for confidentiality.

Through a collection of practical strategies and case examples, these authors have provided an overview of a successful model for the delivery of online supervision.

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