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Article 31

Using Reflecting Teams in Counseling Practicum

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Abstract

The reflecting team offers a valuable process for counselors-in-training to try out new ideas and skills while offering a powerful intervention for clients. This article will describe the reflecting team process and how it is used to teach counseling skills in a graduate counseling practicum class.

Keywords: reflecting team, counseling practicum, conceptualization, therapeutic dialogue

"Two perspectives from the same issue will most likely create new possibilities."
-Tom Andersen

The reflecting team of students and instructor starts their pre-session meeting 30 minutes prior to Patti's (the client) counseling session. At the beginning of the meeting, the practicum instructor encourages the team of students and two clinical supervisors to hypothesize and reflect on their current thinking about Patti. The team is encouraged by the instructor to consider Patti and her situation in a positive way and to offer reflective statements and questions among the group. The dialogue continues as each team member builds on the comments of others. Marie, the assigned counselor, listens quietly and takes notes. From this she will develop an open-session summary to share with Patti (the client) at the beginning of the counseling session.

Patti (the client) arrives and greets the team and, after a few moments of cordial conversation, enters the counseling room across the hall with her counselor Marie and three of the reflecting team members that serve as "session reflectors." With a Bluetooth-enabled digital camera on, the reflecting team observes the session from an adjacent

room while the session reflectors in the room observe the session quietly. After about 30 minutes, the session is stopped and the reflectors in the counseling room reflect on what they have heard so far in the session. Patti and her counselor observe the session reflectors as they talk to one another. The reflectors have an open conversation, reflecting on what they have observed so for in the session. The reflectors stay non-strategic and mostly make statements of curiosity or state affirmations. One reflector offers a hypothesis.

Following the discussion by the reflectors (about 5 minutes), the discussion then switches back to Marie and Patti and they explore their thinking and feelings in response to the discussion among the reflectors. Patti tells her counselor that she is filled with hope because it has been a long time since she or anyone else has recognized the positive parts of her life. This reflecting team process, she recognizes, is unique.

The session concludes and the counselor, client, and session reflectors briefly join the reflecting team in the opposite room. Several team members offer pre-planned reflection statements from the team. There is a short dialogue between all involved and then the counseling session is closed.

It is the aim of this article to describe how the reflecting team model is applied as a supervision and clinical approach in a graduate counseling practicum class at a private university in the Midwest. The university's three colleges offer 87 undergraduate majors, 55 minors, and 19 graduate programs to a total of 6,945 students. The counseling program has existed for 62 years and is Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Programs (CACREP) accredited. The counseling practicum course has approximately 25 students per semester. The program is taught by a principle faculty member and supervised by six clinical or school counseling in-class supervisors.

Changes in the Reflecting Team Process: Past to Present

Tom Andersen is generally credited with developing the term "reflecting team" (Pare', 1999) in the 1980s and creating the model that is now used in modern practice. At the time, family therapists were using teams of professionals to observe the client-counselor interaction in session from "behind the glass," using short breaks to talk with the counselor. Andersen became frustrated with several aspects of the process, including the hierarchical nature of a team that announced their impressions unilaterally to the client via the counselor, ultimately supporting the idea that the team members were the experts. Remaining hidden, the team was inaccessible to the client and important conversations that could offer a more integrated, multi-perspective view of the family's experiences were unavailable to them. Andersen rejected several tenets of the practice and worked to create a non-hierarchical approach to family therapy using a reflecting team that was collaborative, non-directive, multi-perspective, and not drawn into the pessimism of the family (Pare', 1999).

A newer model of reflecting team is for the client to have direct access to the team, no longer only communicating "behind the glass" (Brownlee, Vis, & McKenna, 2009). The modern approach gives the client an opportunity to observe the reflecting team in action and at times direct dialogue with the team. Once solely used in family

therapy training programs, reflecting teams are now used in counseling programs and clinical settings.

Benefits for Counseling Students

There are several benefits for adopting the reflecting team model for teaching practicum courses in graduate counseling programs. First, the reflecting team is a method for helping trainees develop a wide range of counselor skills. In particular, trainees learn core counselor skills that develop the therapeutic relationship such as active listening, empathy responding, and circular, reflexive questioning. Students also learn how to structure the session, develop treatment goals, and manage termination. Through interaction with the team, they learn the process of conceptualization and learn how to use this skill to develop interventions for the client.

Having the opportunity to practice these skills in practicum class before moving on to internship is a huge benefit to the trainee, not to mention the site itself, which receives a better prepared intern. The supportive nature of the reflecting team leads to a less stressful transition from the practicum experience to the internship site, where the trainee assumes the position of lead counselor. Trainees regularly speak of the supportive nature of the team and the confidence it gives them with their core skills. Trainees who participate in the reflecting team develop the confidence to use language and conversation therapeutically (Cox, Banez, Hawley, & Mostade, 2003) because, as they practice, they are highly supported by the supervisor and class instructor. This translates into students receiving immediate feedback in a supportive way, since by their very nature, reflecting teams are positive and supportive. This support also helps counseling students be more receptive to feedback when compared to students who are not in an encouraging environment.

The reflecting team encourages counselor trainees to practice reflection processes and therapeutic responses while challenging trainees to be less focused on delivering successful interventions. Since counseling trainees tend to be over-focused on implementing interventions, there is a risk that trainees will focus on interventions at the detriment to their own development of counseling process skills.

The multiple perspectives of the instructor, supervisors, and fellow students also challenge counseling students on black-and-white thinking that is often characteristic of novice counselors (Harrawood, Parmanand, & Wilde, 2011). Practicum students move through right or wrong thinking to a deeper understanding of client problems and solutions. Reflecting teams promote that there are no absolute truths, resulting in less rigid conceptualizations among counselor trainees (Shurts et al., 2006).

Additionally, Cox et al. (2003) stated that in the reflecting team context, there is no one right way of responding to a client so that trainees feel less constrained by having to "get it right." This can reduce dualist thinking and expose students to different perspectives. Trainees become more accepting of feedback from other team members and supervisors since they become less concerned with defending what they have done and more open to learning from the input of others.

Two cautions should be considered concerning trainee involvement in reflecting teams during counseling practicum. First, it is important to understand that the student's performance anxiety will be high and may continue even when instructors communicate

that students are not expected to be perfect. Unfortunately, the trainee will likely not tell the practicum instructor that he/she is experiencing this intense anxiety. For example, Amanda, a practicum student disclosed at the end of a reflecting team counseling session that she was experiencing anxiety to such an extent at the beginning of session that she literally feared she would cry. The group observed her anxiety as fast-paced dialogue with limited silence but never understood the intensity because she did not disclose it. Amanda described her experience (Amanda S., personal communication, April 15, 2014):

> Once my anxiety was triggered, it had begun to grow and become more noticeable while I was in session. I imagine it as taking an unexpected picture with a Polaroid camera. There's a sudden flash of bright light and then out pops an image of you surprised by what is happening in low, dark tones. Then with more exposure, like the anxiety, the picture becomes more noticeable, brighter, and in color. My "brighter and more noticeable" was evident throughout my session in the room with the client.
>
> …when people tuned in over the Bluetooth, making suggestions and corrections, my anxiety would heighten because I felt pushed past my limit. It was in this moment, if going back to the Polaroid, the picture is over exposed; I thought I was failing and out of my league in this environment and began to feel knots in my throat and tears swelling up behind my eyes. The sensation lasted no more than five seconds.
>
> Everyone in the room saw me being stretched to my limit and out of my comfort zone, which is as vulnerable as many people have seen me in the program. Growth in action is such an emotional process for many, and the reflection team is a manifestation of quick growth in a short amount of time. Confessions of near tears seemed to surprise most observers in the room, but expression of emotion seemed like the next step to my growth and reflection.

As educators we recognize the simultaneous interaction of taking risks with practicing new skills and the vulnerability and trust it certainly takes to step out of your comfort zone. Practicing in front of peers and supervisors produces anxiety that can spur counselor development or hinder it and may generate the tension in the moment that might bear the fruit of growth. It is recommended that instructors process the presence and nature of this anxiety even when it is not readily observable in the counseling trainee.

Secondly, students may continue to view themselves as the expert rather than operating from a position of natural curiosity (Harrawood et al., 2011). Trainees tend to demonstrate this when they suggest teaching clients "new skills" or advocate utilizing interventions early in the counseling process. Instructors should work regularly to process thoughts and feelings of team members around these issues and embrace "acceptable" performance. It is also important to maintain curiosity as a frame of reference and not offer "expert" or strategic reflections.

Benefits for Clients

The basic premise of the reflecting team is that multiple realities exist in any situation, and the reflecting team's responsibility is to share with clients alternative perspectives to the client's dominant story (Harrawood et al., 2011). The team attempts to

stay non-directive, reflects out loud, and hypothesizes about the client's situation. They reject the family's negative impression of the client, preferring to positively connote negative transactions, and in doing so can more objectively view the client and their situation.

The team has a dialogue in the presence of the family, and these thoughtful reflections that occur in front of the client create dissonance and dilemmas that need to be reconciled by the client. They are put in the position of choosing from several different perspectives, those of each individual team members and their own. People generally are more open to new perspectives when they receive not just one, single, final version, but several variations from which they can choose the versions that best fit and to reject the ones that don't (de Barbaro et al., 2008). The sharing of information by team members can offer new insights for the client that may not have previously been in their awareness (Harrawood et al., 2011). This can be freeing for the family and create opportunities for change.

Natalie P. participated as an individual client in the reflecting team for one semester at the university. She describes the counselor's involvement as "a listening ear and gentle guidance" (Natalie P., personal communication, November 16, 2015). She shared with the reflecting team the impact of hearing multiple perspectives:

> Something that is helpful about the reflection process is that it gave me the opportunity to listen to what I'm projecting and how I'm perceived. As awkward as it is to watch people talk about you, it was an opportunity to see if my outsides match my insides. That's helpful ground for setting goals.

Using the reflecting team model can also be beneficial in the delivery of services in multicultural counseling by creating strong therapeutic rapport. Clinical research indicates that from a client perspective, communication in reflecting teams tends to be more trusting, thoughtful, comforting, nurturing, and not controlling or blaming (Pender & Stinchfield, 2012). When an African American client receives counseling with a Caucasian counselor, they are often fearful that the counselor will be biased, use stereotypes, minimize the client's experiences of discrimination and not understand African American cultural traditions. Furthermore, even if an African American client has an African American counselor, the client may fear that the counselor will be unable to relate to them due to differences in education, class, or life experiences (Sanchez-Hucles, 2001).

Reflecting team counselors work to focus on the positive aspects of the client in the first and subsequent sessions, and demonstrate that they are multi-perspective and in no way the expert in the room. This perspective can reduce mistrust and create an environment of caring that can lead to a strong therapeutic alliance. As Sanchez-Hucles (2001) contends, when working with African American clients, the counselor should work to show they care before they show what they know.

Preparing Practicum Students to Be Reflecting Team Members

In general practice, the reflecting team observes a counseling session remotely, and then at some point the reflecting team and the counselor/client switch rooms for the client to observe and listen in on the reflecting team discussion. The reflecting team discussion usually lasts around 5–10 minutes or shorter. More than 10 minutes can offer

too much information for the client to process. The two groups then switch to their original rooms and the counselor and client discuss their reaction to the comments of the reflecting team. The primary idea is that the "gaze" shifts from the system of the client and counselor to the system of the reflecting team and back again once the reflecting team finishes their discussion (Willott, Hatton, & Oyebode, 2012). These discussions are parallel, so there is no interaction between the two systems.

Preparing a practicum student to create this discussion and deliver a reflection takes practice. Specific guidelines should be discussed and rehearsed with trainees before live sessions. Reflecting, by its very nature, is thinking deeply on something. In Andersen's original idea (1987), team members should take turns sharing positive comments about the client and the comments should be "appropriately unusual." In other words, the comment should be something new and different but not too different. It takes some practice for practicum students to feel comfortable offering reflections to clients.

There are a few primary guidelines critical to effective reflecting by practicum students. Following Andersen's early prescription, any comment from the team should be non-directive and avoid any suggestions or interventions. Trainees should be told to avoid statements like, "has the daughter tried talking to her mother. . . " or "I think it would be helpful if the couple spent more time in the evening together. . . " and so forth. These are typical strategic statements from practicum students that are violating the principle of non-directive reflection.

Practicum students are also cautioned that reflections from the team are not just restating and paraphrasing. The focus should be on the observations, questions, curiosities, and hypothesis of each team member. As reflections occur, team members should attempt to create a cohesive dialogue about what they observed in the counseling session that builds on the comments of other team members' curiosities.

Early in the practicum class, as students are trained on core course content, they are also trained on the primary orientation of the reflecting team. Table 1 below is a list of orienting underpinnings that guide the reflecting team.

Table 1.

Orientation for Reflecting

Be polite and affirming
Reflect only on what has been discussed, observed, not observed
Focus on the positive aspects of the client
Be speculative, tentative, and not the expert
Multi-perspective; use both/and orientation
Use positive connotation
Use common language
Approach problems non-strategically

Practicum students are asked to be polite, affirming, and personal in their demeanor. Since they are non-directive, their language should not include specific interventions or any counselor jargon. Their reflections need to be relevant and focus on what has been discussed, observed, or not observed. Statements made by the reflecting

team should be tentative and not give the impression that the reflecting team is the expert. The key orientating word counseling students are asked to remember is "curiosity." Creating curiosity opens up many possibilities; being the expert, however, creates resistance. Practicum students are also asked to maintain a multi-perspective view and not advocate for any one perspective. Reflecting teams that maintain a multi-perspective orientation help expand the client's perceptual field.

Since the reflecting team does not adopt the negative client view of their situation, counseling students are encouraged to focus on the positive aspects of the client. When a challenge is offered to the client's negative view, the counseling student is asked to use positive connotation—in other words, to positively connote the underlying motive of the problematic behavior or thought. Positive connotation can help the client hear a positive perspective for something they view negatively; negative attributions and blaming should be avoided.

Practicum students are asked to plan their reflections and share them with the team prior to saying it in front of the client when possible. Since they are new to the process, students are expected to only use one of the preselected directed reflecting team responses taught in the practicum class. These are outlined in Table 2 below.

Table 2.

Directed Reflecting Team Strategies

Pose a question
Hypothesize in an "appropriately unusual" way
Offer an affirmation
Offer a different perspective
State something you are curious about
Normalize something
Talk to each other; comment on another team member's idea
Disagree with another team member, politely and respectfully (positively connote first)
Define the problem from a circular perspective or different from the client's definition
Emphasize something positive
Positively connote a difficulty of the client (after rapport is clearly established)
Notice a metaphor or image you have while listening; share it and connect it to the client story
Share a personal story about the reflector, and relate it to the client narrative—be brief
Share a story about another client (respecting confidentially, of course)
Reflect on the themes of your reflections

An interesting feature of the reflecting team model is the use of self-disclosure and the sharing of personal stories. As noted above in Table 2, practicum students have an opportunity to use self-disclosure under the guidance of the instructor. This is not a commonly used reflecting team response in the class but, nevertheless, we wanted to make mention of this as one useful and interesting option to help students understand the application of self-disclosure.

Counselor self-disclosure is considered a major process within counselor practice, with the recommendation that when used sparingly, it has the potential to be very influential (Hill et al., 1988; Knox & Hill, 2003; Watkins, 1990; Watkins & Schneider, 1989). Most counseling theories support counselor self-disclosure to some degree (Edwards & Murdock, 1994), which is defined by revealing positive or negative personal information about oneself, versus counselor self-involving statements, which include positive or negative statements about the client's behavior in the here and now (Watkins, 1990; Watkins & Schneider, 1989).

The use of self-disclosure is not that uncommon in counseling practice. Edwards and Murdock (1994) found that all counselors in their study used a moderate amount of self-disclosure with the most frequent type of disclosure about professional issues. Psychoanalytic practitioners reported significantly less disclosure, while humanistic and behaviorally oriented counselors used self-disclosure to increase similarity and demonstrate modeling behavior. Offering self-disclosure can have a variety of benefits for the client. Hill, Mahalik, & Thompson (1989) highlighted the potential benefits of effective use of counselor disclosure, which include making the client and counselor more equal and the client feeling more comfortable in session, experiencing themselves at a deeper level, and feeling safer to explore further aspects of themselves.

The primary purpose for disclosure is to strengthen joining with the client by placing the client, counselor, and team in a more authentic context (Cole, Demerrit, Shatz, & Sapoznik, 2001). Self-disclosure through the team process also flattens the hierarchal nature of counseling because the client will hear the reflections in an egalitarian manner (Freedman & Combs, 1996).

Knox and Hill (2003) presented at least seven subtypes of disclosures, which include: disclosure of facts, feelings, insight, strategies, reassurance/support, challenge, and immediacy. For the purpose of practicum class, students are only permitted to use self-disclosure to offer reassurance or support, or to normalize an experience. These personal comments need to be brief, with the attention on the client and not the team member. Sharing a personal story by the team member does not mean bearing one's soul to the client. The personal story should be concise and relate to the client narrative.

Preparing Clients for the Reflecting Team Experience

The first contact with the client is with the practicum student, who serves as a liaison for the class. As part of the practicum class, students for each reflecting team are required to provide a client for a different reflecting team in the class (the class generally has two). This person in essence is the liaison to the client for the rest of the semester. The clients can be friends or acquaintances, but not direct family members. The liaison does not do counseling with the client but only connects with the client to set, confirm, or cancel appointments. The liaison is also asked to briefly explain the reflecting team

process to the client and assure the person that he/she will receive a more detailed description of the process at the first session. At that time, the client can decide if he/she wants to continue with counseling.

The reflecting team process as a clinical intervention is a strange setup to the client and should be recognized as such. Special care should be taken to provide detailed information about the process through informed consent. It is important to be careful to emphasize the differences of the reflecting team from traditional therapy, and care should be given to help the client acclimate to the setting and technology prior to session. It is interesting to note that when clients are asked to identify when reflecting teams are not effective, they report that it is ineffective when rapport between the counselor and client was not established or that they did not understand the process (Pender & Stinchfield, 2012). Client participation is always voluntary and, following this preparation, the client should be asked if he/she wants to participate in counseling.

Below is an outline of topics for informed consent with clients participating in the reflecting team. This could be read verbatim to the clients. At the end of each category, the counselor asks, "What questions do you have about [confidentiality, your role, etc.]?" Following the conclusion of informed consent, the counselor asks the clients what they are still curious about and if they want to continue their involvement with the team.

Unusual Nature of the Reflecting Team

The reflecting team is an unusual setup in counseling. Much of the experience is what you would expect from traditional counseling. One obvious difference is that there are a group of people observing you and that initially you will feel uncomfortable. However, in our experience, clients tell us that this goes away quickly, and they focus on their conversation with their counselor. They also feel supported by the team. Another difference is how the team interacts with you. Our team is challenged to see your problem in a different and positive way and then share those perceptions with you. What do you think will be most unusual for you?

Why a Team?

We believe that the reflecting team process is an effective way to help find solutions to your problem. We also know the reflecting team has many benefits. Our clients tell us that the approach is comforting, trusting, and even nurturing. It can offer new insights and allow you to consider a range of options to addressing your problem. These insights are positive and constructive. We hope that by hearing a variety of thoughts from the team that we create multiple perspectives for you to consider.

The team approach does have risks. If we are too wordy in our reflections to you, we can create confusion and stall the counseling process. Since many of us are practicum students, we may stray from the structure that I have set. As the instructor, I may need to stop the counselor and have them do something different. What concerns do you have?

Reflecting Team Orientation

Our team has a specific way that we require of ourselves to interact with you. We have to be speculative and multi-perspective. Our goal is to create many perspectives that you may or may not want to consider. Another goal is to be non-directive. We know that you are the best person to solve your problems. We hope to expand your perspective so that it creates new opportunities for solutions. So you will not hear us telling you what to do.

Structure of Session

We will offer a team reflection midway through our session. During this time, the team will discuss what they heard so far in your session. We ask that you and your counselor quietly listen and take notes as needed. The reflection lasts for 5–10 minutes. After the reflection is completed, you and your counselor will discuss your reaction to the reflection.

Agenda for the Counseling Sessions

Four reflecting team sessions are scheduled during the practicum semester. Each session is facilitated by a different counselor trainee who is a member of the reflecting team. In each session, the counselor trainee is asked to practice specific core counselor skills with the client. The focus of each counseling session is outlined below.

Session 1: Informed Consent, Philosophy, Defining the Presenting Problem

The counseling instructor introduces the team and facilitates informed consent specific to the reflecting team. When the client and counselor enter the counseling room, the counseling trainee will facilitate a more general informed consent and offer their personal philosophy of counseling. The remainder of the session is dedicated to working with the client to identify the context of the presenting problem, attempted solutions, and potential goals.

Session 2: Goal Development, Completion of Treatment Plan

In this session, the counselor trainee is asked to guide a discussion about one specific personal goal that the client would like to focus on during counseling. It is emphasized that this goal continues beyond the four counseling sessions since the time with the team is very limited. The counselor trainee works to help the client develop three parts of the treatment goal; 1) What the client wants to change in their thinking, feeling or behavior, 2) the context of the change, and 3) the duration, frequency, or intensity. Once the goal is developed, the treatment plan is written with both the outcome goal (client's desired state) and process goals (interventions the counselor will use in session), and the treatment plan is signed.

Session 3: Implementing the Treatment Goal

Since this is the primary session to "officially" begin the implementation of the treatment plan, the team plans an intervention based on the selected process goals of the treatment plan. Between-session tasks can be assigned at the end of session.

Session 4: Termination, Referral

A simple process of termination is facilitated, which includes identifying the general outcomes of the client's involvement with the team and planning for beyond the therapeutic experience. The client is offered a referral for continued treatment to a local licensed professional.

Reflecting Team Class Schedule

The reflecting team counseling session follows a specific structure. We have found it helpful for everyone involved to have a clear schedule, as follows:

Table 3.

Reflecting Team Schedule

Pre-session	30 minutes
Session	30 minutes
Intersession	15 minutes
Intervention	15 minutes
Post-session Reflection	10 minutes

Pre-Session

The pre-session meeting begins in the observation room, which is set up to observe the counseling room using video and audio feed. Pre-session is primarily for the students, supervisors, and instructor to meet for planning and instruction. The students are expected to review the client record and conceptualize the case, utilizing theme and context analysis. Theme analyses include identifying both themes within and between sessions and includes the perpetual stress/presenting problem, underlying feelings of the client, productive and maladaptive coping, patterns that the team has identified, individual and social resources, and strengths of the client. Context analysis includes prior learning and the social and environmental factors that may contribute to the problem.

The next task of pre-session is to prepare a reflection and plan the structure of the session. Students are asked to offer their reflections using the directed reflecting team responses. As the team shares and discusses their reflections, the counselor listens and takes notes. The counselor uses these notes to create an open-session summary at the beginning of the counseling session.

The client joins the pre-session planning at the end of the pre-session meeting. This tends to be useful because it helps the client get to know the team and increases comfortableness with the process. Cohen et al. (1998) found in their practice that when clients were in their pre-session and post-session discussions, it made therapy more

comfortable for the client because it allowed them to understand what was happening in session and feel more equal to the team.

Session

In the interest of making the team accessible to the client, sessions are conducted in a counseling room adjacent to the observation room and include the counselor and client, along with two other students and a supervisor in the room who operate as session reflectors. As the session begins, the counselor begins with an open-session summary. The focus of the summary is on the content of the last session, any themes between sessions or within the previous session, key affect, and setting an agenda for the session. The session continues for 30 minutes. At any point in the session, the reflecting team may call in from the observation room using Bluetooth to direct the counselor to focus on specific content, affect components, or to direct the counselor away from interventions or strategies.

At the end of this 30 minute period, the counselor is signaled by Bluetooth to have the session reflectors in the room reflect their thoughts about the session. The reflectors use the directed reflecting team responses (outlined in Table 2) as a guide to provide the reflection for the client. The supervising reflector functions as a facilitator of the reflection and helps make connections with the student's ideas. They also should help to make sure that the discussion is perceived by the client as a coherent and fluid discussion among the reflectors.

At the completion of the reflection, the counselor facilitates a short discussion with the client to get their reaction to the reflection. As the counselor listens, it is important to paraphrase and validate the client's response. The expectation is that the counselor does not challenge the client's ideas or add additional comments from the counselor's perspective.

Intersession

Following the session reflection, the client is asked to take a short break as the reflecting team meets privately. During the break, the team considers what they have observed in the session. The focus then turns to helping the counselor prepare a small intervention for the intervention part of the session. Since the reflecting team is non-directive and non-strategic, the intervention is reflexive, meant to influence the client on a perceptual level—in other words, attempting to expand the clients perception of themselves and their family of events they are experiencing. On most occasions, the intervention is a simple reflection offered by the team through the counselor, a positive connotation of some aspect of the client narrative or a normalizing statement of the client's perception.

Intervention

This session is dedicated to the implementation of the intervention selected. Discussion continues and as the session ends, the client is asked to identify one idea that they can translate into action. This can serve as their between-session task. At the conclusion of the intervention stage, the counselor will offer a final closing session summary, and the session reflectors offer a brief reflection and the session is concluded.

Post-Session Reflection

When the session is concluded, the client, counselor, and the session reflectors return to the observation room and the client is given the opportunity to give feedback about their experience. Prepared reflections are then offered by the reflecting team to the client and the client responses are validated by the instructor of the class. This reflection concludes the reflecting team experience.

Summary

Reflecting teams are highly useful in training counseling practicum students. They create a supportive environment that increases self-confidence. There is less focus on implementing interventions correctly and a strong emphasis on creating a positive connection with the client by utilizing therapeutic dialogue. As part of an integrated team, students learn the process of reflection, conceptual skills, and how to maintain structure. At the completion of practicum, students report more confidence and feeling better prepared to therapeutically interact in internship with clients presenting diverse issues.

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