Supervision for Inner Vision: Solution-Focused Supervision

Keith Decker
Tawny Brown-Warren
Purpose of Supervision

Through supervision, we aim to both

- develop those basic capacities and competencies necessary for the job
- facilitate the supervisees’ sense of inner direction and creativity – or *inner vision*
SF SUPERVISION
WHAT IS IT?

- Collaborative, curious and respectful
- Flexible
- Parallel process
- Based on the same premises as SFBT
“The knowledge of what supervisees do correctly in supervision is more important to the overall development of personal competency and the well-being of their clients than is a continual focus on clinical mistakes. In an unlimited universe there are more things clinicians do not know about therapy than they can ever possibly know how to do correctly.” (Wetchler 1990)
Solution-focused supervision, in parallel with therapeutic practice, is about collaborating in a partnership which pays attention to, and develops, the supervisee's interests, best intentions, and goals for their work (Table 1).
Table 1: A comparison between solution-focused therapy and solution-focused supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SF Therapy</th>
<th>SF Supervision</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Seeks to be helpful to the client in their agenda for therapy.</td>
<td>☐ Seeks to be helpful to the supervisee in their agenda for their work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Focuses on history of resources and strengths and the ‘solution story’ rather than the ‘problem story’.</td>
<td>☐ Focuses on abilities, learning, and strengths that the supervisee’s already has.</td>
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<tr>
<td>☐ Pragmatic — helps the client notice what works — their good qualities, abilities in the face of difficulties, etc.</td>
<td>☐ Pragmatic - helps the supervisee’s notice what works — their skills, abilities, creative ideas, etc. in the service of the client/patient.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Collaborates with the client on their agenda.</td>
<td>☐ Collaborates with the supervisee’s on their agenda for their work with clients/patients.</td>
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## Table 1: A comparison between solution-focused therapy and solution-focused supervision, cont’d.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SF Therapy</th>
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<tr>
<td>✖️ Listens constructively for client's unique strengths and resources.</td>
<td>✖️ Listens constructively for the supervisee’s unique strengths and resources in order to aid clients and their practice generally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✖️ Invites client to talk about and develop details of their ideas of their preferred future.</td>
<td>✖️ Invites and develops supervisee’s preferred future in terms of being as good a therapist as they can possibly be for this client, or all clients/patients, and in their working context.</td>
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<tr>
<td>✖️ Uses scales and circular questioning to note and measure progress towards client's preferred future and goals</td>
<td>✖️ Uses scales and circular questioning to note and measure progress towards the supervisee’s best practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>✖️ Maintains professional boundaries of time, place, confidentiality and ethical practice; Strives for best therapeutic practice.</td>
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SF SUPERVISION
SUPERVISOR’S STANCE

- Guru
- Gatekeeper
- Guide

(Thomas, 2000)
SF SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

Miracle Questions
Use scales to measure and develop progress
Identify Exceptions
Be future-oriented and assume competence

Offer appropriate, evidenced compliments
Goal Setting

(Waskett, 2006)
**SF SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES**

**Miracle questions** –

“If you were working better with this client and your current difficulties had been overcome, what would be the first signs for you that a miracle had happened?”*

“What will be different about for you and/or your client when this is no longer a problem?”**

“If we were working at our optimum level (i.e. – the best supervision ever), what would that look like?”**

*(O’Connell & Jones, 1997)*

**(Waskett, 2006)**
SF SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

**Scaling** - used in solution-focused supervision to develop answers to the miracle question, but it can also be used elsewhere during supervision.

“On a scale of 0 to 10, 10 being your effectiveness with this client after the miracle and 0 the lowest it’s ever been, where would you say you are today?”

- Where would you like to get to?
- What would it look like when you got there?
- What would be happening that’s not happening now?
- What would have stopped happening?
- What would need to happen for that to happen?
- What would be the first thing you would do?
- What would the client notice was different?
- What would you need to remind yourself about?
- If there were set backs how would you get back on track?

(O’Connell & Jones, 1997).
SF SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

Scaling Questions–

“On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is as worse as the problem can get, where would you say you are today?”

“When you are close to moving to the next number, how will you know; what will be different about the way you handle that situation?”
SF SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES

Scaling Questions—

“Where 10 means our supervision today was as useful as it could have been, and 0 means not useful at all, where are we on that scale after our meeting?”

“Ok, so what went well, or what was most useful in our conversation that made you choose that number?”

“What would have to be different next time (what would we have to do differently) to move up one point from there?”

(Waskett, 2006)
SF SUPERVISION
SCALING EXERCISE

Get in pairs ("supervisee/supervisor")

"Supervisee" thinks of a practice situation they have been unhappy about/struggling with.

Supervisor asks on a scale of 0-10 (10=best possible client outcome):

- How far on the scale had the client come since first meeting w/ you?
- What would your client say about this?
- What might your client have said about how s/he has moved to that number; what has been helpful for him/her and what strengths were used to get there?
- What would you and your client say when life was significantly better? How is this happening now – even a little bit?

Swap roles!
Exception questions:

❖ Help supervisees focus on those times when things went well - or at least not as badly.

❖ Prevent supervisees from ‘awfulising’

❖ Identify areas of competence
Tell me about the times that you expect this problem, but it doesn’t happen?”
“How do you explain this, and what did you do to make it happen?”
“When is the problem less frequent, or a little different from the problem you describe?”
“When are you already doing a little of what you’d like to be doing regarding this problem?”
“How were you able to do that?”
“What accounted for the change?”
“What do you think the client noticed about the change?”
“So you feel not much has improved since last week, what are you doing to keep it from getting any worse?”
Pre-suppositional language - language which is future oriented and assumes competence.

Pre-suppositional statements assume that there were times that progress was being made with the client. The supervisee is thus encouraged to think about examples when things were better.
SF SUPERVISION
COMPLIMENTS

- Focus is on what the supervisee is doing well
- Provides encouragement and support
- Enables supervisee to use areas of competence to solve problems
“One cannot hit a target without a target”

Thomas (1996) suggests 3 month goals that are:

- Observable
- Measurable
- Verifiable
Keeping It Solution-Focused…

What {job responsibilities} would be the most productive for us to focus on today?”
“Tell me what would you like to get most out of meeting today?”

“What aspect of your work has gotten better since we last met?”

“Tell me the best thing you did with a client this week?”
SF SUPERVISION

Exercise –

“How To Interview for Client Strengths” (De Jong & Miller, 1995)
“How To Interview for Client Strengths”

What are some of the Solution-Focused Techniques mentioned in this article?

How could these be applied to supervision?

Are you currently using any of these techniques? If so, which ones?

If you are currently not using any techniques, which ones could you see yourself using?

Are your CMs using any of these SF techniques? If so, which ones – and give examples, if possible.

Do you disagree with assumptions or techniques of SF? If so, please explain.
“The branch will tell me how to carve it....each piece of wood has its own shape, which you must respect... in each branch lies a flute, my job is to find it” (Thomas, 1996).
SOLUTION FOCUSED SUPERVISION

Resources


O’Connell B, Jones C. Solution-focused supervision. Counselling, November 1997 pp 289-292


Waskett, C (2005): The Pluses of Solution Focused Supervision, in HCPJ, January 2005
