CHAPTER 2 ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF SUPERVISORS

**Introduction**

- Supervision is a complex process that entails a multitude of roles and responsibilities
  - Roles are functional relationships between supervisors and those they supervise
  - Responsibilities include the clinical, ethical, and legal duties of the supervisor
ROLES OF A SUPERVISOR

In a single supervisory session, a supervisor might:

- Teach a clinical approach
- Act as a consultant on how to intervene with a culturally diverse client
- Act as a recorder in documenting the supervisory session
- Provide evaluative feedback to the supervisee regarding his or her progress as a clinician
LIST OF SUPERVISOR ROLES IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS:

- Teacher/coach
- Mentor
- Consultant
- Sounding board
- Adviser
- Administrator
- Evaluator
- Recorder and documenter
- Empowerer
- Advocate
Teacher/Coach

- The supervisor instruct supervisees on:
  - Assessment
  - Diagnosis
  - Therapy approaches
  - Skills, ethics and legal issues
  - A host of other topics that arise in supervision

- Coaching consists of a combination of providing:
  - Instruction, demonstration, modeling guidelines, positive and negative feedback, and suggested strategies

- The level of coaching needed is often commensurate with the level of knowledge and skill that the supervisee possesses
MENTOR

- The supervisor is the trusted guide for the supervisee

- A mentor provides support in the protégé’s pursuit of becoming a full member of a particular profession

- Mentors make themselves available at a deeper level of communication

- Examples of mentoring may include actions such as introducing a supervisee to professional colleagues
CONSULTANT

- The supervisor may consult with the supervisee to resolve a problem or to help the supervisee make a decision, such as choosing the best treatment approach for a client.

- The issues addressed can be clinical or administrative.

- Consultants assist consultees with immediate problems and offer solutions for similar problems that may occur in the future.
COUNSELOR

- The proper focus of the supervision process on the supervisee’s professional development rather than on his or her personal concerns
- Supervision may have therapy-like qualities, but it is not therapy
- The supervisor can help the supervisee deal with issues of personal strength and weaknesses as they related to the supervisee’s practice as a clinician, explore counter transference issues, and cope with stress and burn out
- The supervisor’s role as a counselor is occasional and brief
SOUNDING BOARD

- Supervision should provide a safe place
- Supervision is also an appropriate place for the supervisee to discuss fears, hopes, and frustrations with his or her work and training
Issues surrounding suicide, dangerousness, duty to warn, court appearances, and treating minors may require direct intervention by the supervisor with the supervisee.
Administrators

- Supervisors must attend to policies and procedures of the organization or setting, licensing body, or professional association.
EVALUATOR

- Supervisors are ethically required to provide the supervisee with regular and systemic feedback and evaluation.
- In the role of evaluator, supervisors typically serve as gatekeepers for their profession.
- Supervisors have responsibilities to supervisee’s current clients and to their future clients as well.
- They also have the responsibility to monitor and evaluate each supervisee’s conduct, competence and ongoing personal and professional development.
Recorder and Documenter

- It is good practice for a supervisor to keep track of what the supervisee is bringing to supervision.
- In addition to having supervisees sign a written contract at the outset of supervision, it is helpful for supervisors and their supervisees to document the following:
  - Dates and duration of each face-to-face supervision session; an outline of each session, including questions and concerns, progress towards learning goals, recommendations and resources; a follow-up plan with rationale; cancellations of sessions; (and) dates of all telephone and electronic contacts and the nature of each contact.
**EMPOWERER**

- To empower means “to enable, give another the ability and authority to do something”

- Empowerment is a process, not a one-time event
Increasingly, social justice and advocacy are being viewed as areas of major concern for all therapists.

Ideally, all therapists will make a commitment to promoting change on both individual and community levels.

One role of a supervisors is to address with supervisees how they can begin thinking in terms of speaking out for their clients.