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Clinical Supervision of Counselors in Appalachia: A Culturally Appropriate Model

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Supervision of counselors has been described in a variety of ways. Campbell (2000) said, "Clinical supervisors are responsible for transmitting the skills, knowledge, and attitudes of their profession to the next generation of practitioners" (p. 4).

Lewis, Packard, and Souflee (2001) described supervision as "Helping a subordinate..." (p. 14). There is a consensus that supervision is a process whereby a provider receives direction, oversight, education, and support from an experienced member of the profession. Volumes have been written about supervision in general. A less massive literature exists about supervision of counselors who are members of or working with minority groups. There is little literature concerning supervision of counselors who are Appalachian or working with Appalachians. The need to understand Appalachian culture is important as more mental health services are integrated into the region.

McCauley (1995) used a map adapted from John C. Campbell (1921) to describe the southern Appalachian region as the state of West Virginia and portions of Kentucky, Tennessee, Virginia, Maryland, the Carolinas, Georgia, and Alabama (p. 3). The authors use that definition of Appalachia. It is a culturally unique region and often called central Appalachia or southern Appalachia. No one has better described the unique traits of Appalachians than Loyal Jones (1994).

Jones discussed 10 cultural values of Appalachians: religion; independence; self-reliance and pride; neighborliness; familism; personalism; humility and modesty; love of place; patriotism; sense of beauty; and sense of humor. He said, "All work in Appalachia must be based on the genuine needs as expressed by mountain people themselves. Whatever work is done must be done with the recognition that Appalachian culture is real and functioning" (pp. 9-10). Relationships are important to the success of supervision, and attention will be paid to forming relationships with Appalachians. Supervisors cannot build relationships with supervisees when a cultural deficit exists. The process of change within supervision is discussed in this article with respect to Appalachians.

Building a Relationship in Appalachia

The minority status of Appalachians is defined more by geography than race or other characteristics. Appalachians may be male, female, White, Black, young or old and may come from ancestries such as Native American, African American, Euro-American, or some mix of all. Kimbrough (2002) attempted to understand Appalachians: "I did not suffer from the common problem that many non-Appalachians suffer ... I am a native speaker with a suitable hillbilly accent" (p. 3). Kimbrough saw himself as Appalachian but committed an offense common to work with minority populations. Kimbrough used an ethnic epithet in an intended positive statement about Appalachians. His use of *hillbilly* is a sign of disrespect to his subjects.

To address discrimination of Appalachian clients or trainees, supervisors must develop a culturally appropriate approach. Lee (1999) said, "Culturally skilled counselors are aware of how their own cultural backgrounds and experiences and attitudes, values and biases influence psychological processes" (p. 207). Lee also said, "Culturally skilled counselors possess specific knowledge and information about the particular group they are working with. They are aware of the life experiences, cultural heritage, and historical background of their culturally different clients" (p. 209).

These statements can be transposed to work with Appalachian supervisees. Appalachians will be enhanced and strengthened by this approach. The ability of a supervisor to utilize values such as self-reliance, independence, pride, neighborliness, humility, and modesty (Jones, 1994) in a supervisee will be both working in a culturally appropriate manner, and developing a stronger, more effective counselor.

Theory of Change in Supervision With Appalachian Supervisees

We use the approach to change developed by Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente (1994). The Prochaska model is transtheoretical and may be used with a variety of theories and approaches. Velicer,

(2004) Prochaska, Fave, Norman, and Redding (2004), stated, "The Transtheoretical Model is a model of intentional change. It is a model that focuses on the decision making of the individual." The use of such a model is appropriate with a counselor in training. The effort involved in the process of clinical supervision indicates a commitment to change.

Prochaska and his co-authors (1994) listed six stages of change: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance, and termination (p. 39). The Prochaska model also utilizes nine change processes. Those processes are consciousness raising, social liberation, emotional arousal, self-reevaluation, commitment, reward, countering, environment control, and helping relationships (p. 54). Most supervisees begin the supervision process at the preparation or action stage. The process of having pursued education to the point of clinical supervision represents an act of preparation and action. While a few counselors might enter the supervision process at an earlier stage, it is not the norm, and this article focuses less attention on the first two stages of the Prochaska model. Velicer et al. (2004) described precontemplation as "The stage in which people are not intending to take action in the foreseeable future..." The authors admitted that most supervisees are committed to change. However, some minority group supervisees fit into that population which Prochaska et al. said is in "active resistance to change." It is likely that most counselors at this stage will resist changing particular negative behaviors.

With respect to Appalachian counselors in training, the quality listed by Jones (1994) that is contributory to problems is familism: "Appalachian people are family centered. Mountain people usually feel an obligation to family members and are more truly themselves when within the family circle. Family loyalty runs deep and wide...Supervisors in northern industries have been perplexed when employees from Appalachia have been absent from jobs to attend funerals of distant relatives" (p. 75).

Loof (1971) also spoke of this familism, "Repeatedly, in every phase of our work, we found it almost impossible to overemphasize the significance of familism. Its influence was constantly reflected in our clinical experience....I have never ceased to be struck by the close, remarkably interdependent functioning of Eastern Kentucky families" (p. 21). The presence of familism in a supervisee could be problematic. But it can also become a strength as the counselor develops professionally. Loof (1971) stated, "The stable working class, the middle, and the upper classes in the region generally succeed remarkably well in providing for their health, education, and welfare needs. The most important developmental force

accounting for this success is regional familism. By assuring that even limited resources will be shared among the extended family, particularly at times of crisis, familism stabilizes family life structure and functioning" (p. 128).

The next stage in the Prochaska model is contemplation, in which clients begin to recognize that a problem exists but do not know how to make changes. The process of education necessary to bring a counselor to the point of supervision indicates that the trainee is beyond the stage of contemplation. It is conceivable that some trainees are in this stage, which Prochaska et al. (1994) stated can be treated best with self-arousal and self-reevaluation. Supervision is geared to create self-reevaluation. Barry Cournoyer (1996) stated that "In order to use yourself effectively in helping others, you must possess an extremely well developed understanding of self" (p. 8). The supervisor must work with the trainee to develop that self-awareness.

Prochaska's third stage of change is preparation, "the stage in which people are intending to take some significant action...These individuals have a plan of action..." (Velicer et al., 2004). The supervisee fits this stage. He or she has completed education and is working to improve skills under supervision. Prochaska et al. (1994) said "Preparation takes you from the decisions you make in the contemplation stage to the specific steps you take to solve the problems in the action stage." Prochaska recommended commitment as the process most likely to succeed in this stage (Velicer et al., 2004, p. 146).

The Appalachian values of independence, self-reliance, and pride can be utilized to produce commitment in a supervisee. Jones (1994) said that "We value self-reliance, to do things for ourselves...We get satisfaction from that..." (p. 63). A supervisor who gives the Appalachian supervisee room to make errors can reap rewards as the supervisee utilizes self-reliance to develop skills.

Prochaska described the action stage as "the stage in which people have made significant overt modification in their lifestyle within the past 6 months" (Velicer et al., 2004). There is no better description of a supervisee. The trainee has moved from being a student in a classroom setting to being a student who now seeks training in actual practice. Again, self-reliance is an Appalachian value that can be utilized by the supervisor.

However, humility and modesty may become problematic for the Appalachian at this stage. Jones (1994) said, "We mountaineers are levelers, and we believe we are as good as anybody else, but no better. We believe that we should not put on airs, not boast, nor try to get above our raising. We usually do not extol our own virtues..." (p. 90).

The Appalachian supervisee might be reluctant to exhibit skills, or acquiesce to a supervisor when he or she actually has adequate skills to perform successfully. Yet, there is also a positive side: as Jones says, "My feeling is that we mountain people have a pretty realistic view of ourselves, and we don't take ourselves too seriously. ...Since we never think that we can be perfect, we don't become cynical when we fail. When we do not fail, we are pleasantly surprised. These beliefs make us somewhat at peace with ourselves. We don't pretend to be what we are not" (p. 97).

What could be better than the ability to never "pretend to be what we are not"? Cournoyer (1996) said the skill of "responsible assertiveness refers to the expression of one's thoughts and feelings in a manner that does not violate the rights and dignity of others" (p. 11). This skill is well defined by Jones.

The final stage in the Prochaska model, maintenance, is a stage in which people "do not apply change processes as frequently as do people in action" (Velicer et al., 2004). Prochaska et al. (1994) also stated, "Maintenance refers not only to maintaining change but also to maintaining the use of the change processes" (p. 209). Reward, countering, environment control, and helping relationships are listed by Prochaska et al. as crucial to work in this final stage (p. 54). All these change processes are elements of supervision. Reward is built into the process in the form of grades, licensure, degrees, and a personal sense of achievement. Supervision is a countering process. The supervisor counters negative habits or self-appraisals by the trainee. Supervision is filled with environmental control. Supervision occurs in a tightly constructed and monitored setting. The schedule and client load of a supervisee is set by the supervisor. Video monitoring, audio monitoring, treatment plan supervision, and other tools of oversight work to structure the environment. The supervision process is a helping relationship throughout.

In assessing the maintenance stage of the Prochaska model, from the viewpoint of Jones (1994), we discuss personalism. As Jones says "Appalachians are tolerant of personal differences...We may not always like or approve of other people, but we normally accept them as persons and treat them with respect" (p. 82). What better asset could a counselor have?

Conclusion

This article discusses culturally appropriate supervision for Appalachian counselors. The intent is to promote the concept that Appalachians are a culturally unique group who live in a limited geographic

area and that these people are bound by a documented set of common values, traits, or characteristics. This article proposes that these traits, values, and characteristics can be a strength in counselors and clients; can be utilized to facilitate growth; and are as valid as any set of factors in use today to identify, separate, evaluate, and treat any minority population. Appalachians are discriminated against daily. The use of these criteria in treating Appalachians can be an effective tool for the success of any treatment regimen in Appalachia.

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