

Effective Behavior Analytic Supervision: A Practice Model and Considerations for the Development of Future Behavior Analytic Practitioners

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National Autism Conference

August 4th, 2016

The Penn Stater Conference Center Hotel

State College, Pennsylvania



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Learning Objectives

- Identify components of effective behavior analytic supervision consistent with the BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum.
- Discuss considerations in conducting evidence-based, socially valid and ethical supervision practices in applied settings.
- Utilize methods to evaluate the acceptability of the procedures, process, outcomes, and effectiveness of supervision.



Purpose of Trainee Supervision

- Develop, improve, and maintain effective clinical, professional and ethical repertoires in supervisees (BACB, 2012)
- Guide case conceptualization, problem solving, decision making and assistance seeking repertoires (BACB, 2012)
- Support supervisee wellbeing
- Instill a culture of ongoing learning, consultation and self-assessment
- Support the growth and credibility of the field



Support Client Wellbeing, Progress & Outcomes

(BACB, 2012)

Behav Analysis Practice
DOI 10.1007/s40617-016-0132-1



RESEARCH ARTICLE

An Evaluation of the Impact of Supervision Intensity, Supervisor Qualifications, and Caseload on Outcomes in the Treatment of Autism Spectrum Disorder

Dennis R. Dixon¹ • Erik Linstead² • Doreen Granpeesheh¹ • Marlena N. Novack¹ •
Ryan French² • Elizabeth Stevens² • Laura Stevens² • Alva Powell¹

- Effectiveness of supervision on client outcomes was not related to the *amount* of supervision (i.e., increased supervision hours did not dramatically increase the number of mastered learning objectives) or the size of a supervisor's *caseload*.
- Rather, effectiveness was related to the *qualifications* of the supervisor (i.e., BCBA) and years of *experience* as a clinical supervisor.



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Potential Outcomes of Poor Supervision

- Inadequate client wellbeing, progress, and outcomes
- Poor performing supervisees with limited or non-generalizable repertoires
- Supervisors who do not become effective supervisors themselves
- Obvious egregious and unethical acts

Loss of Motivation for the Job

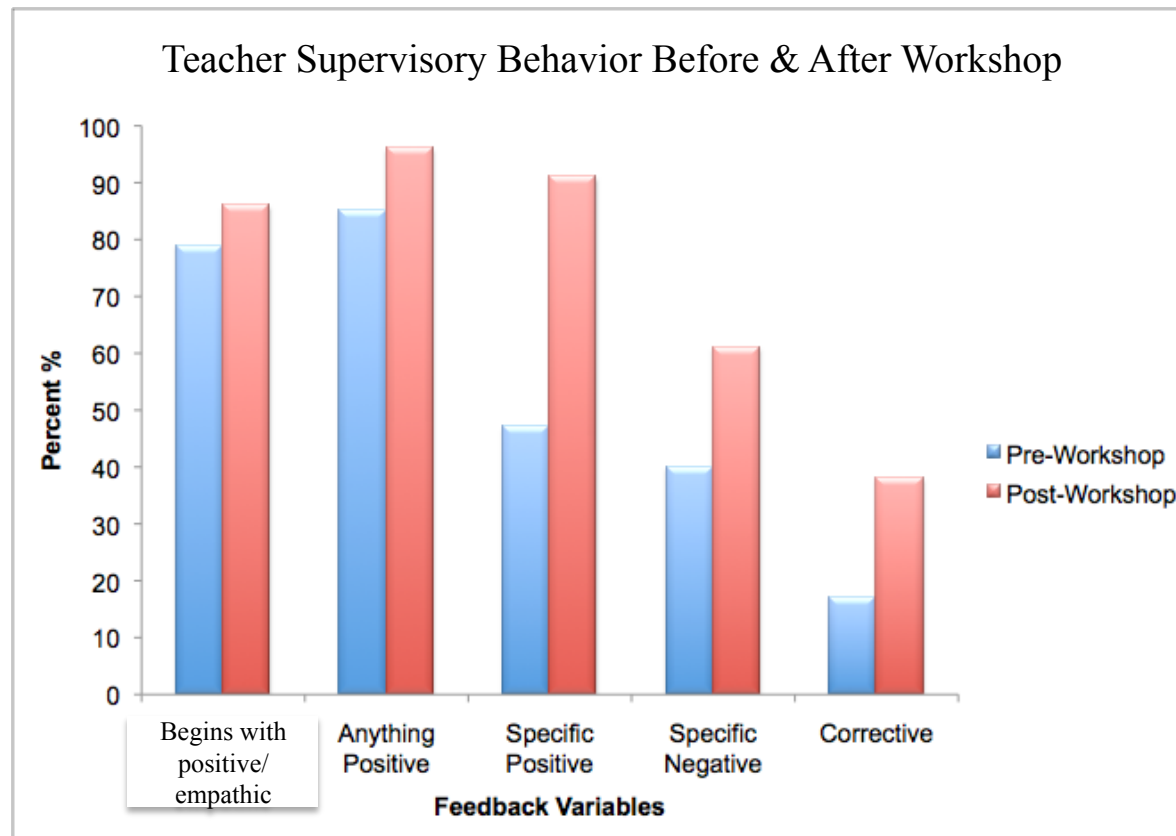
- Burnout
 - Uncharacteristic angry outbursts, apathy, chronic frustration, reduced productivity
- Research from other fields...
 - A positive supervisory alliance can have a positive impact on the supervisee's functioning and wellbeing (Livni, Crowe, & Gonsalvez, 2012)
 - Perceived supervisor support is correlated with reduced therapist burnout (Gibson, Grey, & Hastings, 2009)



Clinical Example

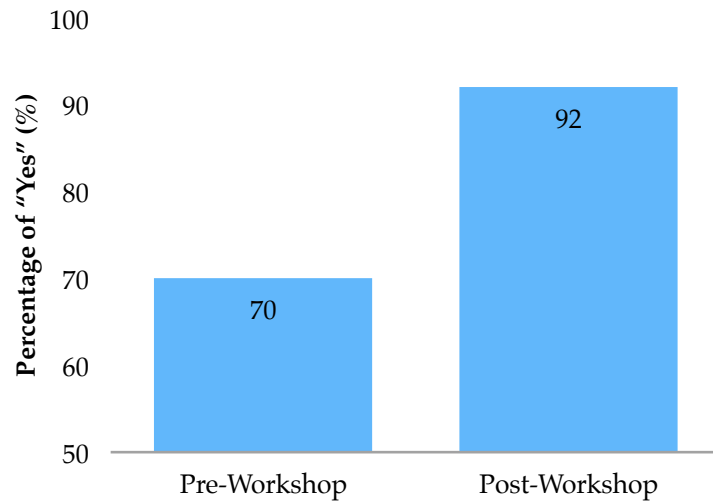
- 5 Special Education Teachers working in behavior analytic classrooms at Institute for Child Development (SUNY Binghamton)
- 4 session Supervisor Training Workshop (Modified from Reid, Parsons & Green, 2011)
 - Focused on the importance of frequent positive, specific and corrective feedback in supporting trainees
 - Behavioral Skills Training
- Measured percentage of different types of written performance feedback used with BCaBA trainees before and after training



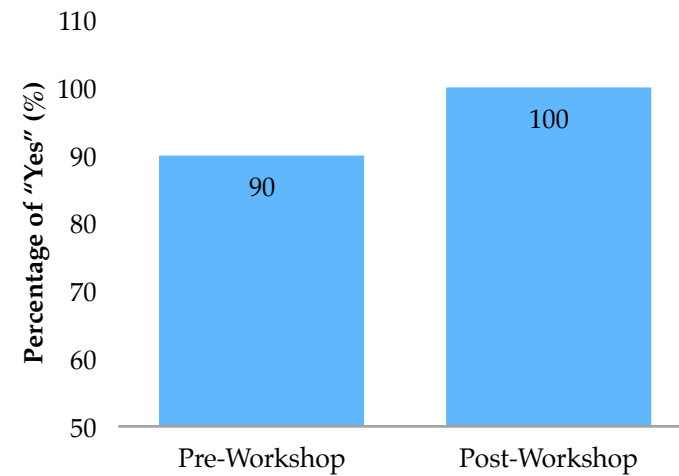


“The workshop had a positive effect on me” - 100% agree

Are you receiving enough feedback from your supervisor?"



Are you receiving enough support from your supervisor?"

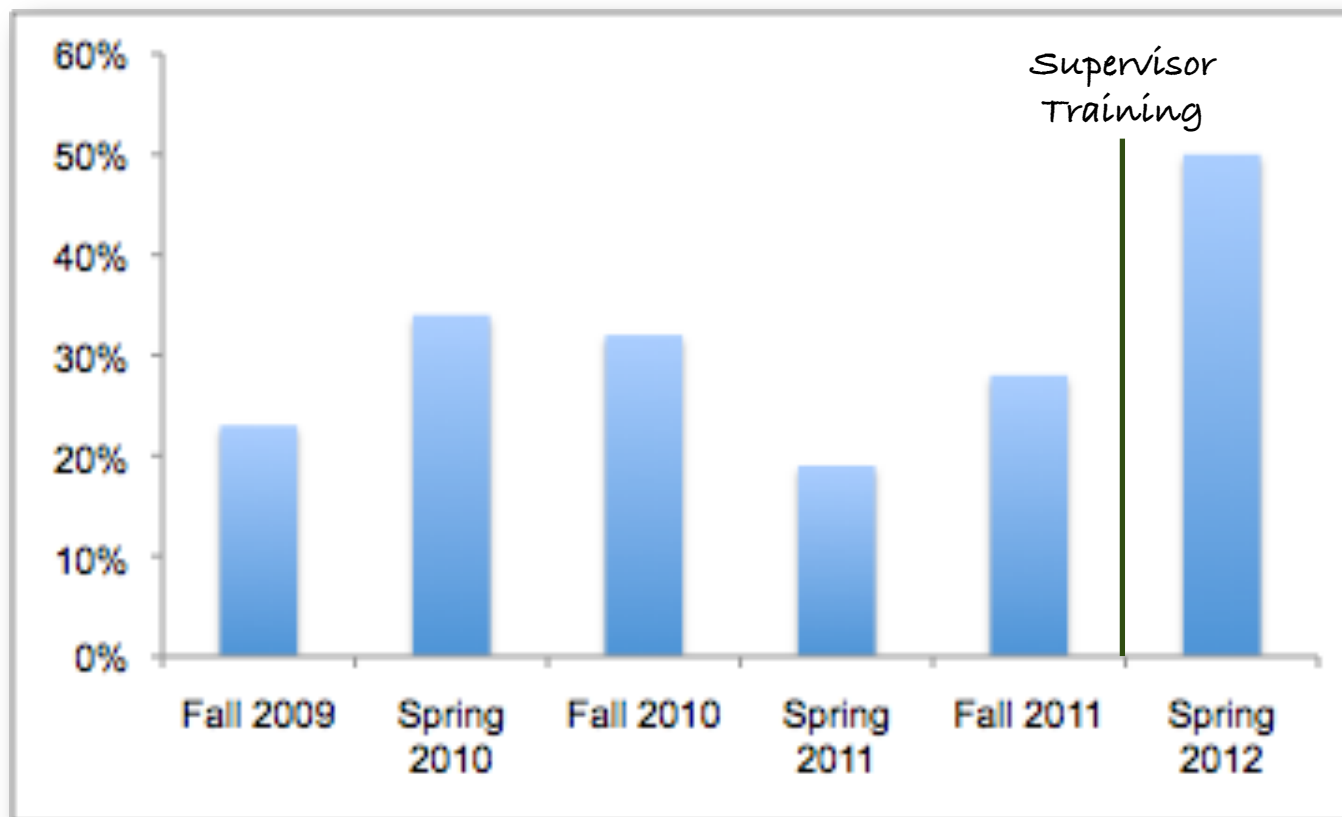


"The workshop had a positive effect on the individuals I supervise" - 100% agree



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BCaBA Student Retention



Current Context for Supervision Across Disciplines

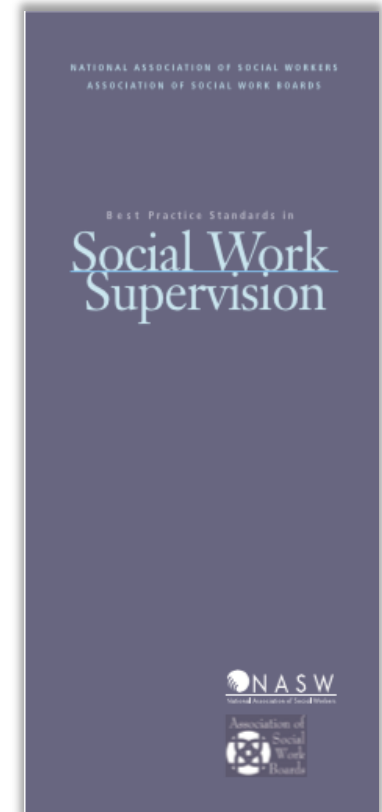
- Accountability & protection of clients
- Licensure / certification requirements
- Evidence- and **competency**-based era – no “osmosis”

Best Practices in Clinical Supervision
ACES Task Force Report
January 18, 2011



Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health
Service Psychology

American Psychological Association



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Commonalities of Competency Based Supervision Across Disciplines

- Assesses outcomes and is rooted in the current literature
- Utilizes a contract to focus on collaborative approach (e.g., goals, performance criteria, outcomes)
- Recognizes the importance of a strong supervisory relationship
- Takes an individualized approach
- Incorporates frequent performance feedback based on observable behavior
- Focuses on self-evaluation and knowledge of own weaknesses

What are our minimal competencies as behavior analytic supervisors?

- Development of individualized performance expectations for the supervisee AND supervisor (behavioral contract)
- Observation, behavioral skills training, and performance feedback
- Modeling technical, professional and ethical behavior
- Guiding behavioral case conceptualization, problem-solving, and decision-making repertoires
- Review of written materials (e.g., behavior programs, data sheets)
- Oversight and evaluation of the effects of service delivery
- Ongoing evaluation of the effects of supervision



SPECIAL SECTION: SUPERVISION PRACTICES

Towards a Competency-Based, Ethical, and Socially Valid Approach to the Supervision of Applied Behavior Analytic Trainees

Laura B. Turner¹ • Aaron J. Fischer² • James K. Luiselli³



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SPECIAL SECTION: SUPERVISION PRACTICES

Recommended Practices for Individual Supervision of Aspiring Behavior Analysts

Tyra P. Sellers¹ • Amber L. Valentino¹ • Linda A. LeBlanc¹



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Setting the Stage for Quality Supervision: Developing the Supervisory Relationship

- “Rapport” (Carr et al., 1997, Magito McLaughlin & Carr, 2005)
 - The degree to which a supervisor and a trainee are mutual discriminative stimuli for generalized reinforcement (e.g., positive feedback, social support)
 - How? Potential impact on supervision?
- *Mutually* agreed upon expectations for supervision and engagement in behaviors consistent with those expectations.
 - Supervision contract
 - Guideline 5.05 of the Professional & Ethical Compliance Code (BACB, 2014)





BEHAVIOR ANALYST CERTIFICATION BOARD - Experience Standards -

INSTRUCTIONS

This document contains all of the standards and forms for experience used to qualify for BACB certification.

All experience used toward the requirements for BACB certification must meet these standards.
The BACB requires the supervisor and supervisee review this entire document together and discuss any concerns before the experience begins.



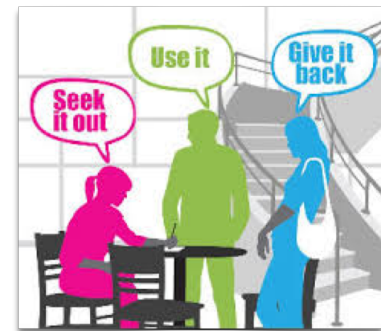
Time Expectations

- 1 supervisee, accruing 30 hrs.wk of experience hrs
 - In-vivo observation/supervision = 30 min.
 - Supervision Meeting = 1 hr.
 - Read article/find resources for supervisee = 1 hr.
 - Answer questions/respond to emails = 15 min.
 - Complete documentation/supervisee evaluation = 15 min.
 - Total time = 3 hrs. per week
- How many supervisees can you *competently* supervise at a time?



Setting the Stage for Quality Supervision: Defining the Relationship

- The supervisory relationship can be complex...teacher, mentor, evaluator, facilitator of self-assessment and growth
- Define the relationship & clarify role expectations
 - Dual relationships
 - Ask about previous supervision experiences (in or outside of behavior analysis)
 - *Reciprocal* performance feedback
 - Consequences of not meeting expectations (for both parties)
 - Terminating supervision

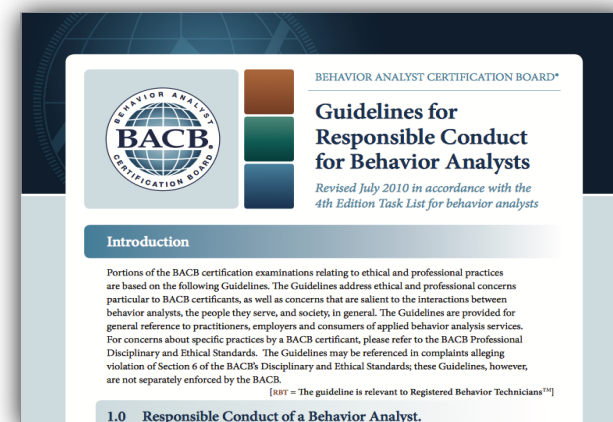


Setting the Stage for Quality Supervision: Reviewing Confidentiality

- We have a primary obligation to take reasonable precautions to respect the confidentiality of those with whom we work, *including supervisees* (Professional & Ethical Compliance Code, BACB, 2014; Guideline 2.06)
- What is confidential information in a supervisory relationship?
- Considerations regarding who can we disclose information to, and in what contexts?

Assessing Current Abilities

- Review course syllabi, previous practical settings and populations
- Talk with previous supervisors, if given permission
- Systematically review task list (e.g., Checklist, rating scale, interview)
- Observation, present scenarios, role play



Developing Individualized Goals

- Collaborative - What are the supervisee's short and long-term professional goals?
- Develop goals in a variety of areas:
 - Professional (e.g., consultation and communication skills)
 - Technical (e.g., conduct an FA)
 - Ethical (e.g., consent process)
 - Basic (e.g., develop fluency with terms for exam)
 - Clinical decision making



Developing Individualized Goals

- Prioritizing and identifying pre-requisite skills
- Be mindful of ability level *per* goal or skill area
 - Planning for independence *within* and *across* skill areas
- Use goals to identify appropriate activities, rather than choosing activities based on their convenience
- Sample goals



Considerations for Training

- Effectiveness, efficiency and acceptability (Parsons, Rollyson & Reid, 2012)
- Behavioral Skills Training
 - Do you have to use BST all the time?
 - Depends on the skill and the BL ability of the staff (e.g., Graff & Karsten, 2012)
 - Role play or in-vivo?
 - In-person modeling or video modeling?



Considerations for Training

- Assess application and generalization of skills to new targets, clients, and settings (BACB Supervision Training Curriculum, 2012; Stokes & Baer, 1977)
 - Program common stimuli - role play in the location with stimuli
 - Train sufficient exemplars
 - Supervisees are encouraged to have multiple experiences (i.e., sites, populations)
 - “Teach Loosely” - vary noncritical aspects of your teaching



Teach Decision Making via Problem Solving Activities

- Utilize structured problem solving activities
 - Define the problem / question
 - Generate alternative solutions
 - Choose a solution: Cost-benefit analyses
 - Implement the solution
 - Evaluate outcomes of the solution
- Ethics
 - Model ethical behavior and openly discuss any incorrect models
 - APBA ethics challenges

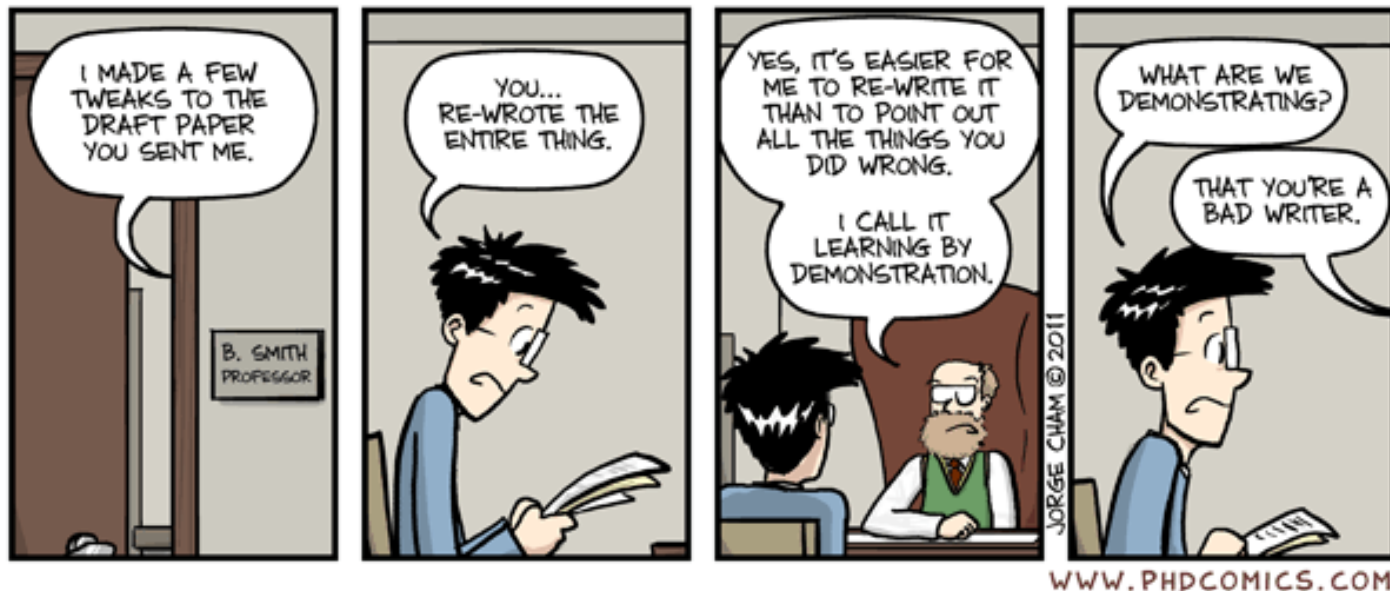


Giving Performance Feedback

- Performance feedback is...
 - an effective procedure for increasing and maintaining skills (Mortenson & Witt, 1998; Reinke et al., 2014)
 - most effective when combined with review of data, goal setting, antecedents and consequences (Balacazar, 1985, 1986; Noell et al., 2002; Sanetti, Luiselli & Handler, 2007; Neubert, 1998; Alvero et al., 2001; Alvero et al., 2001)
 - most effective when delivered by a supervisor (Balacazar, 1985, 1986)
 - crucial during skill acquisition (Daniels & Bailey, 2014)

Giving Performance Feedback

- Frequent, Immediate, Descriptive, Positive, Corrective



Catch Supervisee's Being Good

- Deliver as frequently and as immediately as possible, especially in the beginning
- 4:1 ratio
- **Quick Activity:** Think about someone you could have given positive feedback to today, but didn't - why didn't you? What stopped you?



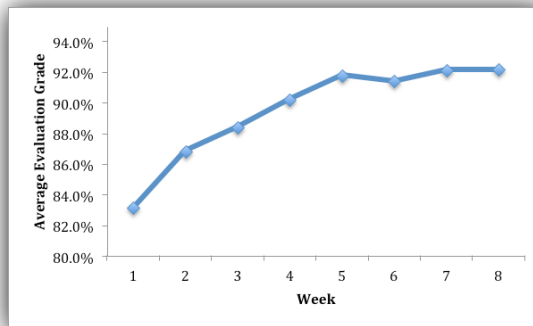
Descriptive Positive Feedback

- There are “101 ways to say good job”
- But what did they do that was so good?
- WHY does it matter (i.e., provide a rationale)
- Consider linking your feedback to their goals (when appropriate)
- E.g., “Very impressive performance today with Johnny. Even though it was a stressful situation, you followed his plan to the tee. The great thing was that all the other staff saw you keep your cool and implement the intervention, which is important as you’re trying to establish yourself as a role-model. The more you can get in there and model, just like you did today, the more the staff will look to you as a leader.”



Using Video & Graphic Feedback

- Review with supervisee; lends credibility to the feedback
- Self assessment: Have them watch it back and identify their own areas of strength and weakness



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Individualizing the Experience Supervision Form if Needed

BACB Experience Standards – ver. 1/13/2014

BACB Experience Supervision Form

This form (or equivalent) must be completed at least once during each supervisory period.

Supervisee: _____ Supervisor: _____

Supervisory Meeting Date(s) & Duration(s): _____

Supervisory Meeting Format (check all that apply): _____ individual _____ group

This document covers the supervisory period from ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Experience Hours Accumulated During This Supervisory Period (complete all four lines)

A) Number of independent experience hours accumulated (excluding time spent with supervisor): _____

Of the hours listed above, state the number spent in direct implementation of behavioral programs: _____

B) Number of individual supervision hours accumulated: _____

C) Number of small-group supervision hours accumulated: _____

D) Total experience hours accumulated (add lines A through C): _____

Characteristics of Supervision Conducted During This Supervisory Period (check all that apply)

_____ BACB Task List skills covered (list Task numbers): _____

_____ Specific client(s) discussed

_____ Client privacy protected

_____ Observation of supervisee (video)

_____ Observation of supervisee (in-person)

_____ Supervisory discussion & feedback (in-person)

_____ Supervisory discussion & feedback (remote)

_____ Readings: _____

Evaluation of Supervisee Performance:

S – satisfactory NI – needs improvement U – unsatisfactory N/A – not applicable

	S	NI	U	N/A
Arrives on time for supervision				
Maintains professional and courteous interactions with:				
Clients/consultants				
Other service providers				
Coworkers				
Maintains appropriate attire & demeanor				
Initiates professional self-improvement				
Accepts supervisory feedback appropriately				
Seeks supervision appropriately				
Timely submission of written reports				
Communicates effectively				
Written				
Oral				
Demonstrates appropriate sensitivity to nonbehavioral providers				
Supervisee self-detects personal limitations				
Supervisee self-detects professional limitations				
Acquisition of target behavior-analytic skills				

Overall evaluation of supervisee performance during this period (circle one): S NI U

Supervisee signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

DO NOT SUBMIT THIS FORM TO THE BACB WITH THE EXAM APPLICATION
SUPERVISOR AND SUPERVISEE MUST EACH RETAIN A COPY OF THIS FORM FOR AT LEAST 7 YEARS

Page 6 of 7

See BACB Standards for required components of the form

BACB Supervision Form Supervised Independent Fieldwork

Supervisee: _____ Supervisor: _____

Current Two-Week Supervision Period: ____/____/____ to ____/____/____

Total Experience Hours Accumulated: _____

1) Individual Experience Hours (>10 & <30 per week): Week 1: _____ Week 2: _____ Total: _____

2) Supervision Hours: Total Individual (In-vivo + Ind.): _____ Total Group (2-10 people): _____

1) ____/____/____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-vivo	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Mtg.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	Duration: _____
2) ____/____/____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-vivo	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Mtg.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	Duration: _____
3) ____/____/____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-vivo	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Mtg.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	Duration: _____
4) ____/____/____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-vivo	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Mtg.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	Duration: _____
5) ____/____/____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-vivo	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual Mtg.	<input type="checkbox"/> Group	Duration: _____

Activities During Supervision Period

☐ Direct implementation of behavior analytic programs (Number of hours: _____)

☐ Other: _____ (Number of hours: _____)

Topics Discussed/Readings: _____

Supervisee Evaluation for this Supervision Period

	Excellent	Expected	Needs Improvement	Unacceptable	NA
Timeliness & completion of assignments/activities					
Attitude and enthusiasm					
Engages in professional and ethical behavior					
Responds appropriately to feedback					
Communicates effectively					
Detects personal/professional limitations and initiates self-improvement					
Takes initiative & seeks supervision appropriately					
Interacts well with clients, peers, supervisors and other professionals					
Acquisition of target behavior-analytic skills:					
Acquisition of target behavior-analytic skills:					
Acquisition of target behavior-analytic skills:					

Supervisee signature: _____ Date: _____

Supervisor signature: _____ Date: _____

Giving Corrective Feedback

*Steps BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum, 2012

- *Provide an empathic statement - think about their context
- *Describe ineffective performance
- *Provide a rationale for desired change in performance
- *Provide instructions and demonstrations for how to improve designated performance
- *Provide opportunities to practice the desired performance
- *Provide immediate descriptive feedback

*A few initial considerations

- *Don't correct in public
- *Give corrective before next performance (response prompt)



Example

- “Hi ____! I’m so glad I got to see you working with Johnny this morning. I was impressed by how well you remained neutral while he was flopped on the ground. That can be a frustrating situation especially when you feel like you there’s not much you can do. To avoid this situation all together, let’s talk about a way to ease the transition and prevent him from flopping in the first place. Rather than asking him to line up at the door when he’s engaged in an independent activity, one thing the BIP says to do is ask him to complete tasks he usually complies with before giving him the direction to walk to the door to line up (i.e., a task demand he usually doesn’t comply with). For example, giving high fives and picking up materials from his work area. The point of this is to gain compliance and spark responding. Let me show you quick and then I’ll have you show me.



Scenario

- Your supervisee is going to meet with her client's parent to develop a home behavior plan. You have been supervising the supervisee for nearly a year, but this is her first time working directly with parents. You've had her sit in on one of your parent meetings and you've role played several aspects of meeting with parents. She seemed nervous, so you decided to sit in on the meeting with her, but let her take the lead. During the meeting, the supervisee did a nice job establishing rapport with the parent; however, the supervisee often used behavior analytic jargon and did not notice that the parent was clearly confused. The supervisee was also quite directive with the parent, not making the process collaborative. You had to jump in several times to clarify and assess the feasibility and acceptability of the proposed plan.



Giving corrective feedback is less preferred than giving positive feedback...

Barriers to giving feedback

Feedback does not happen for many reasons. Basically, providing constructive feedback is a difficult task. Most clinical teachers have received little or no instruction in giving feedback, and many believe that providing negative feedback is pointless because of a lack of resources to help the student to improve.¹⁴ Teachers say that they fear damaging their relationship with learners and want to avoid undermining the learner's self esteem.¹⁵ Corrective feedback can be awkward to communicate, and teachers may wish to avoid appearing critical, particularly in the presence of patients or medical colleagues.¹⁶ Learners are often apprehensive about asking for feedback, for fear that it will be critical—and to make matters worse, they can become defensive when offered corrective feedback.¹⁷ In sum, giving feedback is often difficult, but the negative effects of not seeking or giving feedback are considerable (box 2).¹⁷ Cantillon & Sargeant (2008)



What behaviors do we typically give feedback on?

- Implementation of assessment and intervention procedures
- Written materials (e.g., assessment reports, objectives, behavior plans)
- Data sheets & graphs
- Ability to conceptualize a case, problem solve and think critically
- Ethical behavior
- Professional behavior

A few examples – what else?

- Social skills broadly
- Assertiveness
- Appearance
- Argumentative
- Empathy and sensitivity to others
- Tone & nonverbal communication (e.g., facial expressions)
- Flexibility / rigidity

How do we define and measure these behaviors so that we can provide feedback and monitor performance?



Giving Corrective Feedback

- Research from other fields suggests:
 - Can be most challenging when **personal, often subjective**, issues are interfering with the quality of their professional activities (Dittman-Tracy, 2006)
 - Research suggests that supervisors often withhold negative reactions to supervisee's clinical and professional performance, and regret it later (Hoffman et al., 2005)
 - About 47% of supervisors agreed that they gave higher ratings to supervisees in fear of harming rapport (Gonsalvez & Freestone, 2007)
 - Not raising important feedback can have negative implications for clinical work and the supervisory relationship (Dittman-Tracy, 2006)



Considerations in Giving Corrective Feedback

- Is the behavior you are correcting “interfering”? – what is “interfering”?
 - Recognition that professional behavior and expectations can be impacted by personal factors, such as beliefs, values, and interpersonal biases and conflicts (BACB ethical code)
- Potential negative effects on supervisory relationship
 - Recognize it, discuss it and attempt to resolve it.
- If given poorly, negative supervisory experiences can produce significant and adverse effects on an individuals future career goals (Ramos-Sanchez et al., 2002)
- “They did everything wrong” – the importance of prioritizing
- Be as objective as possible



Being objective can be hard sometimes...

- Will you be objective?
 - Don't provide corrective feedback when in a bad mood!
 - The longer you wait the harder this can be...
- “Favorites” (The potential negative side effect of strong rapport)
 - Has the potential to overshadow difficulties of or mistakes made by the supervisee.
- You may get uncomfortable...Take time to plan/practice
 - What do you want to get across – what is your desired *impact*?



Use Self-Monitoring & Self-Evaluation

- Get the supervisee to notice for themselves
- Provide prompts for various technical and professional behaviors and have them rate various aspects of their performance
- Use video comparisons
 - Their behavior
 - Model of expected behavior



Example

You have received several comments from others regarding how unfriendly one of your supervisees is. For example, she often ignores others in the hallway and has been described as unapproachable by teacher's aides. You have also observed the supervisee often looking "mad" or "uninterested"; however, the supervisee is always on time, completes all assignments, takes feedback well and states that she wants to remain in this field and enjoys her job.

Difficult Supervisees

1. Argumentative <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gOKWJAvjD4Y>
2. Reluctant <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wfWvWDymehY>
3. Attraction <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-X7JT3NkDY>
4. No Direction <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SxXPqLbrYWo>



Documenting Corrective Feedback

- E,g., dates/times and details of events, feedback given in regard to difficulty areas, responses and reactions from supervisee
- Develop and document a remedial plan with clear specification of the responsibilities of each party
- Consultation
- Reference the supervision contract

Monitoring your Supervisory Behaviors

- Are you consistently meeting the performance requirements of a supervisor?
- Utilize objective and subjective measures
 - Supervisee making progress on goals?
 - Clients making progress?
 - **Acceptability of supervision process**
 - Supervisee feedback helps serve as a form of self-evaluation to maintain continuing education
 - Ethical Consideration: The supervisor is always in the more powerful position



Supervision Monitoring and Evaluation Form

Trainee:
Supervisor:

Placement Site
Evaluation Period:

Supervision Arrangement		
Measures	YES	NO or NOT ALWAYS: Explain
Supervision sessions occur as scheduled		
Supervision sessions start and end on time		
Supervision sessions are free of distractions		
Supervision sessions can be re-scheduled as warranted		
I am able to correspond with my supervisor between supervision sessions		



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Measures	Supervisor Behavior				
	Rarely	Sometimes		Always	
	1	2	3	4	5
Supervisor is approachable					
Supervisor is attentive to my current abilities and training needs					
Supervisor gives me behavior-specific positive feedback about my strengths					
Supervisor gives me behavior-specific corrective feedback about my weaknesses					
Supervisor gives clear performance expectations and evaluation procedures					
Supervisor models professional behavior (clinical decision making, ethics, confidentiality)					
Supervisor models technical skills					
Supervisor requires me to practice (e.g., role play) when learning new skills					
Supervisor delivers feedback in a variety of modalities (e.g., verbal, written, graphic)					
Supervisor reviews my written work					
Supervisor facilitates my critical thinking					
Supervisor shows support and positive regard					
Supervisor listens well					
Supervisor shows energy and enthusiasm					
Supervisor is able to shift focus during sessions as warranted					
Supervisor is prepared for supervision sessions					
Supervisor advises about my professional development					
Supervisor suggests and/or assigns up to date readings and other materials					

Supervision Content					
Measures	Rarely	Sometimes			Always
	1	2	3	4	5
Supervision addresses the BACB Task List and ethical and professional guidelines of the field					
Supervision is a collaborative experience					
Supervision informs me about evidence-based practices					
Supervision addresses objectives in my individualized training plan					
Supervision builds and enhances my clinical skills (e.g., case conceptualization)					
Supervision expands my knowledge base					
Supervision considers matters of diversity and inclusion					
Supervision is conducted within the boundaries of confidentiality					
Supervision advises helpfully about my clinical interactions with clients, constituents and other service providers					
Supervision fortifies my professional development					
Supervision enhances my ability to make clinical decisions and solve problems					



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Turner, Fisher & Luiselli, 2016

Please complete this form and review it with your supervisor during your next scheduled session. Use the space below to note any additional comments or discussion points.

Trainee Signature:	Date:
Supervisor Signature:	Date:

Maintaining Competence is Key to Being a Strong Supervisor

- “Competence is not static, but is a progression toward **ever evolving** expertise” (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986), requiring continuing assessment of competence across one’s career (Roberts et al., 2005)
- Model for supervisees; encourage the same practices
- **Multiple** areas of competence, including competency in supervision
- Recognition of the influence of your personal stressors on the quality of the supervisory alliance and your own competence
- Recognition of your own strengths and weaknesses
 - Recognizing that a strength in one context can be a weakness in another



Come up with a plan and stick with it!

- Start journal clubs; invite supervisees to join or start their own with peers
- Start supervisory review groups with colleagues
- Invite peer observers - “Supervision of supervision”
- Regular conference attendance
 - Go to presentations on content you are not as familiar with
 - Go to presentations on content your supervisee is interested in
 - Use this time to consult with experts - join roundtables
- Stay up to date with relevant legal and professional issues
- Join email lists of professional organizations



Three questions to leave you with.

- What are your strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor?
- How are you monitoring the effectiveness and acceptability of your supervisory behavior?
- Who do you regularly consult with regarding supervision issues?



thank you!

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