Supervising the School Psychology Practicum
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Supervising the School Psychology Practicum

A GUIDE FOR FIELD AND UNIVERSITY SUPERVISORS

Kristy K. Kelly, PhD
Shanna D. Davis, PhD
To all of the supervisors and the students they teach.
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Every school psychologist-in-training completes at least one practicum during his or her graduate career. Practica are an essential part of school psychology curricula and critical for candidate preparation for internship, the culminating experience of graduate training. Despite the significance, there is little known about how practica and associated supervision are addressed within graduate programs nationwide. Although important accrediting bodies and professional organizations recognize the significance of practica and field experiences with some basic requirements, training institutions have been provided little guidance on this topic.

Supervising the School Psychology Practicum: A Guide for Field and University Supervisors is a practical resource for those involved in the training and supervision of school psychology practicum candidates, including supervising school psychologists, university trainers, and graduate candidates. The book is designed, in particular, with the field supervisor in mind. We present information related to supervising novice practicum candidates in the field and assisting with training in basic school psychology foundations. Field supervisors will find many ready-to-use resources in the form of reproducible handouts, example formats, figures, and reference tables and boxes. University trainers can use this text as a guide for designing practicum experiences, to assist with training and supervision provided via campus-based seminars, or for adoption for a course in supervision. It may be particularly useful for doctoral candidates enrolled in a supervision course and involved with the provision of practicum supervision of more novice candidates. Practicum candidates may also use this resource to enhance their supervision and training. Trainees will find many of the resources helpful in building their professional identity and applying concepts learned through coursework in the field.

Supervising the School Psychology Practicum: A Guide for Field and University Supervisors includes eight chapters that are organized to roughly follow the developmental sequence of a full academic year practicum, from entry through termination of the practicum. While not all practica are designed this way, we have included content that is relevant to the supervision and training of contemporary foundations of school psychological...
practice and address issues related to a wide range of practicum experiences. Topics addressed include case conceptualization across three broad roles (i.e., evaluation, consultation, counseling) of school psychological practice, the foundations of special education, multitiered systems of support, development of important professional behaviors, and internship preparation. Our final chapter will be of particular interest to university trainers and field supervisors, as it provides strategies for effectively collaborating across university and field settings to enhance training.

Each chapter is organized in a similar format, with a focus on the following key supervisory roles: (a) candidate skill development, (b) supervision, and (c) advancement and evaluation. The content aligns with the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) training standards and is meant to be a step-by-step guide to training and supervision related to practica. Each chapter also concludes with a supervisor-to-do list to assist readers in applying the concepts addressed. The final chapter is designed as a special topic in practicum supervision and focuses on collaboration between university trainers and field supervisors, as well as strategies for addressing common issues in training, including problems with trainee professional competence. Handouts and appendixes are also available for download and may serve as ready-to-use practical resources. Many can be used as designed or modified for individual use. Download from: springerpub.com/kelly
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—Kristy K. Kelly

I would like to thank my family and friends for being endless sources of support, good humor, and occasional, well-timed awe. I would like to thank my former practicum and internship supervisors, Nancy Knutson, Andrea Canter, and Scott McConnell for their life-long lessons. And finally, I would like to thank Kristy for being such a great friend, colleague, and inspiration to be better at everything.

—Shanna D. Davis
ENTRY INTO THE PRACTICUM

The start of the practicum for the school psychologist-in-training is an incredibly exciting time in professional development. In many training programs, the practicum is the first formal training candidates receive under the supervision of a credentialed school psychologist. Whether in an educational specialist (EdS) or doctoral program, it can be assumed that a candidate has completed at least 1 year of formal coursework in the foundations of school psychology and assessment practice. In addition, some training programs offer candidates other applied experiences (e.g., service learning, clinic rotations, research work) that help to prepare them for work in the field. Regardless of the training model, the practicum is often the first time a candidate is exposed fully to the roles and functions of the school psychologist in everyday practice. As such, candidates require a high level of supervision and support from field and university supervisors, proper orientation to the school setting in which they are placed, and an appropriate introduction to the supervision process. This chapter explores each of these activities as they relate to both the field and university settings.

THE SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY PRACTICUM

The National Association of School Psychologists (NASP; 2010) Standards for Graduate Preparation of School Psychologists define practica as “closely supervised on-campus and/or field-based activities designed to develop and evaluate school psychology candidates’ mastery of specific professional skills” (p. 7). Some training programs may require candidates to complete multiple practica aligned to a particular area of practice, such as consultation or assessment, while others have designed a more general field experience that covers a range of skills. Above all, the primary purpose for the practicum is to develop candidate skill and competency in school psychology domains.
and should not be mistaken as a way to deliver important professional service in the organization or school (NASP, 2010). While candidates in training undoubtedly add value to the working environment of a school and may provide service through the practicum activities they engage in during their training, supervisors should not view the practicum candidate as a key service provider and expect to “share the caseload.”

The number of hours required in a practicum may vary greatly depending on the requirements of the training institution or credentialing process for the state. Doctoral candidates typically spend more time in practica-related activities as part of the training sequence than a specialist-level student. In a national survey of specialist-level school psychology programs, directors reported that candidates were required to complete a minimum of 414.75 hours, on average, during practicum training (Lasser, 2013). The number of hours required by programs ranged from 200 to 1,200 hours. More clear, perhaps, is that practica must be completed for academic credit and prepare candidates for the school psychology internship (NASP, 2010), the culminating field-training experience. That said, practica placements are most typically completed on a part-time basis (e.g., 2 days per work week) and occur concurrently with university-based instruction.

As previously noted, a practicum should be designed as a closely supervised training experience (NASP, 2010) and is likely to include supervision from both university- and field-based personnel. Who then is qualified to provide this supervision? Both the American Psychological Association (APA) and NASP offer little to answer this important question in their guidelines for training (APA, 2013; NASP, 2010). What these two organizations do offer, however, are more clearly defined requirements for the school psychology internship. At the most basic level, NASP requires the following for the school psychology internship: (a) field supervision from a school psychologist, who has at least 3 years of full-time experience, holds the appropriate state credential for practice in a school setting, and is a regular employee by the district or agency; (b) an average of at least 2 hours of field-based supervision per week from a supervisor that is responsible for no more than two interns; and (c) the majority of supervision is provided on a weekly, individual, face-to-face basis (NASP, 2009, 2010). The reader can review NASP’s Best Practice Guidelines for School Psychology Internship (2009) for a more thorough discussion of the recommendations for supervision, mentoring, and collaboration during internship training. Although these guidelines do not directly address practicum supervision, we feel they should be strongly considered in the design of a comprehensive practicum.

SUPERVISION IN SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY

Supervisors help trainees “bridge the gap” between what is learned in the university classroom and the practical needs of the field. In the professional literature, supervision in schools has been defined as “an interpersonal
interaction between two or more individuals for the purpose of sharing knowledge, assessing professional competencies, and providing objective feedback with the terminal goals of developing new competencies, facilitating effective delivery of psychological services, and maintaining professional competencies” (McIntosh & Phelps, 2000, pp. 33–34). NASP (2004) extends this definition with a focus on improving the “performance of all concerned—school psychologist, supervisor, students, and the entire school community” (p. 1). To summarize, good supervisors teach their trainees what they know, facilitate opportunities for practice, and evaluate trainee competence and readiness for advancement in the field. Both the trainee and supervisor are afforded an opportunity for growth and are able to provide additional benefit to the schools and students they serve through improved practice. Figure 1.1 illustrates the components of school psychology supervision.

Understanding the roles of supervision is a good start, but having a framework for addressing these roles is equally important. A developmental model of supervision is particularly useful in conceptualizing how the school psychologist-in-training experiences growth in clinical skills and professional identity over time. Developmental models of supervision recognize that professional development is an ongoing process and that supervision should be integrated throughout the course of professional practice, both during formal graduate training and beyond. Harvey and Struzziero (2008) describe a model that integrates work from Stoltenberg and Delworth (1987) and Benner (1984) that indicates trainees pass through various levels (novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, expert) before professional identity is fully integrated. A trainee experiences shifts in both cognitive

![FIGURE 1.1 Components of school psychology supervision.](image-url)
Supervising the School Psychology Practicum

(concrete to more abstract) and behavioral (rule-governed to intuitive) development as they advance through each stage. Self-awareness in the professional role also improves as a trainee advances through each level. As shown in Figure 1.2, school psychology candidates enter the practicum with little to no applied experience in the various roles of school psychology and their training is consistent with what Harvey and Struzziero (2008) describe as a novice supervisee. Novices are characterized as being highly motivated, having limited self-awareness, and focused on skill acquisition. Given the multiplicity of the roles of the school psychologist, it is unrealistic to assume that candidates will advance much beyond the novice level of professional development during the practicum. Thus, the practicum is designed for school psychology candidates to gain a basic level of training in the roles and functions of the school psychologist. Depth and breadth of training should be expected during advanced field experiences (e.g., internship).

In these early stages of professional development, supervisees require highly structured and prescriptive supervision in order to control their anxiety and provide adequate direction in early activities (Stoltenberg, 2005). Novices benefit from facilitative (e.g., praise, reinforcement, attentive listening), prescriptive (i.e., provide specific input and direction), and conceptual (i.e., link theory to practice) interventions (Stoltenberg, 2005). The supervision activities and resources provided in this book have been designed with this understanding in mind.

A stage-based developmental model, similar to the one just presented, helps to conceptualize where the practicum candidate is in the overall sequence of professional development and provides some basic direction as to the type of supervision that will meet the trainee's needs. Process developmental models can help to provide guidance during more discrete and time-limited training periods, such as a 1-year practicum (Newman,
2013). Harvey and Struzziero (2008) propose an adapted version of Alessi, Lascurettes-Alessi, and Leys’s (1981) model for intern supervision that includes five stages of goal-directed teaching activities. Newman (2013) goes on to describe this as an “I do, we do, you do” approach to supervision, with supervisors modeling roles and activities (“I do”) early in the training experience, working together with the trainee as skills improve (“we do”), and supporting trainee independence (“you do”) toward the end of the training experience. We have adapted this model further to apply specifically to training at the practicum level and it is illustrated in Table 1.1. Each stage of the model is aligned to supervision goals and suggested supervision activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 1.1 Goal-Directed Supervision</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Stage</strong></td>
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</table>
| 1: Shadowing and modeling           | Supervisee shadows supervisor to directly observe performance of professional activities | ■ Introduce supervisee to various school personnel  
■ Provide tour of school facilities  
■ Orient supervisee to school and district procedures  
■ Organize supervisee’s observations of different classrooms and programs  
■ Invite supervisee to attend various team meetings  
■ Orient supervisee to roles and responsibilities of school psychologist in school/district |
| 2: Observation and assessment of professional skills | Supervisor observes supervisee performing direct and indirect services, assesses supervisee developmental levels, and develops training plan with supervisee | ■ Observe supervisee conducting a variety of assessments  
■ Observe supervisee interacting with students, other school personnel, and parents  
■ Observe supervisee interviewing students, teachers, and parents  
■ Observe supervisee in basic consultation activities (e.g., teacher implementation of behavior plan)  
■ Observe supervisee in team settings  
■ Review current counseling cases with supervisee  
■ Direct supervisee to conduct self-assessment of skill and experience in various domains  
■ Develop training plan with supervisee for site that incorporates university and site goals and objectives |
### TABLE 1.1 Goal-Directed Supervision (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Supervision Goals</th>
<th>Suggested Activities</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3: Guided independent practice</td>
<td>Supervisee independently performs tasks in which he or she has demonstrated competence and continues to receive more direct supervision for new skills</td>
<td>■ Assign basic case studies&lt;br&gt;■ Collaborate on supervisee’s casework&lt;br&gt;■ Cofacilitate counseling group with supervisee&lt;br&gt;■ Assign individual counseling case&lt;br&gt;■ Collaborate on first full consultation case&lt;br&gt;■ Assign supervisee an active role on one or two teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4: Increasing independent practice</td>
<td>Supervisee takes more initiative and responsibility for professional activities</td>
<td>■ Direct supervisee to conduct self-assessment of skill and experience in various domains&lt;br&gt;■ Collaboratively assess progress with professional plan and identify new goals for professional development&lt;br&gt;■ Assist supervisee in development of professional portfolio&lt;br&gt;■ Allow supervisee to lead case conceptualization on one or two case studies&lt;br&gt;■ Allow supervisee to lead group counseling for one or more sessions&lt;br&gt;■ Explore new counseling roles (e.g., new groups, individual casework, family support)&lt;br&gt;■ Facilitate school level presentation or activity (e.g., staff professional development, systems project, presentation to school team)&lt;br&gt;■ Allow supervisee to present casework in team meeting (e.g., individualized education program [IEP] report, problem-solving case)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5: Professional independence</td>
<td>Long-term plans for professional development are established</td>
<td>■ Develop termination plan with supervisee for site- and case-related activities&lt;br&gt;■ Assist supervisee in preparation for certification/licensure requirements&lt;br&gt;■ Conduct summative evaluation of supervisee’s competence in practice domains&lt;br&gt;■ Assist supervisee in developing goals for internship (short term)&lt;br&gt;■ Assist supervisee in developing goals for professional work (long term)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
SUPERVISION ACTIVITIES

Practicum candidates and supervisors alike often begin the year with a great deal of excitement about their work together. With this excitement, however, may also come some anxiety about how it will all turn out. Supervisees may feel worried about their overall performance and ability to succeed in the field, while supervisors may have concerns about their potential success as supervisors. While this anxiety is normal and should be expected, it can have a direct impact on the overall supervisory relationship (Bischoff, Barton, Thober, & Hawley, 2002). Supervisors should both recognize how these feelings may impact the process of supervision and also take care in helping to alleviate it in the early stages of the relationship. A thoughtful orientation to the field site and supervision process is an excellent way to address these early concerns. In particular, supervisees need to learn a great deal about how to enter the placement site, participate in the supervisory relationship, and take a more active role in their professional development. We discuss each of these activities in more detail.

Orientation to Placement Site

Formal orientation to the field site helps to set the stage for successful supervision. Even before the field training begins, supervisors should begin orienting their supervisees to the overall school environment in which they will practice. Like any organization, schools have their own culture and operating procedures and are often part of larger local districts. Supervisors can help supervisees feel prepared, welcomed, and connected to the school, even before they begin, by making efforts to help them learn more about the site. For example, most districts require individuals who will work in a school to first pass a background check and fingerprinting procedures before having contact with children. Supervisors should be prepared to help their supervisees navigate all of the building and district requirements to ensure a smooth transition into the setting. The roles and responsibilities of today's school psychologist may also vary greatly depending on the district needs, practices, and professional training of the psychologist. Given the limited experience of the practicum candidate, most will have a limited understanding of what the expectations are for school psychology practice in their individual field site. Orientation to the school psychology roles and functions in the field site, in relation to recognized practice domains (e.g., NASP practice domains), will help supervisees gain perspective about the work they will engage in during practicum training. A sample checklist for orientation to the field site is provided in Handout 1.1 and outlines activities that will help supervisors to prepare supervisees to connect to the site, understand the district policies and procedures that impact practice, and gain a clear view of how the field experience will contribute to their overall training in the field of school psychology.
### HANDOUT 1.1  Field Site Orientation Checklist

**Site Introduction**
- Direct supervisee to read student and staff handbooks and review school/district website
- Provide walking tour of building facilities on first day
- Assist supervisee in completing all human resources paperwork, processes, and procedures (e.g., background checks, fingerprinting)
- Orient supervisee to building access procedures (e.g., keys, name tags, hours)
- Orient supervisee to workspace, resources, and office procedures
- Introduce supervisee to front office staff
- Introduce supervisee at first staff or building meeting
- Introduce supervisee via e-mail to all staff in building and explain supervisee roles and availability
- Direct supervisee to review information about school demographics and populations served
- Direct supervisee to review any school/district information about school performance indicators (e.g., test scores, parent involvement, programming)

**School/District Policies and Procedures**
- Direct supervisee to review school/district special education procedures and paperwork
- Direct supervisee to review school crisis plans and protocols
- Introduce supervisee to all school-related service professionals via e-mail and in-person
- Orient supervisee to all school teams (e.g., problem solving, behavior support, grade level)
- Orient supervisee to parent groups and resources

**School Psychology Roles and Functions**
- Review school psychology roles and responsibilities in the district
- Allow supervisee to shadow for first few days
- Introduce supervisee to other district school psychologists
- Introduce supervisee to peer supervision groups
- Orient supervisee to locations and procedures for student files and records (e.g., cumulative and special education)
- Orient supervisee to assessment and intervention resources
Orientation to Supervision Formats

There are a number of recognized formats for conducting supervision of psychologists, such as individual, group, peer, and live versus virtual methods. While individual supervision tends to be the most preferred (Milne & Oliver, 2000), supervisors are encouraged to consider using a variety of approaches to meet the individual needs of the practicing psychologist, supervisee, and site. We review formats here that we feel are well suited to practicum training.

Individual supervision

As noted, individual supervision is the most preferred (Milne & Oliver, 2000) and commonly used format for clinical supervision. Supervisors meet with supervisees face-to-face in regularly scheduled meetings each week to discuss training and casework. At the practicum level, it is most likely that supervisees will spend the majority of their time in the site with their individual supervisor, particularly in the beginning stages. This in-the-moment supervision, however, is not the same as formal individual supervision and should not replace this time. While much can be learned from working in tandem each day, much can also be missed in these interactions. Supervisees may not take the time or know when to ask for guidance and assistance with casework or may only get some of their questions addressed as the busy day unfolds. Individual supervision allows for thoughtful discussion of case planning and assists the supervisee in case conceptualization, a skill that is very new to the practicum candidate. Moreover, this format has been recognized as the method of supervision that provides the greatest level of protection over client outcomes and control over the quality of trainee work (Milne & Oliver, 2000). It is highly recommended that supervisors and supervisees schedule a formal individual supervision time in the first week of training and prioritize this time as busy schedules take over.

To maximize the time spent during individual supervision and assist the novice supervisee in learning how to participate in this important professional activity, we encourage supervisors to use a structured session format. This will help both the supervisor and supervisee to prepare, facilitate, and document what occurs during each supervision session. This will be the first of many supervisory relationships (e.g., internship, district administrators) the practicum candidate will have over the course of his or her professional career. Supervisors can thus promote supervisee development of important professional skills by teaching supervisees how to be actively engaged in the supervision process. For many school psychologists in training, the supervisory experience they have during fieldwork is the only preparation they have for providing supervision later in their careers.
We propose that supervisors consider structuring their sessions so that they are goal oriented, address opportunities for supervisee growth and advancement, and offer feedback about performance (see Figure 1.3). Teaching supervisees to prepare for supervision sessions by developing clearly defined goals in advance of the session helps to foster self-sufficiency as a trainee (Harvey & Struzziero, 2008). Supervisees should develop goals for supervision (what guidance do they need or questions do they want answered), feedback (what work or skills should be evaluated), and growth (what do they want to do next). The supervisor should assist the supervisee in determining what he or she wants from supervision and ultimately help the supervisee achieve these goals. Supervisors can facilitate opportunities for trainee growth by taking an active role in developing and maintaining the supervisee’s training plan throughout the practicum. Over the course of supervision, the supervisor should assess how the experiences provided in the field are consistent with the student training goals (e.g., What have you done? What do you need to do next?). The final component, feedback, is a cornerstone for supervisee development and an important communication tool used to maintain or change trainee behavior. Supervisors should provide feedback to supervisees for three main reasons: (a) to facilitate skill development, (b) to change or “fix” problems, and (c) to respond to specific skill requests from the supervisee. Because feedback can be both difficult to provide and accept, the systems and formats for providing feedback should be discussed early in the supervisory relationship so that both supervisor
and supervisee are prepared and more open to engaging in this process. We provide a more thorough discussion of feedback systems later in this chapter. An example session format for individual supervision, oriented around the three tenets discussed in this section, is also included in Handout 1.2. This tool can be used to both facilitate and document supervision sessions. Supervisors can complete the first page and use it to guide their discussion about casework, provide feedback, and document the feedback that is provided. The forms may be kept for reference in later individual sessions to ensure that the feedback is addressed in subsequent training and supervision activities. Supervisees complete the second page as an opportunity to provide the supervisor with feedback about the supervision session.

**Group supervision**

During group supervision, a supervisor meets with more than one supervisee at a time, and may use one of two different formats. The supervisor can provide individual supervision within a group setting, wherein the supervisor rotates to each individual supervisee over the course of the session. Alternatively, the supervisor can facilitate group support for individuals within the group or collectively address common issues for all members of the group. The group format provides benefits beyond individual supervision in that it allows group members to learn from one another and also provides a built-in network of professional support. Research has shown that this format is most effective when used with video/audio recording and experiential techniques (Ray & Altekruse, 2000), thus incorporating activities such as role-play, video analysis, and simulated activities may be helpful. Supervisors who are responsible for multiple supervisees may find this format to be a much more efficient way to provide supervision. This type of supervision is particularly useful when incorporated into university seminars that are provided on campus, where one supervisor monitors the training of a small group of practicum candidates that are at the same developmental level. Field supervisors who train multiple candidates at different levels (e.g., practicum students and interns) may also find this format useful in their work.

When using the group format, supervisors should also take care in attending to the stages of group development. Harvey and Sturzziero (2008) summarize a three-phase process. During an initial stage, the group leader establishes ground rules, orients the group to the structure of supervision sessions, and reviews expectations for the confidentiality of client and supervision work. In this stage, we feel it is particularly useful for supervisors to introduce and model a structure for group supervision so that case and fieldwork can be presented in a systematic way, helping the novice professional to develop early skills in both case conceptualization and supervision. Figure 1.4 provides an adapted format from Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Hart,
### HANDOUT 1.2 Supervision Notes and Feedback Form: Supervisor

**Student prepared for the supervision session (e.g., identified goals, had data and information necessary to discuss cases):**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>not at all</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>somewhat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>fairly well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>very effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student objectives (list main objectives for supervision session):**

**Student presentation of cases and work was concise and allowed for focus on problem solving and consultation:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>not at all</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>fairly well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>very effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Student requests for feedback or guidance were specific and relevant to work in site:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>not at all</td>
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<td>fairly well</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>very effective</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Feedback (circle area[s] addressed):**

- Skill/Knowledge
- Application
- Dependence
- Organization
- Interpersonal
- Accepting Feedback

**Note feedback provided:**

**Supervision Reflection: Student**

*Rate the session on a scale of 1 to 5, with a 5 indicating a very successful supervision session.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rating</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>4</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Identify how the supervision met your needs:*  

*Identify what your supervisor could have done to improve the supervision session:*  

*Identify what you could have done to improve the supervision session:*
and Morris (1994) that the authors have found to be successful for group supervision during practicum seminars in the university setting. During the intermediate stage, the leader provides active supervision thereby promoting a norm of structured and supportive feedback. During the final stage, the supervisor attends to the termination of both field and group activities. Supervisors should prepare for their group supervision by considering the life cycle of both the group and field activities.

**Other formats**

There are a few additional supervision formats that practicum supervisors may consider using to supplement individual and group supervision; we mention these briefly. Perhaps of most use is collaborative work, where supervisor and supervisee work together on cases and field activities. We have observed field supervisors use this method most often by working collaboratively with practicum supervisees to complete psychoeducational evaluations. This is particularly common when a supervisee has little exposure or experience to new assessment tools and methods and may benefit from observing the supervisor administer a test or analyze and interpret the results. Another format to consider is team supervision, where multiple supervisors work with the same supervisee. We have seen this used effectively when more than one supervisor provides supervision to a practicum candidate because they hold different roles (e.g., Response to Intervention (RtI) coordinator, counseling team member) in the
Supervising the School Psychology Practicum

district and want to provide the candidate with experience in various practice domains. University and field supervisors also provide team supervision to candidates when they work collaboratively to support the candidate through training. This team supervision can be enhanced with thoughtful planning and collaboration. For example, one of the authors asks each site supervisor to conduct an observation with her of each of the practicum candidates during training. A team supervision meeting is held with the supervisee, whereby each supervisor provides feedback and all three discuss how this relates to overall professional development and goals.

It would be remiss to exclude from our discussion on supervision formats the potential to also use various forms of technology in supervision, including phones, e-mail, and computers. Contemporary school psychologists work in a “tech savvy” world and today’s practicum candidate is likely proficient and reliant on a variety of technology tools. Supervisors should plan ahead and discuss with their supervisees how technology will be used in their practice and supervision. Phones can be a useful way to communicate with supervisees when important situations (e.g., student crisis, supervisee illness) arise in the event that the supervisor is off-site or the supervisee needs to communicate outside of work hours. Supervisors should provide phone numbers (e.g., work, home, cell) to use for contact and also set ground rules for when and how to use them (e.g., hours of availability, reasons for contact, voice versus text contact). Supervisors who are unclear about these expectations may otherwise receive shorthand abbreviations via text late at night from their supervisee!

E-mail has also become a common and somewhat preferred method of communication in most workplaces. Supervisors may find it very useful to rely on e-mail to coordinate schedules and discuss general site activities with their supervisee. We recommend that supervisors be very cautious in how they use e-mail to communicate about the supervisee or the students and families they serve so that confidentiality is maintained. Supervisors and supervisees often share student casework via e-mail during the process of review and revision. At a minimum, identifying information should be removed from reports, student records, and written communications. As an alternative to e-mail, it may also be useful to explore the use of secure cloud sharing systems such as Dropbox or Box or utilize a secure district network to share case files and student information.

Supervisees may also need some additional guidance on how to communicate with e-mail in the professional world. For many candidates, the practicum may be the first experience working in a professional setting. Supervisors are encouraged to take some time to review how formal e-mail communications should look, either by sharing examples or having the supervisee practice sending communications to them. It is also important
to direct the supervisee to create a signature line and appropriately note his or her status as a psychologist in training. Finally, it is worthwhile to also discuss expectations for response time and some common barriers to the use of e-mail communications, such as the increased probability for miscommunication. Supervisors and supervisees should proactively discuss how they will both prevent and address potential miscommunications (e.g., follow-up in-person) when they occur. For example, a supervisor may request a student meeting if a supervisee sends a lengthy and time-intensive e-mail asking for guidance with casework.

Videoconferencing has also been demonstrated as an effective tool for supervision (Chamberlain, 2000) and can be used in either individual or group formats. It is particularly useful when supervisors are required to provide remote supervision (e.g., location of site is a long distance from the training institution, commute times are lengthy). In a videoconference, the supervisor would meet virtually with one or more supervisees, meeting with them in real time. Supervisors may also choose to conduct site visits or observation through a videoconference format. This type of supervision is referred to as telesupervision and is defined as “clinical supervision of psychological services through a synchronous audio and video format where the supervisor is not in the same physical facility as the trainee” (Commission on Accreditation[CoA], 2010, p. 64). Doctoral programs that utilize telesupervision must have a formal policy regarding the use of this supervision modality and ensure that it does not account for more than 50% of the total supervision at a practicum site (CoA, 2010). Videoconferencing may also prove to be incredibly useful in facilitating metasupervision (e.g., supervision of supervision) activities for field and university supervisors. For example, a university-based practicum supervisor may hold monthly group metasupervision meetings via Skype with all of the field-based supervisors for a particular cohort of students to discuss supervision issues throughout the year.

**Orientation to Evaluation and Feedback**

Evaluation is a central component of supervision and critical to ensuring that supervisees are meeting the goals of supervision (Corey, Haynes, Moulton, & Muratori, 2010). Consistent with the NASP training recommendations for interns (NASP, 2010), candidates should be evaluated both formatively (assessed regularly throughout the training experience) and summatively (assessed at the end of the training cycle) during formal practicum training. Summative evaluation of trainee skills is typically directed by the university and is often accomplished when the field supervisor completes a form that assesses supervisee competence in various
practice domains. Depending on the length of the practicum (i.e., semester, full year), the evaluation may occur once or more (i.e., midterm, year end) during the training experience. School psychologists in training are required to demonstrate both knowledge/skills and work characteristics relevant for professional practice in the field (NASP, 2010). Work characteristics refer to professional behaviors (e.g., time management, organization, flexibility) and interpersonal skills (e.g., cooperation, enthusiasm, empathy) that are necessary for work as a school psychologist. We have included in Appendix A a copy of the practicum evaluation tool used in the School Psychology Program at The Chicago School of Professional Psychology (TCSPP) as an example. The form requires field supervisors to evaluate professional skills and behaviors as they relate to the 10 NASP standards, as well as professional work characteristics demonstrated in training. Supervisors also make an assessment of the candidate’s readiness for advancement to internship training.

While feedback by itself is a nonevaluative appraisal of performance, it is tied to the overall evaluation and advancement of the trainee. Meaningful feedback can assist supervisees in developing self-efficacy and an accurate view of their professional competencies (Steward, Breland, & Neil, 2001). While the benefits of providing corrective feedback are commonly known, this does not negate the fact that many supervisors struggle giving supervisees honest feedback. Some challenges include: (a) fear of upsetting the supervisee or damaging the supervisory relationship, (b) feedback that is too general and not specific, (c) an over-reliance on positive encouragement and lack of corrective feedback, (d) discomfort by the supervisor in giving feedback, (e) poor timing (i.e., too late), and (f) a supervisee being resistant or defensive to feedback (McKimm, 2009). Supervisors can help to prevent some of these issues by discussing how feedback will be provided and used at the start of the practicum and also by encouraging self-awareness around both the supervisor’s and supervisee’s approach and response to feedback. For example, the supervisor might prompt an initial discussion where the supervisor discloses comfort with the process of providing feedback and asks the supervisee to describe his or her experiences and expectations with feedback in other settings.

Supervisors are encouraged to find a formal system for providing feedback. Informing supervisees about the process and expectations for feedback will help to decrease their anxiety about the experience and prepare them to use the feedback more constructively in their clinical work. One method that supervisors may find helpful is the sandwich method (Daniels, 2009), where corrective feedback is sandwiched between two positive comments. This type of approach may work particularly well for the novice
practicum candidate, as it focuses on using encouraging statements to deliver the feedback. A second approach for establishing a conversation about performance during supervision is the Pendleton method (Cantillon & Sargeant, 2008). The following steps are used: (a) the supervisee states what was good about his or her performance (b) the supervisor states areas of agreement and elaborates on good performance (c) the supervisee states what was poor or could have been improved (d) the supervisor states what he or she thinks could have been improved. Examples of each of these are provided in Box 1.1.

<table>
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<th>BOX 1.1 Example Supervisee Feedback</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>The Sandwich Method:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Positive statement:</strong> I really like the intervention you chose.</td>
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<td><strong>Corrective statement:</strong> I noticed that the student was not given a chance to try the task independently. Perhaps we could find a way to incorporate this into your current plan.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Positive statement:</strong> You seemed to have a great rapport with the student.</td>
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<td><strong>Pendleton Method:</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor:</strong> “It’s time for your midyear evaluation. We’re going to use a model in which I will have you share what you think is going well, and then I will share. I will then have you state what you think you could improve and then I will share.”</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisee:</strong> “Ok, sounds good. Well, I think I have done a good job getting my reports finished on time. I have incorporated your feedback and have integrated them more than I did in the beginning of the year. I have been working really hard in the resource classroom to help with Curriculum Based Measurement (CBM) progress monitoring and have enjoyed my social skills group.”</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor:</strong> “I agree. I have seen an improvement in your reports. I also know that Ms. Brown really appreciates your help and has really learned how to get progress monitoring up and running. You have done a nice job planning your group and the students seem excited to come each week. What are some things you think you could improve?”</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisee:</strong> “Well, I think I could do a better job with follow through. I notice Mr. Fredrickson didn’t respond about the plan for Charlie. I need to make sure to follow up with him. I could also run my group a little more smoothly. Sometimes the students talk out and do not follow directions.”</td>
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<td><strong>Supervisor:</strong> “Great ideas and reflection. It is great to follow up with teachers. I would agree that when you give something to a teacher or ask him or her to implement a plan, you need to follow up immediately for the first few weeks until it is up and running. For your group, the management is always tough. Have you considered an incentive system? We can work on this. I would like to see some kind of outcome measure to know if it is helping. Overall, you have offered a nice reflection. Let’s follow up next week to see how these new ideas work out for you.”</td>
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Feedback is also bidirectional (McKimm, 2009) and supervisors are encouraged to seek feedback from supervisees about their experiences in supervision. Supervisors should frequently assess how well their methods of supervision are meeting the supervisees’ needs and whether adjustments should be made in order to better support training. Supervisees who are provided regular opportunities to provide feedback to their supervisors will find it less challenging to address potential conflicts that may arise during the supervisory relationship. Incorporating two-way feedback into supervision is an excellent way to teach these important professional skills to the novice trainee. It will also likely be a much more pleasant experience for both!

**Development of Training Plan**

A thoughtful orientation should also include the development of a plan that documents supervisee goals and activities for the training period. A training plan is a written document and can serve as a contract between the field and university supervisors and supervisee and is a great tool for ensuring goal attainment over the course of training. It is important to remember that the school psychology practicum candidate is often enrolled in courses on campus while completing the part-time field training experience. As such, practicum candidates often have to manage field-based training requirements from course instructors (i.e., applied assignments), practicum seminar leaders (i.e., seminar assignments), and field supervisors (i.e., unique activities related to the field site). While these experiences are all essential to the growth and development of the candidate, having multiple supervisors and expectations can also lead to miscommunication and conflict without thoughtful coordination. It is recommended that supervisors collaborate with their supervisees to develop a training plan that will be monitored over the course of the practicum.

A great place to start is to prompt the supervisee to document all of the university requirements he or she will need to complete in the field site. The field supervisor and supervisee can discuss both the feasibility of facilitating university expectations and ways they can be accomplished in the field site (e.g., assign casework and roles). If conflicts arise during these initial discussions, the university-based supervisor can be consulted for problem solving and assistance. The field supervisor should then offer input about the types of experiences and activities he or she feels are unique to the training site and beneficial for the student. The field supervisor and supervisee can determine which activities they will add to the plan. Finally, the field and university supervisors can prompt the supervisee to complete a self-assessment of his or her skills and interests in the field. Encouraging trainees to routinely appraise and correct their
own performance helps them to develop skills for lifelong professional development (Cantillon & Sargeant, 2008). In our work, we have observed this done with very informal (e.g., general reflection upon skill and abilities) and more formal (e.g., review of skills and abilities in 10 NASP domains, inventories) approaches. One suggestion is to have the supervisees self-evaluate skills and abilities with the formal evaluation tool that will be used to assess competencies during the training experience. Upon completion of the self-assessment, supervisees can develop a few feasible goals they have for their own professional development.

Supervisees may find using the SMART method (Doran, 1981) useful when writing goals for the training plan. Goals should be written so that they are specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time-bound. An example goal for the practicum training plan might state, “Co-lead one 8-week social-skills group by April.” This goal provides specific (8-week social skills group) information about the candidate behaviors (co-lead a group) that will be attained by the end of the practicum training period (time-bound). It is attainable, realistic, and easily measured through observation and documentation. Once an initial plan has been drafted, all three parties (field and university supervisors and supervisee) should review the plan for final revisions and each place a formal signature on the document as an agreement for training. An example training plan is included in Appendix B.

**SUMMARY**

School psychologists who supervise the practicum candidate are in a unique position to help train candidates that are novices in the field and are often completing their very first field training experience. Practicum candidates require supervision that is highly structured, provides a great deal of direction, and offers a high level of encouragement and support. Supervisors can help to set the stage for a successful supervisory relationship by thoroughly orienting the practicum candidate to the field site and the supervision process. Thoughtful orientation includes an introduction to the placement site, supervision formats that will be used during the training experience, procedures for trainee evaluation and feedback, and concludes with the development of a formal training plan. Supervisors should also encourage active supervisee participation in the supervision process and professional development by incorporating activities that promote self-assessment and reflection. Taking time to establish the routines, procedures, and expectations for supervision in the early days of the supervisory relationship helps to promote positive outcomes for the supervisee, supervisor(s), and the students, families, and schools they serve.
SUPERVISOR TO-DO LIST

- Orient supervisee to field site
- Orient supervisee to supervision formats (e.g., individual, group, other) and procedures
- Orient supervisee to evaluation and feedback methods, including timelines and procedures
- Develop a training plan for field activities
- Prompt supervisee to complete a self-assessment of current competencies

REFERENCES


Lasser, J. (2013). *Internship and practicum hours per semester* (Data file). Retrieved from https://docs.google.com/spreadsheet/ccc?key=0AqoXyD0HMgFdrJRe2dDRHLUQ5VWdVGZMYXUxU0aFE&usp=sharing


