

The Unveiling

Off the Record: Insights for the Clinical Supervisor

Delve into the professional practice of clinical supervision by exploring ideas, best supervision practices, and reflections from experienced clinical supervisors

The Ethics Conundrum

Keep your ego out of it. This is the best statement that can come to me as I think about this brief message.

Janice (name change) contacted me on a weekday asking if I could be her distance counselor. I knew her from a prior place of employment. She had spent 12 years as a client with a colleague. I informed her that I could not due to the nature of her struggles. She found another counselor and began working with him. She contacted me a few months later and informed me of unethical practices that were performed when she worked with my prior colleague. Needless to say, her story brought dismay and disappointment to my heart to hear of the depths my colleague had gone to with her. Her story was believable, and this made it even harder. Luckily, the State licensing board had already begun an investigation, though it certainly did not lessen what was done.

The ethical codes were developed as a means to protect the integrity of the field, the clients, and the professionals who call themselves counselors or psychotherapists. It is a strong foundation that allows for counseling relationships to develop, when combined with competent and efficacious therapeutic models. As a professional, nothing brings a smile to my face more than seeing a client work through, recover, or change for the better. As an educator and supervisor, I experience the same joy when I witness other counselors in training have similar experiences.

It is sad when ethical codes are broken and result in a compromise of the counselor's professional and personal integrity—especially when it causes psychological, emotional, or social harm to clients. I find it interesting that in many of these cases the professional learns the ethics, agrees to them, yet slowly begins to compromise one rule and then another until they are led to a sense of confidence and justification in their actions. Most of these professionals don't start out believing that they will break a serious ethical code such as engaging in a dual relationship with a client. At the core of ethical compromises, there seems to be a strong sense of ego. It doesn't mean that the professional thinks highly of himself or herself; in fact, it can be the opposite. There are two sides to ego. One is the inflated side that we see in narcissism. The other, a professional proclaims and believes they are humble, yet develops a professional identity based on client's successes and growth. Both can lead to an ethical compromise.

One way to combat this sense of ego is to remember ourselves, and to remind our students and supervisees that counseling is a career and a job. It is a service, albeit noble, that we provide to society and communities. Exercising self-awareness, self-care, and heaven forbid seeing our own counselor or even leaving the field for a short time can help us remain ethical.

Dr. Jamison Law

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Dusk to Dawn: Gradually visible trends in counseling & psychology

Engage in an exploration of ideas and thoughts that illuminate future evidence-based therapies, techniques, theories and interventions in the fields of counseling and psychology

Music: The Global Therapy of our Time.

“Without music, life would be a mistake.” -Nietzsche

As I write this article music is playing in the background. I am always surrounded by music and my CD cases are never far. I now have satellite radio, which is a game changer indeed! For a music fanatic like myself, streaming music without any interruptions is a dream come true.

I knew at a very early age how powerful music was in my life. I recall the immense pleasure of being locked in my room with endless hours of playing records at a high volume. I found music to be like nothing else in my world that could evoke a multitude of emotions and feelings, even at a very young age. I can still vividly remember each piece of music that seemed to define each decade growing up.

As I began my professional career as a therapist, I quickly became intrigued by the human brain. We have 100 billion neurons in our brain and music is the only thing we know that impacts the entire brain!

The human brain is the most sophisticated and complex thing we know in this universe. We are still discovering aspects of the brain that are literally changing how we perceive and understand the human condition.

As I began to understand and study neuroscience, I realized the profound nature of music and the interplay between music and our neurological make-up. Music is more than just something we enjoy; it is simply healing. Music brings each of us to our natural intrinsic state; the mother's heartbeat. This is why music is beyond just listening pleasure; it is our first sound as human beings in the womb.

As a therapist, I quickly realized the healing potential behind this art form. I also noticed the wonderful connection I am able to build in each session with clients regarding their musical tastes. We can gain wonderful insight and develop a stronger relationship with each client, based on simply discussing music. As I continued to dive into neuroscience I understood that neurotransmitters such as endorphins are the key elements to mood centers of the brain and the interplay between neurotransmitters, and how this improves our state of being in the world. Music taps into these wonderful “feel-good” neurotransmitters like nothing else in our existence.

My hypothesis is that music creates a different neural pathway (wiring) each time we expose ourselves to music. This is why it has such healing properties. We are seeing very innovative ways music is currently being used in treatment and clinical research with clients.

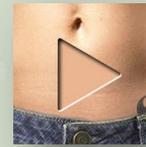
So, the next time you listen to your favorite song, you will know why the song can literally take you back to your favorite memories. We are forever changed by music and continue to be impacted by our favorite old songs and new songs that capture our imagination.

The New Mix

Our changing world practically requires technological competency. Stay up-to-date with software, apps, programs, and other advances.

QUARTERLY SPOTLIGHT:

BellyBio Interactive Breathing



This simple iApp is a biofeedback tool that focuses the user to their breathing. Soothing sounds play that are coordinated to the user's breathing patterns, while charts measure levels of relaxation. PsychCentral ranked this app #1 in their list of top Mental Health Apps. This app is free but only available to iPhone users.

Dr. Andy Abbott

Behind the Curtain

Explore the experiential world with thoughts from the counselor's couch that speak to the heart of practice

The Dis-Ease of Change

Before drifting off to sleep, I lay in the dark quiet stillness to reflect on my day. Often my thoughts shift between the items marked off of my list, productivity levels, impacting conversations, how to do it better and what I still need to mark off my list. Eventually, thoughts settle on "I will" statements. I will exercise more. I will eat better. I will be more productive. I will have more patience, especially with my 3 year old. I will organize my office. I will.... *Tomorrow*.

The word *tomorrow* satisfies the conversation in my head. In that moment I am optimistic, committed, and ready to take-on those "I will" statements with full force! Unfortunately, this resolve fades as the sun rises. The next day starts and the "I will" hopes for self-improvement are pushed aside for the day's to-do list. The cycle is ready to spin until ending my day in the quiet reflection of "I will."

Perhaps there is false hope in the word tomorrow. This word, tomorrow, worms its way into conversations, goals, ideas, and plans, starting each day with the promise of pushing change off to yet another day ceaselessly making today our new tomorrow; just another day away. We are left to chase the coattails of tomorrow while change slips out of grasp.

Ending with hopes and waking up with reality reinforces the gravity of change and softens my heart when I consider the vast changes that my clients want to make in their life.

WORDS OF WISDOM

Counselor meditations for daily clarity

Inner Resources

To know how other people behave takes intelligence, but to know myself takes wisdom.
To manage other people's lives takes strength, but to manage my own life takes true power.

Heider, J. (1985). *The Tao of Leadership*. Atlanta, GA: Humanics Limited.

Clients deal with the complexity of change as counselors bear witness to their journey in offering encouragement, validation and hope for self-improvement.

Although mental health professionals advocate for wellbeing, it is not uncommon for frustration to grow when the treatment process stands still. It can be tiresome to stay the course when change feels further away or when it presents itself as a stubborn child that refuses to comply. This frustration creates an environment of doubt, discouragement, and jadedness. These are the times that I remind myself of "I will."

I like to think that I am a healthy, well-balanced person (don't roll your eyes!). I like to *hope* that our field is full of healthy counselors. If we find change difficult, it's easy to bet that others do too. Counseling gives clients a greater resolve and commitment to the "I wills" of tomorrow. It gives strength for change.

The reality is that therapy (and true change) is hard. It does not come easy. If it did, perhaps our profession would not be needed. Perhaps, life would breathe into the ease of transformation. Perhaps, we could be accepting of one another. Until this type of world is created, the understanding that change is hard must be embraced.

We...Ok, let me take full responsibility here... I need to remember that change does not always happen "tomorrow." It takes time. It takes a lot of "I wills."

Dr. Sarah Stewart-Spencer

✦ *Don't miss our next quarterly newsletter coming in October 2015! Join our distribution list or find out how you can become a contributor by visiting our website www.TherapeuticSpeakeasy.com*



Hushed Tones

*Soothe your self with discussions on caring for the counselor,
self-care and related thoughts*

Self-Care is Not Optional

I put on some comfy clothes, snuggle under a warm blanket, and spend some time looking at the back of my eyelids. During the middle of the afternoon. Some might say this is a waste of time, and that I should be doing something productive. I say I am doing something productive. It's called self-care, and it's something I need to do more regularly.

Self-care looks different for everyone. For some, it is slowing down and resting. I try to slow down and rest every Sunday afternoon; however, when I first started this routine, I felt a little guilty. But, using my ol' self-talk skills, I reminded myself that this was healthy. I was not being lazy, rather, I was making sure I was refreshed and ready to take on the tasks of the coming week. I had to come to the realization that I should never feel guilty for taking care of myself, in particular as a counselor and educator who cares for others.

Really, the idea of self-care is just about making sure we put some margin in our lives to give us time for ourselves. We have to learn to set these parameters in our lives so that we can invest in ourselves, our loved ones, and what we care about outside of our work lives. Because, yes, there is life outside of work!

We simply cannot pour into others (whether they are our clients or our students) without being filled up ourselves. If we try to do so, we will experience burn out in this field quicker than you can say "Freudian slip." The reality is that we have to have something to give to others in order to be helpful, and we won't have anything to give if we are emotionally drained and physically exhausted all the time.

When I teach fieldwork courses for counseling students, I have often wrapped up the class by asking the students what they plan to do for themselves between that class session and the next one. I don't take "work, work, and more work" for an answer! I share with the students that self-care does not have to be time consuming or expensive, but it does need to be time specifically set aside in our schedule. Otherwise, we will never fill up our own emotional bank...and if we keep doling out without putting in, we will go bankrupt. I knew there was a reason I like to watch a sitcom every evening! Truthfully, the laughter lightens my mood and recharges me emotionally. It helps me to relax in order to rest easier and gives me what I need to take on the challenges of the next day.

So, the next time you want to do something for yourself (and I am not talking about giving yourself permission to buy that Kate Spade handbag you can't afford), don't allow irrational guilt to creep in and convince you that you need to get back to your to do list. Instead, remind yourself that you are recharging your own batteries so that you can be a better counselor or educator. Since we routinely preach this to others, we should lead by example.

Dr. Laurel Shaler