Social Work 790–009  
Advanced Topics in Interpersonal Practice:  
Reflective Supervision in Child and Family Practice  
Fall, 2012  
Office Hours: Mondays 4-5,  
Wednesdays 12-1, and by appointment

Douglas Davies, M.S.W., Ph.D.  
Office: 2740 Social Work Building  
Phones: 763-8045 (SSW)  
269 345-9912 (Home)  
E-Mail: ddavies@umich.edu

Course Description

This course focuses on Reflective Supervision as a best practice in clinical work with children, parents and families. The word “reflective” is given prominence because the goals are to think carefully about an infant/child and her family, to develop an appreciation for each of their perspectives, to understand the family from an interactional perspective, and to identify and consider alternative approaches to intervention. Reflection implies “stepping back” and “slowing down,” considering the issues and transactions of the child in her family context in some detail, before proposing solutions. Reflective Supervision puts particular emphasis on understanding the social worker’s personal reactions and perspectives as a potential pathway for doing more effective work with clients.

The impetus for offering this course comes from the reality that many MSW practitioners begin supervising within 5 years of graduation. With that reality in mind, the course aims to provide a conceptual and experiential preview of useful supervisory skills and processes.

Course Objectives

At the end of the course, students should be able to:

--Identify and define core concepts in Reflective Supervision process.

--Articulate the value of the practitioner’s self-reflection in practice with children and parents.

--Demonstrate an understanding of the use of Reflective Supervision as a vehicle for exploring difference and diversity, including divergent perspectives based on class, race, socio-economic status, privilege and oppression, sexual orientation and identity, risk and protective processes, and mental health status.

--Demonstrate increased skill in participating in a Reflective Supervision group.

Course Design and Format

Class format will include lecture, discussion, case analysis, skills development sessions, and viewing of videotapes. For classes 2-5, students will alternate between participating in, and observing a reflective supervision group.
Course Requirements and Grading

• Class participation is encouraged. Good listening in discussions is equally encouraged. Participation is not factored in as part of the grade, as students have a range of ways of being present, including listening and reflecting as well as verbal expression. Participation in several exercises will be expected.

• Grading will be satisfactory or unsatisfactory for the course. Attendance at all 5 sessions is a requirement, as is a 5 page paper. Your grade will be affected negatively if you miss any classes without communication with the instructor. A make-up assignment is required for any missed class session.

Students in Need of Accommodations

If you have a documented disability or condition that may interfere with your participation in this course, please schedule a private appointment with me as soon as possible to discuss accommodations for your specific needs. This information will be kept strictly confidential. For more information and resources, please contact the Services for Students with Disabilities office at G664 Haven Hall, (734) 763-3000. Also, if religious observances conflict with class attendance or due dates for assignments, please notify me so we can discuss appropriate arrangements.

PAPER

Write up some aspect of a case that has been engaging (and perhaps stressful) for you emotionally, that has elicited strong reactions in you, or perhaps has challenged your sense of competence. How do you understand your responses to this case?

The following ideas might be used to inform your analysis: transference, countertransference, induced countertransference, parallel process, vicarious trauma, problems in perspective taking, identification with one family member over others, reflexive reactions. The following examples suggest a range of experiences this paper might respond to, though this list is meant to be suggestive rather than exhaustive:
-- A difficult conversation with a parent about her/his child that was troubling when you had it, or one you’re anxious about initiating.
-- An interaction with, or view of, a client that you’ve been thinking about in ways that feel to you “less objective,” or “more defensive” than typical for you, or a client you find yourself avoiding thinking about—or obsessing about—for reasons that are not clear to you.
-- A client’s words, behavior, affect, play, recounting of an experience that left you puzzled and unsure how to respond, thinking about both your and the client’s contributions to your confusion.
-- A meeting in which a client tells a story of trauma, despair, or hopelessness, or presents as extremely defended, cognitively scattered, or affectively aroused or overwhelmed.
-- A time when you were unknowingly pulled into a transferential role in a family’s/client’s relationship scripts and how you became aware of this.

Provide a brief description of the incident/client you’re responding to (1-1½ pages). Then discuss your personal responses, and reflect on your understanding of those responses, as well as how that reflection might help you better understand the client, her/his relationship with you, and how this may contribute to the intervention on behalf of this client (3½-4 pages).

The aim of this assignment is to bring reflection to your practicum work. It is also intended to be a dialogue—I will do my best to offer an attuned response to your work.

Length: 5 pages Due Date: November 19
TEXT and HANDOUTS


I will be passing out several handouts on topics in reflective supervision.

COURSE OUTLINE AND READING SCHEDULE

October 29, 2012

Lecture: What is Reflective Supervision? Reflective functioning; Core Elements of Reflective Supervision; Expectations of Supervisor and Supervisee; Self-Reflection and Use of Self in Understanding Clients; Attention to Parallel Process.

Video: 1) “Settling In—Reflective Supervision with a Relatively New Clinician.” Julie Ribaudo and Katie Bresky.
      2) “Wondering about Relationship—Reflective Supervision at a Transition in Treatment.” Doug Davies and Vicki Novell.

Experiential: Early Memories Exercise

Required Readings

Rebecca Shamoon-Shanok, Chapter 1, “What is Reflective Supervision?” Heller and Gilkerson, pp. 7-24.
Barry Wright, “Why Bother with Reflective Supervision?” (Handout)

November 5, 2012

Lecture: Individual and Group Reflective Supervision Processes; On Listening and Being Listened To; Obstacles and Resistances to Reflective Process.

Experiential: Peer Listening Exercise; Reflective Supervision Group

Required Readings


November 12, 2012

Lecture: Reflective Responses to Diversity in Clinical and Supervisory Process; Growth and Complexity in the Supervisory Relationship.


Experiential: Reflective Supervision Group

Required Readings


Angela Keyes, Amy Cavanaugh, & Sherryl Scott Heller, Chapter 6, “How Do I, as a Reflective Supervisor, Repair Ruptures in the Supervisory Relationship?” Heller and Gilkerson, pp. 99-120.

November 19, 2012 Paper Due

Lecture: Clinical Stress and Parallel Process in Working with Distressed/Oppressed High-Risk Families: Vicarious Traumatization; Countertransference and Induced Countertransference.

Case Presentation: Reflective supervision on a “difficult” clinical case, with video illustrations.

Video: “Aftershocks of Trauma—Reflective Supervision with a Clinician Working Alone with a Traumatized Client.” William Schaefer and Stefanie Hill.

Experiential: Reflective Supervision Group

Required Readings

November 26, 2012

Lecture: Focus on Systems Issues: Introducing Reflective Supervision to Programs; Combining Reflective and Administrative Supervision; Translating Reflective Supervision to Other Child-Focused Disciplines

Experiential: Reflective Supervision Group

Required Readings


