**How Site Supervisors Identify and Respond to Counselors-in-Training Who Exhibit Problematic Behaviors: A Grounded Theory Study**

by

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to provide information regarding the experiences of site supervisors in supervising counselors-in-training who have exhibited problematic behaviors and to begin building a theory about how site supervisors' identify and respond to intern counselors-in-training who exhibit problematic behavior while at their internship sites. Grounded theory was utilized in this study to allow for the exploration of a topic that has previously been explored on a limited basis.

Categories that emerged within this study describe how site supervisors identify those intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior and how they responded to the situation. Ten participants participated in a single semi-structured interview incorporating experience-near questions. Categories depicting how site supervisors identify problematic behavior including through observation by administrative staff and the site supervisor; during supervision through the self-identification from the intern counselor-in-training; and via external sources such as clients or the faculty supervisor. Categories depicting how site supervisors respond to an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors include collaboration with colleagues, supervisors, and faculty supervisors; reactions including shock, frustration, and sadness; and interventions which included working with the intern and as a last resort, termination. Further, categories emerged that were not connected to the research questions, including challenges supervisors face, motivations to be a site supervisors, and experiences

working with faculty supervisors.  Results are provided and discussed along with implications

for counselor education programs are provided.

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## Abbreviations

American Counseling Association (ACA)

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

American Psychology Association (APA)

Association for Counselor Education and Supervisors (ACES)

Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification (CRCC)

Council on Rehabilitation Education (CORE)

Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP)

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CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION

In counselor education, one of the most significant experiences for counselors-in-training is the internship experience. These experiences provide counselors-in-training with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom to their work with clients. With guidance from counselor education faculty and site supervisors, the internship experience provides counselors-in-training with the opportunity to gain practical experience and prepare for their future role as a professional counselor. Tasked with preparing counselors-in-training, counselor education programs and site supervisors work with counselors-in-training on their development as counselors. This includes developing a professional identity within the counseling profession that adheres to a set of standards and ethical guidelines as well as work with individuals in need of remediation (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Kerl, McCullough & Maxwell, 2002; Lamb, Presser, Pfost, Baum, Jackson, & Jarvis, 1987; Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Rust, Raskin, & Hill 2013). While counselor education programs employ faculty to prepare counselors-in-training, internship sites employ site supervisors who provide counselors-in-training with on-site supervision during their internship experiences. As counseling students enter the counseling profession, their practical experience has the potential

to affect not only their career but also the future of the counseling profession as well as the clients they serve.

The impact of the counseling practicum and internship experience on counselors-in-training may have career-long implications. The knowledge, skills, interpersonal, and intrapersonal behaviors learned and utilized during the practicum and internship experience may be applied in their interaction with clients and colleagues in the future (Bradley & Fiorini, 1999). Additionally, the opportunity to apply their knowledge of therapeutic skills and ethical guidelines during an internship experience provides counselors-in-training with valuable experience in working with clients (Bradley & Fiorini, 1999; MacGulfie & Henderson, 1977; Pitts, 1992). Based on the aforementioned concepts, it is of great importance for counselors-in-training to complete an internship experience that is supervised on-site by an experienced site supervisor and in an internship course by a counselor educator. Counselor educators and site supervisors are responsible for not only monitoring the performance of the intern student but also for the welfare of the clients served.

Guidelines for the development of counselors-in-training, which include internship, are provided to counselor education programs through multiple avenues. Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP), the American Counseling Association (ACA), and the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES) provide guidelines, ethical codes and best practice information to counselor education programs and site supervisors. ACES guidelines specify that counselor educators and site supervisors are expected to work with students on advancing their skills and knowledge so that the services provided are of high quality (ACES, 2013). Additionally, CACREP requires site supervisors must have been in their current position for three years and that they should receive support from

the counselor education program (CACREP 2009). Prior to the development of these guidelines, previous literature suggested that limited opportunities for training or support existed for site supervisors (Borders & Leddick, 1988). Later, in 2011, this was further supported in a study in which it was discovered that few supervisors receive training with zero being the median number of hours of training received (DeKruyf & Pehrsson, 2011), thus showing continued lack of training received by site supervisors. Neither the study in 1988 nor the study in 2011 provide counselor educators with information on the training needs of site supervisors, specifically regarding issues that might occur at the internship sites. With limited research on what site supervisors experience when working with counselors-in-training who exhibit problematic behaviors, there is a need to further explore how site supervisors describe identifying and responding to problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training while at the internship site.

Beginning counselors-in-training are in the process of developing the necessary skills to be effective counselors. Counselor education and training programs are expected to monitor the progress and skill level of the counselors-in-training (Lumadue & Duffey, 1999). Additionally, counselor educators are ethically obligated to ensure that counselors-in-training possess the necessary interpersonal skills and professional boundaries, and that they are able to understand, follow and apply ethical guidelines (ACA, 2014; CACREP, 2009; Commission on Rehabilitation Counselor Certification [CRCC], 2010). Therefore, in order to provide quality internship experiences for counselors-in-training, counselor education programs must also ensure that the site supervisors are prepared to provide quality supervision. Supervision provides counselors-in-training with the opportunity to receive monitoring and guidance from an experienced counselor during this developmental period. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) have defined supervision as a

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relationship between an experienced counselor with a counselor-in-training where the supervisor assesses the development and skills of the counselor-in-training during a period of time. The site supervisor plays a vital role in the development of counselors-in-training. Often the supervisor will be among the first to observe when a counselor-in-training is struggling with meeting competencies (Kerl et al., 2002). When a counselor-in-training struggles with meeting, obtaining, or sustaining the needed skills or competencies, the student is deemed problematic or in need of remediation. Literature has shown that occurrences of counselors-in-training requiring remediation often happen during clinical or practical experiences (Kerl et al., 2002; Lamb et al., 1987).

Although not expected or desired, an intern counselor-in-training may exhibit problematic behavior while at the internship site. The site supervisor is often the first to observe how the counselor-in-training interacts with clients. The supervisor is responsible for the quality of services provided to the client as well as protecting the client. Problematic behavior exhibited by intern students has been shown to be an issue of critical importance in counseling and related fields, such as psychology and social work (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002; Palmer, White & Chung, 2008; Vacha-Haase, Davenport, & Kerewsky, 2004). Due to the experiential process of internship, and the potential for causing harm with vulnerable clients, it is imperative to address concerns of problematic behavior during internship (McCutcheon, 2008). Those in the counselor education field are inconsistent in their definition of problematic behaviors which has led to additional questions and a call for clarity (Evans, Carney, Shannon & Strohl, 2012; Trimble, et al., 2012; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004).

Although it is possible to identify potential problematic areas early in the supervision process, supervisors are not limited to a specific time frame when identifying areas of concern

(Lamb, Cochran, & Jackson, 1991).  Lamb et al. (1991) stated that the earlier a counselor-in-training is notified about problematic behavior the more helpful and beneficial it is to the counselor-in-training.  Gaubatz and Vera (2002) suggested that "between 4% and 5% of counselors-in-training may lack the interpersonal competence or psychological health to work effectively with clients" (p 294).  Therefore, the use of supervised practical experiences for counselors-in-training is vital so that any existing problematic behaviors may be identified prior to independent interaction with clients.

Identifying counselors-in-training who exhibit problematic behaviors begins with defining what constitutes "problematic behavior."  Counselors-in-training who fail to achieve or maintain the expected standards within the profession are considered to have professional competency problems (Elman & Forrest, 2007; Kerl et al., 2002).  Within the past decade, there has been a call for a change in terminology used when discussing students exhibiting problematic behaviors.  This call is to move from terminology commonly used to discuss individuals with a disability and instead to more accurately reflect the issues of problematic behavior of counselors (Brear, Dorian, & Luscri, 2008; Forrest, Elman, Gizara, & Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004; Trimble, Stroebel, Krieg, & Rubenstein, 2012).  The term "problematic behavior" is used here to provide a term describing counselors-in-training who fail to achieve or maintain the expected standards within the profession (Elman & Forrest, 2007; Kerl et al, 2002).  Counselor education faculty are challenged with identifying problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training because of the lack of a clear definition of problematic behavior across the counselor education field (Evans, et al., 2012; Trimble, et al., 2012).  Additionally, how site supervisors view and determine what they believe constitutes problematic behavior is unclear.  Identifying and defining problematic behavior may provide site supervisors and counselor educators with information on what to look

for when observing counselors-in-training and how to develop more effective counseling education curriculums.  Clear definitions can provide counselor educators and counseling students with guidelines for appropriate types of behavior, and for specific skills needed (Trimble et al., 2012).  Furthermore, counselor educators are expected to provide information to current and prospective students regarding the standards against which they will be assessed (ACA, 2014; Brown-Rice, 2012).  This includes providing potential counselors-in-training with a definition of what constitutes problematic behaviors, thus providing counselors-in-training with the knowledge of professional standards of practice and conduct.  Consistency about the expected standard of behavior and performance between counselor educators and site supervisors may assist in the further development of intern counselors-in-training.  Providing the counselor-in-training, faculty, and site supervisors with the expected standards of behavior and performance will assist with counselors-in-training receiving appropriate supervision or necessary gatekeeping (Bodner, 2012; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999).

Supervision at an internship site provides a form of gatekeeping, which serves to protect the counseling profession and the public from individuals who demonstrate behaviors of concern.  Gatekeeping allows for a sense of quality control in a field where the professionals interact heavily with potentially vulnerable populations (Johnson, Elman, Forrest, Robiner, Rodolfa, & Schaffer, 2008; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). The use of gatekeeping in the counseling field has become widely used in an effort to improve the quality of services provided to clients (Lumadue & Duffey, 1999).  The inclusion of gatekeeping in the supervision process is vital in responding to a counselor-in-training identified as demonstrating problematic behaviors. Gatekeeping is defined as an intervention by supervisors either at an internship site or faculty in the counselor education training program when a counselor-in-training demonstrates problematic

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behavior (Ziomek-Daigle & Bailey, 2010; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010).  Gatekeeping

may occur during the admissions, educational, or practical training portion in a counseling

education program.  Gatekeeping is the result of needing to control the quality of professionals

entering the counseling field.  Within the educational setting, "gatekeeping practices in

psychology are implemented to benefit students and trainees, and the individuals with whom

they interact" (Bodner, 2012 p. 60).  A significant amount of literature on the use of gatekeeping

in counselor education has found that counselors-in-training with personal areas of concern

including emotional or interpersonal problems, apply and begin counselor education programs

(Kerl et al., 2002; Palmer et al. 2008).  While gatekeeping typically occurs at the university level,

site supervisors have demonstrated a willingness to incorporate gatekeeping at their sites when

terminating an intern counselor-in-training due to problematic behaviors (Tedesco, 1982; Vacha-

Haase, et al., 2004).  For example, Tedesco (1982) found that slightly more than one percent of

internship site supervisors requested that the counselors-in-training enrolled in an internship not

return, thus terminating their internship experience.  Two decades later, Vacha-Haase et al.

(2004) found that 52% of the internships surveyed had terminated at least one counselor-in-

training during a three-year period.

Examining site supervisors' experiences in working with problematic behaviors in intern

counseling students may provide the counseling education and supervision field with valuable

information.  The purpose of this study is to begin building a theory about how site supervisors'

identify and respond to intern counselors-in-training who are exhibiting problematic behavior

while at their internship sites.  Vacha-Haase, et al. (2004) purported that improving the

knowledge surrounding problematic behavior in counselors-in-training may lead to refining the

curriculum of counselor training programs thus resulting in improved services for current and

future clients.  This study has the potential to provide the counselor education and supervision field with: a) information to provide support and training to site supervisors, b) an operational definition of problematic behaviors, c) ideas for designing or modifying the counseling education curriculum, d) information for those revising or updating standards and guidelines for the development of counselors-in-training, and e) information for counselor education faculty to better prepare counseling students in becoming a professional counselor.

## Research Questions

1. How do clinical site supervisors describe identifying problematic behavior demonstrated by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?
2. How do clinical site supervisors respond to problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

## Definition of Terms

*Clinical Site Supervisor*: An individual responsible for monitoring and supervising the intern counselor-in-training at the internship site (Granello, 2000; Nyman, Nafziger & Smith, 2012).

*Intern Counselor-in-Training*: also referred to as an intern counselor counseling student, intern counselors-in-training are individuals currently enrolled in a CACREP accredited masters level counseling training program in an internship course requiring 600 hours of experience per CACREP requirements, which includes 240 hours of providing direct counseling services at the internship site.

*Counselor Educator*: A faculty member in a counselor education graduate program who prepares counselors-in-training through teaching and supervision.

*Problematic Behavior*: Counselors-in-training who fail to achieve or maintain the expected standards within the profession (Elman & Forrest, 2007; Kerl et al, 2002).

*Gatekeeping*: A continuous process of quality control that begins with a selective admissions process and continues throughout the education, training, and career of a counselor (Brear et al., 2009).

*Supervision*: A process in which a counselor is monitored by a clinical supervisor for quality control and progress through the monitoring of counseling sessions and case documentation  (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Granello, 2000; Nyman, Nafziger & Smith, 2012).

*CACREP*: Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs. An accrediting body that provides leadership, guidelines and promotes professional preparation in counseling and related educational programs (CACREP 2013).

*ACES*: Association for Counselor Education and Supervision.  A professional organization that promotes the need for high quality education and supervision (ACES 2013).

## Summary

This introduction chapter addressed the focus of this study, the research questions, and defined terms used in the study.  The use of internship practical training in counselor education was described along with the benefits.  An introduction to problematic behavior and gatekeeping was discussed with a brief history of the term problematic behavior.  The research questions center around the experiences of site supervisors when working with intern counseling students exhibiting problematic behavior.  Due to the vital role that site supervisors have in the "training and evaluation of graduate students, they are indispensable to the process of proactively

monitoring and addressing student impairment" (Schwartz-Mette, 2009, p. 97).  As the

researcher, I propose to explore the experiences of site supervisors of counselors-in-training,

including how they define problematic behaviors and their responses to the problematic

behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training.  A review of the literature will follow in the

next chapter.

CHAPTER II REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

**Introduction**

Literature examining problematic behaviors of counselors-in-training during internship

has been sporadic, with few studies examining problematic behavior in counselor education.

The terminology related to problematic behaviors has transformed through the years from the

term "impairment," which had disability implications, and therefore the risk for potential

discrimination lawsuits based on the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), to terms that

encompass a variety of behaviors that are cause for concern such as the use of the term

"problematic behaviors." Defining terms that address behaviors of concern continues to be

addressed in the literature with a call for clarification and unification of definitions (Brown,

2013; Brown-Rice, 2012; Elman & Forrest, 2007; Jacobs et al. 2011; McAdams & Foster, 2007;

Trimble, Stroebel, Krieg, & Rubenstein, 2012). Studies on problematic behavior in counselors-

in-training have focused on students, peers, and faculty, with a limited attention to site

supervisors (Boxley, Drew, & Rangel, 1986; Evans et al., 2012; Gizara & Forrest, 2004;

Huprich, & Rudd, 2004; Jacobs, et al., 2011; Lamb, etal., 1991; Lamb, et al., 1987; McCutcheon

2008; Rust, et al., 2013; Trimble et al., 2012; Vacha-Hasse et al., 2004; Ziomek-Daigle &

Bailey, 2010; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). Previous studies have found that internship

is the time when a significant portion of counselors-in-training demonstrate behavior that is of

concern to the site supervisor and sometimes labeled problematic (Brear, et. al 2008; Johnson,

Elman, Forrest, Robiner, Rodolfa, & Schaffer, 2008; Palmer, et al., 2008; Vacha-Haase, et al.,

2004).  This study explored the experiences of site supervisors working with intern counselors-in-training, during a time period where problematic behavior may be exhibited.

## Problematic Behavior Among Counselors-In-Training

**Terminology**

Literature that has reviewed or discussed the terminology related to problematic behaviors exhibited by counseling students has gone through a great deal of change over the last several decades.  In the 1980s, terms used included "impairment" (Lamb et. al., 1987) which Elman and Forrest (2007) noted "lacks definitional clarity" (p. 503).  Later, the terms used to describe this phenomenon included, "deficient" (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002), "not competent" (Gizara & Forrest, 2004), "problematic student" (Kress & Protivnak, 2009).  Gizara and Forrest (2004) posited that being incompetent suggests that an individual has not attained or reached an essential level of competence.  Kress and Protivnak (2009) defined "problematic student" as a counselor-in-training who "may be characterized as professionally unfit, impaired, or incompetent" (p. 154).  The earliest term used to describe students, "impairment," has fallen out of favor in recent years along with "deficient."  The use of "impairment" as a term to describe problematic behavior has been discouraged due to the use of the term as defined by the Americans with Disabilities Act (Brown, 2013; Brown-Rice, 2012; Elman & Forrest, 2007; Forrest et al., 1999; McAdams & Foster, 2007; Trimble et al., 2012).  The use of "impairment" may imply that a counselor-in-training has a disability which the counselor education program must then accommodate, as required by the ADA, rather than address the problematic behaviors exhibited by the counselor-in-training.  Brown-Rice (2012) encouraged use of the term "problems of professional competency" in an effort to identify one phrase to be utilized by counselor educators, site supervisors, and counselors-in-training alike (p. 8).  Additional studies

have utilized similar terms as the trend has moved away from using impairment to describe counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior.  Elman and Forrest (2007) encouraged the use of "problematic professional competence, problems with professional competence, and professional competence problems" (p. 505).  Furthermore, Brown (2013) and Evans, Carney, Shannon, and Strohl (2012) utilized the term "problematic behavior" in their research studies.

Recently, studies have worked toward clarifying terms and definitions used to describe and categorize problematic behaviors in counselors-in-training.  Jacobs et al. (2011) divided problematic behavior into two categories: functional and foundational competency.  Functional competency included "assessment/diagnosis/conceptualization, intervention, consultation, research/evaluation, supervision/training, and management/administration" (Jacobs et al., 2011, p. 177).  Foundational competency included "professionalism, reflective practice/self-assessment, scientific knowledge and methods, relationship, ethical and legal practice, individual and cultural diversity, and interdisciplinary systems" (Jacobs et al., 2011 p. 177).  While progress has been made in developing a description of what problematic behaviors resemble, there is still a lack of a singular or all-encompassing definition that would provide counselor educators and policy makers with a standard to incorporate into the counselor education curriculum.  For instance, Brown (2013) found that CACREP accredited programs did not utilize one term or definition in their program policies regarding problematic behaviors of students.  Inconsistency in the description and definition of what constitutes problematic behavior leads to the belief that one definition has not been developed, and therefore the standards and definitions vary from one counselor education program to the next (Brown, 2013).  This supports Trimble and colleagues' (2012) conclusion in their study about the viewpoint of counselors-in-training regarding problematic behaviors that while a singular description and definition of problematic behavior in

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counselors-in-training does not exist, the beginnings of a definition are in the process of development (Trimble, Stroebel, Krieg, & Rubenstein, 2012).

As the counselor education field works toward defining and clarifying these terms, it is important to note that understanding how site supervisors and counselor educators recognize or identify problematic behavior may be very useful when working with counselors-in-training and also in developing appropriate curricular designs to address issues before they arise (Timble et al., 2012). Having a critical role in the development of counselors-in-training, site supervisors are in a position where the recognition of problematic behavior is essential to the development of the counselor-in-training and to the protection of the clients served. Counselor education programs may assist site supervisors in understanding, recognizing, and responding to problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training. This study, in part sought to ascertain how site supervisors determine what constitutes problematic behavior, thus contributing to the development of a definition or listing of criteria.

**Recognizing Problematic Behaviors**

Studies examining problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training in recent years have begun to define and clarify problematic behavior. In 2008, McCutcheon completed a study of graduate-level psychology programs, including counseling and clinical psychology, which resulted in the identification of three categories of problematic behavior exhibited by students. The first category addressed students that had been previously identified as individuals with problematic behavior in which similar types of problematic behavior continued to occur during the internship portion of their training. The second and third categories are similar to each other in that prior to internship, the counselor-in-training did not exhibit problematic behavior but demonstrated problematic behavior during the internship portion of their training

(McCutcheon, 2008).  The second category further specified that the counselor-in-training "truly lacks sufficient competence for completion of the internship" while the third category stated that although the student demonstrated problems, they are "nonetheless truly competent" (McCutcheon, 2008, p 212).  As studies similar to McCutcheon (2008) emerge exploring the definition of problematic behavior, it is important to note that it is an ongoing and complex issue in counselor education programs because of the wide range of individuals, including students, faculty, and site supervisors, who may notice, witness, or report concerning behavior.  This study sought to further explore this area by inquiring how site supervisors identify and respond to problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training.

Studies examining individuals who identify problematic behavior have explored the viewpoints of students, faculty, and on a limited basis, site supervisors (Boxley, Drew, & Rangel, 1986; Evans et al., 2012; Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Huprich, & Rudd, 2004; Lamb, et al., 1991; Rosenberg, et al., 2005; Ziomek-Daigle & Christenson, 2010). Students within a counselor education program may self-report behaviors that are problematic. This involves the counselor-in-training recognizing that they are experiencing problematic behaviors and either seeking assistance or notifying others of their concerns (Evans et al., 2012). In a pilot study completed in 2012 by Evans and colleagues, it was found that 58% of the participants, who were counselors-in-training, self-reported experiencing problematic behaviors at some point in their counselor education program.  In this study, problematic behavior was defined using a conceptualization from Kress and Protivnak (2009) who posited that problematic behavior consists of a lower than acceptable level of clinical skills or psychological limitations which possibly cause harm to others, including clients, colleagues, or the public (Evans, et al., 2012).  Within this study, problems included emotional concerns, and avoidant or withdrawn

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behaviors with just nine of the 99 participants indicating that they received any form of remediation (Evans, et al., 2012).  The discrepancy between the number of students who reported experiencing problematic behavior and those who were remediated for such illustrates the need to further explore this area, including developing a definition of what constitutes problematic behavior.  This may lead to the improvement of counselor education program curricula to address problematic behavior prior to the start of the internship experience.

In addition to self-reporting problematic behaviors, often peers of the intern counselor-in-training will observe behaviors that are a cause for concern.  Peers in a counseling program often have a different type of relationship with each other compared to the relationship with faculty or site supervisors.  Due to this unique relationship, often peers will have knowledge or issues and concerns that their peers are facing or witness behavior prior to faculty or site supervisor awareness (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Rosenberg, Getzelman, Arcinue, & Orent, 2005; Stroebel, Krieg, & Rubenstein, 2012).  Gaubatz and Vera (2006) found that counselors-in-training have reported that at least 21% of their peers displayed problematic behavior.  This number is much higher than that reported by counselor education faculty who reported just 8.9% of counselors-in-training exhibiting behaviors of concern.  This study used the term "deficient," providing examples such as "poorly or marginally suited for professional work" (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006 p. 35).  Although counselors-in-training might notice problematic behaviors among their peers, it is not advisable for counseling programs to rely on peer monitoring.  Peers are not likely to address their concerns appropriately, such as addressing their concerns with their peer directly or with counselor education faculty, instead they would likely gossip or speak with other peers (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Schwartz-Mette, 2009).  In a 2005 study, Rosenberg et al. explored peer identification and reporting of problematic behaviors, with findings that resembled

Gaubatz and Vera's (2006) finding that peers are not reliable when it comes to reporting problematic behaviors due to their lack of reporting in an appropriate manner. Counselor-in-training peers are not as likely, as compared to counselor education faculty, to report their observations due to their unique relationship. Among other reasons, this includes the reluctance to report due to not wanting to damage their relationship with their peers (Rosenberg et al., 2005). In addition to self and peer reporting, counselor educators' and site supervisors' observances of problematic behavior are other means of addressing problematic behavior by those who have authority over the counselor-in-training.

A 1986 study found that 66% of American Psychological Association (APA) approved internship sites surveyed reported encountering problematic behavior within a five-year period that included personality disorder, depression, and emotional problems (Boxley, Drew & Rangel, 1986). Later, in a 2004 study by Huprich and Rudd, 800 surveys were sent to the training directors at all APA-accredited doctoral programs and predoctoral internships, with 81 responses from clinical and counseling psychology education programs and 118 responses from internship sites. This study used the term "psychological impairment" defined as "any thought, feeling and/or behavior (within the trainee) that leads to individual distress of dysfunction, that deviates from societal norms, or that reduces the individual's level of adaptive control in his/her environment" (Huprich & Rudd 2004, p 45). Huprich and Rudd found that 98% of the clinical and counseling psychology education programs reported a greater frequency of problematic behavior compared to internship sites who reported 68% over a ten-year period (2004). The most frequently reported behaviors by the programs surveyed in this study included: adjustment disorders, alcohol problems, anxiety symptoms, depressive symptoms, and personality disorders. This same study inquired about the current rate of counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic

behavior and found that 65% of the clinical and counseling psychology education programs reported at least one or two problematic students in their programs while 10% of internship sites reported one current counselor-in-training at their site who was currently exhibiting problematic behavior. The similar percentage of internship sites, 66% in 1986 and 68% in 2004, that encountered problematic behavior in both studies, conducted almost two decades apart, suggest that this is an ongoing concern for internship sites (Boxley et al., 1986; Huprich & Rudd, 2004).

**Addressing Problematic Behavior**

Often, problematic behaviors in counselors-in-training are addressed through remediation plans developed in collaboration with the counselor-in-training and counselor education faculty (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Johnson et al., 2008; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Lamb et al., 1987; McCutcheon, 2008). Dufrene and Henderson (2009) stated that it is imperative that counselor education faculty and site supervisors work with counselors-in-training who are experiencing difficulties in developing professional behavior and therapeutic skills. Remediation arranged by the counselor education program may include a variety of interventions that the counselor-in-training must complete in order to progress in their counseling education program (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Schwartz-Mette, 2009; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Although little is known about the specific interventions conducted by internship sites, these studies suggest that interventions may require additional training or even request the counselor-in-training not return to the site (Bodner, 2012; Tedesco, 1982; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). Remediation interventions tend to be highly subjective and customized to the needs of the counselor-in-training and possibly to the needs of the internship site (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Rust, et al., 2013; Schwartz-Mette, 2009; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Customized interventions require that counselor education faculty connect with site supervisors, in order to learn how the site

supervisor recognized the problematic behavior and what remediation plans exist at the site, so

that the interventions utilized in remediation in the counselor education program directly respond

to the needs of the counselor-in-training. Interventions utilized by counselor education programs

may include any of the following: meetings between the counselor education faculty and the

counselor-in-training, demonstration of professional behaviors, attendance at additional training

or workshops related to the problematic behavior, additional supervision sessions, participation

in personal counseling, and additional assignments (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Rust, et al.,

2013; Schwartz-Mette, 2009; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004).

Multiple frameworks and responses have been developed to address remediation of

counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Dufrene &

Henderson, 2009; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Lamb et al., 1987; Wilkerson, 2006). For example,

Lamb and colleagues (1987) developed a process to identify and address problematic behavior,

while Kerl and colleagues (2002) addressed the development of the "Professional Counseling

Performance Evaluation" (PCPE) procedure. Lamb and colleagues developed a process in which

a focus was placed on "identification issues," "administration issues," and "remediation issues"

to address problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training (Lamb et al., 1987, p. 598).

The first step in this process, "identifying the issues," Lamb et al. (1987) noted that a definition

needed to be developed that identifies specific issues or concerns that would define the term

"impairment" and that once defined, connect the problematic behavior via an evaluative process

to the definition. Upon identification of the issues, the next step is to provide the counselor-in-

training with due process, which falls under the process labeled "administration issues." This

step included a suggestion for due process as it related to internship and site supervisors. This

due process model includes twelve detailed steps designed to meet the accreditation criteria for

APA programs (Lamb et al., 1987). The last step in this model, "remediation issues," addresses prevention and remediation strategies. Prevention strategies employed by site supervisors and counselor education programs may include: in-depth orientation seminars, communication with previous counselors-in-training who completed an internship at this particular site, evaluations on a regular basis, information on burnout, and expectations for the counselor-in-training (Lamb et al., 1987). Lamb and colleagues suggested that remediation for counselors-in-training at an internship site include increased supervision or personal counseling.

More than a decade later, Kerl and colleagues (2002) addressed the development of the PCPE procedure and process that was designed for evaluation, communication, and remediation of "competency deficits," (p. 322). This model was developed for use by counselor education faculty and may be used throughout the counselor education curriculum. Although this model does not specify its application for site supervisors, there is the possibility that a site supervisor may choose to apply it during supervision of a counselor-in-training. In recent years, Dufrene and Henderson (2009) developed a framework in working with counselors-in-training in need of remediation that addressed: "professionalism of the trainee," "technical counseling skills of the trainee," and "documentation by the trainee" (p 152). Although not specified as a requirement for this framework, site supervisors may be involved in the development of the "Individual Remediation Plan" (IRP) (p. 152). This three element framework is customized for the counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors and as a framework, was designed to cover a range of problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009). Additionally, Kress and Protivnak (2009) discussed the use of Professional Development Plans (PDPs) to address problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training. The use of PDPs is usually regulated to the support or implementation of a remediation plan and

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may be similar to a contract for supervision (Kress & Protivnak, 2009). Steps in the development of a PDP include: "identifying problem behaviors," "establishing remediation activities," "integrating formative feedback," "determining individuals' involvement," "signing the document," "establishing time lines," "right to appeal," and "provision for immediate dismissal" (Kress & Protivnak, 2009, p 158). The use of PDPs during internship by site supervisors has not been addressed in the literature (Kress & Protivnak, 2009).

**Gatekeeping**

The responsibility of remediation typically is assigned to counselor education programs as opposed to the internship site (Schwartz-Mette, 2009) and often leads to gatekeeping. As such, Brown-Rice (2012) and Kerl and colleagues (2002) stated that counselor education programs are responsible for acting as gatekeepers to ensure that counselors-in-training have the necessary professional competency, behavior, knowledge and skills. The use of gatekeeping, while vital to the counseling profession, often evokes a variety of concerns and emotions to counselor educators and site supervisors. More specifically, the threat of litigation often deters gatekeeping responsibilities (Brear et al., 2008**;** Hutchens, Block & Young, 2013; Lamb et al., 1987; Kerl et al., 2002; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). The use of gatekeeping at internship sites plays an important role in ensuring the quality of services provided to clients and to the future of the counseling field (Bradley & Fiorini, 1999; Kerl et al., 2002; Lamb et al., 1987). This reinforces the importance of understanding how site supervisors respond to problematic behaviors of counselors-in-training. Developing an understanding for site supervisors responses to problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training may lead to a further understanding of how counselor education programs may provide support and resources to the site supervisors.

When addressing gatekeeping in counselor education programs, the concern for litigation exists for both site supervisors and counselor education programs (Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). Gaubatz and Vera (2006) found that twenty-two percent of the participants in their study would contemplate pursuing litigation if their counselor education program dismissed them. However, previous studies have found that counselor educators and education programs must balance the welfare of clients and the public with the rights of students in addition to monitoring the welfare of the counselor education program (Kerl et al., 2002; Lamb et al., 1987). Of further concern to counselor educators in regards to litigation is the lack of collaboration with site supervisors (Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). Communication and collaboration between site supervisors and counselor educators may allow for the addressing of problematic behaviors in a timely manner. In recent years, there have been numerous lawsuits in connection with the clinical or practical experience in counseling programs. Several of these lawsuits have stemmed from the refusal of counselors-in-training to provide services to clients or for being dismissed due to a demonstration of problematic behaviors (Hutchens, Block & Young, 2013; Kerl et al., 2002; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999).

When considering gatekeeping responsibilities, counselor educators are faced with addressing the needs of the counselor-in-training, as well as the counselor-in-training's current and future clients while maintaining awareness of their own vulnerability to litigation. Counselor education faculty who may be concerned about the capability of a specific counselor-in-training are facing a potentially daunting labyrinth of rights of the student, as wel as rights of the counselor education program, the university, and the client (Gaubatz & Vera, 2002). The amount of litigation against site supervisors from students in CACREP accredited programs is unknown, as these students typically bring litigation against the counselor education program

itself (Gaubatz & Vera, 2006). Students are entitled due process, which necessitates that counselors-in-training receive notification regarding deficiencies in their academic performance or any mental, physical, or emotional concerns. In addition, they must be informed of their option for a hearing or a formal-defense (Brown-Rice, 2002; Kerl et al., 2002; Lumadue & Duffey, 1999). Hutchens, Block, and Young (2013) addressed several lawsuits in which students were seeking legal action against their respective counseling programs. In these particular cases, the students were not successful in their lawsuits. However, at least one judge advised counselor educators to be cautious and to recognize the difference between a counselor-in-training disagreeing with ethical standards but not violating the standards versus a counselor-in-training refusing to follow the ethical standards of the counseling profession when working with clients (Hutchens, Block & Young, 2013). Hutchens, Block and Young further stated that the recent litigation suits have provided the counselor education field the chance to reflect on the counselors-in-training ability to maintain professional competence while respecting their lawful right to express views concerning the ethics. This study aimed to provide counselor educators with valuable information about how site supervisors experience problematic behaviors of counselor-in-training exhibited at internship sites which could lead to improved curriculum design and potentially less litigation in the future.

Few studies have examined the termination of counselors-in-training at internship sites due to problematic behavior (Tedesco, 1982; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2001). Tedesco (1982) completed a study examining the termination of psychology interns in American Psychological Association (APA) accredited internships. Tedesco found that while problematic behaviors may be found during internship, terminating an internship is an uncommon incident occurring roughly 2% of the time, with slightly more than fifty percent at the demand of the internship site. The

majority of terminations were due to emotional instability and personality problems. Tedesco cautioned that this finding does not indicate that fewer counselors-in-training should be successful in completing their internship experience (Tedesco, 1982). Instead, the implication is that there could possibly be a variety of other types of problematic behavior exhibited such as tardiness or attire, which do not warrant the termination of the practical experience.

Later in 2004, more than twenty years after Tedesco completed his study, Vacha-Haase and colleagues completed a study examining the termination of intern students in APA-accredited psychology training programs for problematic behaviors. It was found that over half of the programs surveyed terminated at least one intern, citing inadequate clinical skills, defensiveness in supervision, and deficient interpersonal skills as examples of problematic behaviors (Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). It was also found that a significant number of programs that participated most likely would not consult outside of their training program upon observation of problematic intern behavior (Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004). This study inquired about how site supervisors described identifying and responding to problematic behaviors. It was the desire of this study to provide information that counselor education programs may use in the development of training, resources, and support for site supervisors.

### Site Supervisors

While counselor educators focus on the overall development of a counselor-in-training, site supervisors are primarily practitioners who typically focus on the clinical experience only. Site supervisors are the individuals responsible for monitoring and supervising the intern counselor-in-training at their clinical site (Granello, 2000; Nyman, Nafziger & Smith, 2012). They are the individuals responsible for the quality of counseling services that their facility provides to their clients (Nyman, Nafziger & Smith, 2012). The role of the site supervisor in the

development of counselors-in-training has been studied on a limited basis, with studies examining supervision styles, multicultural issues, supervisor-incompetency, and site supervisor training (Borders & Leddick, 1988; Granello, 2000; Hart & Falvey, 1987; Hart & Nance, 2003; Magnuson, Coxon, & Norem, 2000; Muratori, 2001).  The goal of this study was to explore how site supervisors describe identifying and responding to problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training.  The findings of this study were intended to provide information that can be used for the development and modification of standards, guidelines, or the curriculum in counselor education programs.  The findings of this study may also provide insight on the training needs of site supervisors, guidance on how to develop a cohesive definition of problematic behaviors, and information for counselor education faculty to better understand the role of site supervisors and to better prepare counselors-in-training to become professional counselors.

**Training in Supervision**

Studies from the 1980s found that site supervisors of counselors-in-training reported that they received very little support, training and collaboration from the educational programs that supplied the intern counselors-in-training (Borders & Leddick, 1988; Hart & Falvey, 1987), leading to concern about how site supervisors provide supervision to counselors-in-training. Hart and Falvey (1987) noted that a crucial breach in the training of counselors-in-training was the absence of communication between counselor education faculty and site supervisors.  Since this time, there have been some changes and adjustments made regarding support and training for site supervisors through the development of recommendations for counselor education programs to provide support and resources (ACES, 2009; CACREP, 2009).  Although CACREP (2009) and ACES (2009) now recommend that resources or training be provided to sites that

supervise counselors-in-training, that does not mean that this is always provided or that site supervisors take advantage of this resource.

A 2004 study by Gizara and Forrest focused on APA-accredited internship sites at three college counseling centers. Each of the college counseling centers provided four participants, including site supervisors and training directors, to participate in the interview process. This included an even mixture of counseling and psychology trained individuals with an average of fourteen years of experience (Gizara & Forrest, 2004). During this study, participants struggled with the definition of impairment with several requesting a definition be provided to them. They spoke of the lack of collaboration between fellow site supervisors, training directors and counselor education faculty, discussed the often difficult experience of dealing with counselor-in-training impairment, and stated the need for further education and training (Gizara & Forrest, 2004). Gizara and Forrest (2004) found that participants had a general lack of feeling of preparedness to supervise. Gizara and Forrest (2004) also found that participants identified problematic behavior in terms of "professionally harmful or deceitful," demonstrating a "clear pattern," "not resolving," and a "noticeable shift in the intern's level of performance" (p.133). The researchers found that the participants sought consultation with colleagues initially when they encountered a problematic student (Gizara & Forrest, 2004). However, the university psychology-training program was not identified as a likely consultant. This study provided a glimpse into the sometimes complicated work of a site supervisor, highlighting a need to further explore and understand their experiences as it relates to identifying and responding to problematic behaviors in counselors-in-training and the development of resources and support by counselor education faculty.

As previously mentioned, supervisor training varies depending on the accrediting body of the training program. APA sites typically require doctoral-level trained supervisors and clinicians whereas CACREP-accredited sites require that supervisors be in their position for a minimum of three years and not necessarily have doctoral training (ACA, 2014; APA, 2005; CACREP, 2009). This is further supported by DeKruyf and Pehrsson (2011) who examined the training that 147 school counseling site supervisors received and found that the number of site supervisors completing supervision training was close to zero (DeKruyf & Pehrsson, 2011). In this study, 147 school counseling site supervisors completed a survey designed to evaluate site supervisors self-efficacy in providing supervision to school counselors and to identify the amount of supervision training hours completed (DeKruyf & Pehrsson, 2011). Results in this study indicated high supervisor self-efficacy. Additionally, some site supervisors had received extensive training, but the majority of site supervisors had received limited training. DeKruyf and Pehrsson noted that although the literature indicated a need for training site supervisors, information has not been provided describing the specific needs of site supervisors. With the important role the site supervisor plays in the development of future counselors, the need for site supervisors to receive training regarding problematic behaviors as well as what to expect from the students and their counselor training programs is imperative (DeKruyf & Pehrsson, 2011; Hart & Falvey, 1987; Manzanares, O'Halloran, McCartney, Filer, Varhely, & Calhoun 2004). There have been additional calls for counselor education programs to provide information to clinical training sites and to encourage the site supervisors to have conversations with interns about their performance or lack thereof, on a frequent and early basis (Jacobs et al., 1991).

**Summary**

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This chapter focused on the existing literature related to problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training. Due to the impact that counselors-in-training will have on their future clients, it is important that faculty and site supervisors of counselors-in-training provide quality learning experiences and address behaviors that are cause for concern (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Kerl et al., 2002). Site supervisors carry an enormous responsibility for students, their current and future clients, the public, and the counseling profession, and therefore, it is imperative that they receive training and support from counselor education programs (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Kerl et al., 2002). McCutcheon (2008) reminds us that when addressing concerns connected to problematic behavior related to competence, consideration should be given to more than the local counselor education program and the internship site. This should be addressed in a balanced and logical approach that considers the counselor-in-training, counselor education faculty, the public, and the program. There is a clear need for further research examining input on problematic behaviors witnessed by site supervisors in order to address them effectively. Stroebel, Krieg, and Rubenstein, (2012) called for further research to "determine a clear picture of what professional competency should look like for graduate students and how it should be evaluated" (p. 590). This study aimed to examine the experiences of site supervisors providing supervision to counselors-in-training in an effort to promote the further development of training materials for site supervisors and the modification of counselor education programs to address common problematic behaviors prior to internship. The following chapter will review the methods for this study.

CHAPTER III METHODS

My intent for this study was to examine the experiences of site supervisors of intern

counseling students from CACREP-accredited programs.  More specifically, I hoped to identify

how site supervisors describe and identify problematic behavior of intern counselors-in-training.

I anticipated that this study would provide the counselor education and supervision field with

information about what site supervisors consider problematic behavior among counselors-in-

training and how they respond to problematic behavior.  With this information, counselor

educators will be better able to provide support and develop resources for site supervisors.  It

was my hope that the findings of this study could assist in the development or modification of

counseling curriculums to attempt to prevent some problematic behaviors and assist in the

development of standards and guidelines for programs to address student behavior.  In this

section, I will discuss the research methods for this study including type of research method

utilized, description of participants, how I collected and analyzed data, my role as the researcher,

credibility of the study, and ethical considerations.

I developed two research questions to inquire about the experiences of site supervisors: a)

How do clinical site supervisors describe identifying problematic behavior demonstrated by

counselors-in-training while at the internship site; and b) How do clinical site supervisors

respond to problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

As previously noted, limited literature exists that explores site supervisor experiences working

with counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior (Boxley, et. al, 1986; Huprich &

Rudd, 2004; McCutcheon, 2008; Tedesco, 1982; Vacha-Haase, et al., 2004).  Limited existing

literature led to the use of grounded theory as it is appropriate to use grounded theory when little is known about a subject so as to develop an explanation and parameters to predict future occurrences (Patton, 2002).

Utilizing grounded theory allows the researcher the opportunity to explore emerging patterns within the data to work toward developing a theory (Birks & Mills, 2011; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002).  Thus, I incorporated grounded theory in working toward developing a theory that will provide information to the counselor education field.  As the primary researcher, I interviewed site supervisors about their experiences working with counselors-in-training; thus providing site supervisors the opportunity to explain what they deemed to be problematic behavior of counselors-in-training and how they respond to it.  From these responses, I expected I would be able to identify common patterns of types of behavior or problematic situations as well as common responses by the site supervisors to these situations.  Thus potentially providing the counselor education field with specific information to be used for the development of training materials and resources.  Such training materials and resources may be given to site supervisors as part of a support system from the university, hence, bringing more consistency throughout counselor education programs.  Using the information provided by the site supervisors, counselor educators may develop better course materials and curricula for counselors-in-training in an effort to address potential problematic behaviors before they are exhibited.  The findings of this study provide information that has been lacking in the counselor education and supervision field, and information needed to continue in the development of program and curricular design.

**Grounded Theory**

Qualitative research is an inquiry in which the researcher is the instrument.  It typically involves data collection and analysis of interviews, observations, or documents (Auerbach &

Silverstein, 2003; Creswell, 2013). These are examined for meaningful patterns that describe a phenomenon (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003; Creswell, 2013). Designed to generate or discover a theory, grounded theory is a type of qualitative research utilized when little is known about a particular subject or topic (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Grounded theory methods entail methodical, yet flexible strategies for the collection and analysis of qualitative data to develop a theory or explanation "grounded" in the data (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Methods in grounded theory include a variety of data collection techniques such as observations, interactions, interviews, and gathering of materials such as documentation related to what is being studied (Charmaz, 2006). In the current study, I conducted in-depth interviews to gather data. Due to confidentiality, observations and documentation such as evaluations of intern counselors-in-training were not likely to be shared by site supervisors. Grounded theorists follow a specific process for data collection and analysis. Grounded theorists typically simultaneously and constantly collect and analyze data. The researcher uses data collected instead of preconceived ideas to develop codes and categories (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). For the current study, I applied information used from data collected to develop codes and categories. Grounded theorists continuously explore theory development throughout data collection and analysis, utilize memo-writing to explore emerging thoughts and categories, incorporate the use of a population sample to develop a theory rather than representativeness, or conduct a literature review after carrying out an independent analysis (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). This allows for a specific topic to be explored in a full manner, providing the researcher with the opportunity to be flexible and follow where the data leads (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). For this study I attempted to begin to develop a theory through the

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exploration of site supervisors experiences while engaging in activities that would allow for a thorough analysis of the data and reflection of my thoughts and experiences during the process.

As the researcher I engaged in a reflective audit trail and memo writing to suspend my preconceived notions about being a site supervisor and to explore my emerging thoughts and the emerging categories. Additionally, I wrote about my experience as a site supervisor and what that experience meant to me in an effort to limit my experience as a site supervisor impacting how I analyzed the data. Qualitative researchers, including grounded theorists, seek information-rich data, also known as thick-rich data, which is detailed, descriptive, focused, and utilize all of the data available (Charmaz, 2006). Thus providing the researcher with a large amount of information about the experience or phenomenon to be utilized during data analysis and in the case of grounded theory, begin to develop a theory about the phenomenon (Charmaz, 2006). For this study, I sought thick-rich data through the use of semi-structured interviews incorporating the use of experience-near questions to allow for detailed and descriptive responses (Josselson, 2013).

Using the data collected from this study, as the researcher, I worked toward building a theory about the experiences of site supervisors providing a supervision experience to intern counselors-in-training and how the site supervisors address problematic behavior of counselors-in-training. The use of qualitative research allowed for the examination of specific topics, such as site supervisors' experiences with counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors, "in great depth with careful attention to detail, context, and nuance" (Patton, 2002, p. 227). My purpose of using grounded theory in this study was to allow for the exploration of a topic that has previously been explored on a limited basis.

**Participants**

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I recruited participants in this study using chain sampling, which is an approach for finding "information-rich key informants or critical cases" (Patton, 2002, p. 237). The process for chain sampling begins with asking "well-situated people" for referrals for individuals or groups who are able to speak of the topic at hand, which in turn leads to more individuals, thus growing the potential sampling pool (Patton, 2002, p 237). Upon receiving approval from the Auburn University Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (IRB, See Appendix A), I solicited participants via email through the listservs from state counseling associations, this includes: Alabama, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, Texas, and West Virginia. I also requested participation via email through the listservs of state mental health counselor's associations including: Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia. I chose these listservs based on an Internet search revealed that a listserv was available to their members. Additionally, I requested participation via email to the listservs of the American Mental Health Counselors Association (AMHCA), the American College Counselors Association (ACCA), and the Association for Humanistic Counseling (AHC). Included in each email (See Appendix B) was a description of the study, requirements for participation, a request for their participation in the study and a request for them to share my participation solicitation with potential information-rich participants.

Similar studies in counselor education that have utilized a qualitative inquiry approach had between eight to twelve participants (Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010); however, this is not always typical of a grounded theory study. An exact number of participants for grounded theory does not exist, due to the desire to seek saturation. Saturation means to fully develop and explain a phenomenon to the point of no new data (Creswell, 2013),

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which is not always attainable in grounded theory (Birks & Mills, 2011). Creswell (2013) stated

that for grounded theory, a typical number of participants interviewed is between 20 and 30 and

that to reach saturation, a researcher may have to interview upwards of 60 participants or more as

new data and findings emerge. For this study, I aimed to interview at least eight experienced

clinical mental health site supervisors as other qualitative studies in counselor education utilized

between eight and twelve participants in an effort to reach saturation (Gizara & Forrest, 2004;

Ziomek-Daigle & Christensen, 2010). In total, ten site supervisors qualified for this study and

participated in the interview process. In order to participate in this study, participants must have

provided clinical supervision to intern counselors-in-training for a minimum of five years and

have a minimum of a master's degree in a counseling or related field, such as psychology or

social work. By including participants who have supervised counselor trainees for a minimum of

five years, the likelihood that they have experienced problematic behavior exhibited by

counselors-in-training increases as previous studies have stated that supervisors are likely to

observe problematic behavior over a period of five to ten years (Boxley et al., 1986; Huprich &

Rudd, 2004). I conducted a screening interview to determine participant suitability after the

potential participant contacted me to express interest in the study. A total of 11 potential

participants contacted me. Each time I was contacted I responded via email with the consent

form (See Appendix C) and requested available times to complete the screening process (See

Appendix D) to determine participant suitability. Of the 11 potential participants, 10 returned

the consent form, participated in the screening process, and completed the interview process.

The screening process did not lead to the exclusion of any potential participants. Prior to the

start of the interview, I confirmed with the potential participant the type of setting they worked

in, the number of years they had provided supervision, their educational background, and reviewed the consent form.

**Data Collection**

I interviewed participants via phone, in-person, and Skype using a semi-structured interview format that incorporates the use of open-ended, probing, and experience-near questions that lasted between 20 - 45 minutes (see Appendix D).  I informed the participants that the consent form had to be returned prior to the beginning of the interview.  Prior to the beginning of the interview, I informed participants that I had to have a copy of their signed consent form.  At the beginning of the interview, I reviewed the consent form with them verbally and then asked the participants demographic information including gender, ethnicity, and age range in an effort to provide a description of the participant population (See Table 1).  Table one includes participant demographics and pseudonyms used to protect the identity of the participants.  Open-ended, probing, and experience-near questions allowed for the participant to answer questions in an open, unrestricted manner (Charmaz, 2006; Josselson, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).  Lincoln and Guba (1985) posited that utilizing open-ended questions allows for an open dialogue between the researcher and participant, thus facilitating the gathering of information-rich data, which is essential to qualitative research and grounded theory.  In an effort to encourage the participant to give unrestricted responses, I utilized open-ended questions that included probing and experience-near questions and statements.  My initial question to participants was an experience-near question followed-up with questions that included both probing and open-ended questions in an effort to seek clarification or more information regarding a statement or event.  Experience-near questions do not ask directly about an experience or perspective but rather inquire about an event or experience that may be related to the subject at hand (Josselson, 2013).

Utilizing experience-near questions allows the interviewer to engage the participant in a description of their experience about a particular event or phenomenon (Josselson, 2013). Josselson encouraged researchers to set participants at ease with these types of questions and to "reassure such interviewees that whatever occurred to them to talk about is just fine" (Josselson, 2013, p. 45). As the interview session concluded, I asked each participant for any final thoughts or anything they would like to tell a future site supervisor. I also requested that they forward the solicitation email to other site supervisors who they believed might be interested in participating in the study. Although I did not contact participants for additional interviews, at the end of the interview I reminded them that I might contact them for an additional interview should further clarification be needed or additional questions surface (Birks & Mills, 2000). As a part of the study, I destroyed all identifying information, thus making it difficult to connect the initial interview to a second or follow-up interview.

I recorded interviews with the participants using an audio-recorder, which permitted me to focus on the participant and the conversation (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009) and thus allow me to evolve the interview using a semi-structured format (Josselson, 2013; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). Through the use of an audio-recorder I was able to modify the interview as it progressed and follow where the participant wanted to go without concern that I would miss the participants information or intent. An additional benefit of recording the interview is that it provided me with direct quotes that I used to support the findings (Birks & Mills, 2011). In addition to the audio recording, upon completion of the interview, I wrote memos and field-notes about each interview experience, leaving out identifying data. Memos are an account of the researcher's thoughts, feelings, insights, and concerns in connection with the research study. They provide an opportunity to compare data, explore ideas about emerging patterns in the data and direct

additional data-gathering (Birks & Mills, 2011; Charmaz, 2006).  Combining the interview transcripts and memos allowed for information-rich data, which lend to the development of a theory (Birks & Mills, 2011).

**Data Analysis**

Upon completion of each interview, I transcribed each interview while removing all identifying information.  Transcribing is a process where the data, usually an interview, is transferred from oral format to a written format and primed for analysis (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009).  The interview transcription is "regarded as the solid rock-bottom empirical data of an interview project" (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009, p. 178).  During the transcription process, I began the initial review of the data, making notes and memos about the transcript.  I applied my notes and memos regarding the interviews and the transcription while developing a codebook.

During the initial and intermediate analysis, I developed a codebook, which provided detailed information regarding patterns and identifying categories and sub-categories within the data.  A codebook contains a listing of the codes, patterns, and categories and is useful when working with multiple coders (Bazeley, 2013).  The codebook documents operational definitions, data exemplars, sources of data, types of data, and disconfirming evidence.  I applied this codebook to the interview transcripts and examined them for common categories.  As I continued this process I modified the codebook as needed throughout the data analysis based on the categories found within the patterns.  This modification included the development of sub-categories and more detailed descriptions to provide some distinct differences between the categories.  Bernard and Ryan (2010) stated, "codebooks are often a work in progress right up until the project is almost over" (p. 79).  I utilized the codebook (see Appendix C) during the coding process of data analysis and upon further review of the data.  I utilized the codebook by

applying the codes as I developed them to the transcription and comparing the codes to the memos and notes.

Coding is the process where the researcher identifies categories in the data, attaching a name and definition to the categories, thus providing a sense or organization to the data analysis (Charmaz, 2006). Grounded theory typically utilizes three stages of coding: open, axial, and selective (Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). I completed open coding during the initial analysis and continued until patterns began to emerge and formed into categories and sub-categories (Birks & Mills, 2011; Creswell, 2013). Birks and Mills (2011) believed that this type of coding technique was beneficial during the early stages of analysis and caution that it should not end prematurely so that the researcher gains theoretical understanding within the data. During the open coding stage, I read through the data while remaining open to exploring emerging ideas and patterns that began to appear in the data, thus forming the categories and sub-categories that can be found in the codebook (Charmaz, 2006). I worked to stay connected with the data through the utilization of codes that reflected and preserved the responses described in the data (Charmaz, 2006). At this time, I also compared the responses of the participants in an effort to have a thorough understanding of the data and to gain insight on additional avenues to explore in the initial coding (Charmaz, 2006). I did this by comparing similar incidents described by the participants to each other (Charmaz, 2006).

As the analysis continued, I used intermediate or axial coding to begin connecting and organizing patterns into categories and sub-categories (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). This occurred by defining the connections within the sub-categories and between the categories to show how they were related (Charmaz, 2006). When examining the categories and sub-categories for connections, I attempted to identify the causal conditions,

actions and interactions, and the consequences (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). This included identifying the causal conditions and circumstances that were influencing the participants' experiences with counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior, providing categorical information as to why, where, or when (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). I then identified the actions and interactions, which were the specific responses or strategies of the site supervisors, providing information as to who took the action and how (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Next, I identified the consequences that occurred as a result of working with counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior, providing information regarding what happened due to the actions and interactions (Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). At this point, I re-read through the transcribed data and initial coding to look for additional patterns that I may have missed or misunderstood previously, resulting in additional categories and sub-categories being further defined (Charmaz, 2006).

I continued the data analysis process by working toward developing theoretical integration and identifying core categories during the selective coding stage (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013). This was done through identifying core categories while connecting and integrating the categories from the axial coding stage. Birks and Mills (2011) identified three factors essential for the incorporation of a grounded theory: "an identified core category, theoretical saturation of major categories, and an accumulated bank of analytical memos" (p 115). I developed a sense of nearing theoretical saturation when the gathering and exploration of new data did not reveal new core categories (Charmaz, 2006). This occurred during the interview and review of the transcription of the sixth participant. As I moved closer to theoretical saturation, the development of a theory or theoretical integration about the experiences of site supervisors began to take place.

Theoretical integration or the development of a theory begins with the first analysis of data (Birks & Mills, 2011). The integration of categories and selection of a core category assisted in the development of a theory regarding site supervisor experiences (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008, Creswell, 2013). Utilizing the categories identified, I began to construct a theory that identified and described actions described by participants, as well as the causes, interactions, and consequences. During this stage, I worked to develop a theory based on my interpretation of the data and relied on my point-of-view regarding the data collection and my relationship with the participants (Charmaz, 2006). For this study, the information gained may provide counselor educators and program developers with better understanding of how site supervisors identify and respond to intern problematic behavior, thus allowing for curriculum and program modification that addresses problematic behavior prior to the beginning of internship.

**Role of the Researcher**

Often connected to their research in a personal manner, qualitative researchers should clarify their bias on the topic of the research and describe their interaction with the data in an effort to provide transparency (Berg & Lune, 2012; Bernard & Ryan 2010; & Creswell, 2013). Thus, my role as the researcher is provided below, providing the reader with information on what led me to become interested in this topic.

I am a student in a CACREP-accredited Counselor Education and Supervision doctoral program. My master's degree is in counseling and psychology from a CACREP-accredited program. While completing my master's program, I witnessed several incidents of counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior and faculty responses to the counselors-in-training. Incidences of problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training included arguing in class

with faculty or their peers, threatening harm to peers, and cheating on an examination. Faculty responses I observed varied based on the incident and included a class debriefing session, additional coursework, workshop attendance on plagiarism, and re-taking an examination. Additionally, prior to beginning my doctoral program, I was a site supervisor in a community treatment program. While there, I worked with numerous counselors-in-training from various programs including individuals from CACREP-accredited counselor education programs. During this time, I was witness to multiple instances of problematic behavior that included interns having inappropriate personal relationships with clients, acting aggressively toward clients and staff, and involving clients in illegal activities. Several of these interns were terminated from this internship site due to such instances of inappropriate, unprofessional, or unethical behavior. These experiences as a student and as a site supervisor led to my interest in exploring problematic student behavior while at internship sites.

**Credibility**

In qualitative research, it is important to attempt to ensure credibility and trustworthiness through multiples avenues (Berg & Lune, 2012; Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Patton, 2002). To promote credibility I developed and maintained an audit trail and incorporated the use of both a peer coder and peer debriefer. An audit trail is a record of the steps taken by the researcher that allows for the potential of an examination of the research methods used (Birks & Mills, 2011; Patton, 2002). It is important for qualitative researchers to maintain a log of their activities and interaction with the data (Berg & Lune, 2012; Bernard & Ryan 2010; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). This allows for the researcher to create a detailed record that may provide additional insight into the study (Berg & Lune, 2012; Bernard & Ryan 2010; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). For this study I maintained an audit trail to keep a reflective account of my

experiences throughout the research process. Within the audit trail I documented my activities and reflected about each experience. My audit trail assisted with providing me with information on how the codebook was developed and modified throughout the study, information on my initial thoughts from each interview. Furthermore from my audit trail I was able to use my thoughts and responses from the process give a more detailed reporting of my findings and understanding what this experience has meant to me. I shared my audit trail with my dissertation advisor to promote a sense of transparency and increase credibility (Birks & Mills, 2011).

Additional methods to encourage credibility include having peer coders apply the same codebook when reviewing the data as well as meeting with a peer debriefer (Bernard & Ryan, 2010; Berg & Lune, 2012; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). The peer coder that assisted with this study was a recent doctoral graduate in the counselor education field who was knowledgeable about counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through readings and experienced in qualitative research through the completion of qualitative coursework and studies. I gave the codebook along with the all of the transcribed interviews to this individual so that they could apply the codebook to the transcript.

Upon completion of the peer coder's application of the codebook to the transcript, we discussed their findings and interpretations as well as what this information could mean. The peer coder agreed with my findings and provided insight for areas in need of further defining. Although the peer coder and I agreed about my interpretations or coding, they did encourage me to further define the sub-categories and to consider expanding or redefining the category and sub-categories regarding participants' experiences working with university supervisors and the use of the term remediation. Another category that I was encouraged to consider expanding was the motivations to be a site supervisor. This category initially contained four sub-categories and

was later expanded to five categories with past experiences and personal/self as two separate sub-categories.

Additional reviewers or coders increase the credibility of the study and potentially encourage future studies to further explore this area (Birks & Mills, 2011; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009). In addition to a peer coder, I met with a peer debriefer on a regular basis to discuss the research study. A peer debriefer asks pertinent and sometimes hard questions regarding the research methods and questions, data collection, and data analysis; yet still listened to the researcher's thoughts and feelings, thus providing an external review of the research study (Creswell, 2013; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This individual was in the counselor education field, working as a faculty member, and had the ability to ask pertinent questions while considering the researcher's thoughts and feelings. During these meetings, I was challenged to consider alternate viewpoints and reminded to be mindful of my bias in regards to my experience as a site supervisor. The combination of the audit trail, peer coder, and peer debriefer greatly helped to enhance the credibility of the study.

## Summary

This chapter focused on the research design including the participants selected, the type of qualitative inquiry, data gathering methods, and method of data analysis. The purpose of this study was to provide information regarding the experiences of site supervisors in supervising counselors-in-training who have exhibited problematic behaviors.

The specific research questions that guided this study included:

1. How do clinical site supervisors describe identifying problematic behavior demonstrated by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

2.  How do clinical site supervisors respond to problematic behavior exhibited by

    counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

I asked the 10 participants to participate in a semi-structured interview and I analyzed the data

for patterns, which developed into categories and sub-categories.  Another reviewer applied the

codebook to the data to increase credibility.  This chapter discussed the methods that I used to

explore the experiences of site supervisors when working with internship counselors-in-training

exhibiting problematic behavior.

CHAPTER IV RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to begin building a theory describing how site supervisors identify and respond to counselors-in-training who exhibit problematic behavior.  Site supervisors are the individuals responsible for monitoring and supervising the intern counselor-in-training at their clinical site as well as monitoring the welfare of the clients served (Granello, 2000; Nyman, Nafziger & Smith, 2012).  Grounded theory data collection procedures focused on interviewing site supervisors who had a minimum of five years of experience supervising counselors-in-training.   This section focuses on the results found during data analysis, including categories and sub-categories.

This chapter includes a discussion of the qualitative results, which led to the beginning of the development of a theory on site supervisors' identifying and responding to the exhibiting of problematic behavior in intern counselors-in-training.

**Participants**

Initially 11 potential participants contacted me to participate in the study.  One participant did not return the consent form nor complete the initial screening process to set up the interview. Therefore, 10 site supervisors qualified to participate in this study and completed the interview process.   Table one provides demographic information on the participants and the assigned pseudonym to protect the identity of the participant.  Of these participants, four were male and six were female.  Participants' experience supervising intern counselors-in-training ranged from five years to thirty years.  Four of the participants had completed their doctorate degree, four had completed a master's level degree, and two of the participants were in the process of completing

their doctorate degree. Eight of the participants graduated from a CACREP-accredited program.

Two of the participants graduated from an APA-accredited program, supervising counselors-in-

training from both counselor education and psychology programs. The type of counseling

settings of the ten site supervisors included: six participants at college counseling centers, two

participants in correction/residential settings, one participant at a family community center, and

one participant in a community mental health setting.

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

| Participant Pseudonym | Gender | Ethnicity | Degree Program | Years Providing Supervision | Type of Counseling Setting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jean | Female | Caucasian | Masters | 7 | Family Community Counseling Center |
| Beverly | Female | Caucasian | Masters | 5 | College Counseling Center |
| Luke | Male | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 25 | College Counseling Center |
| William | Male | Asian | Ph.D. – ABD | 9 | College Counseling Center |
| Kate | Female | African American | Masters | 5 | Residential Treatment/Correctional |
| George | Male | African American | Ph.D. – ABD | 7 | College Counseling Center |
| Samantha | Female | Native American | Ph.D. | 9 | Corrections Counseling |
| Deanna | Female | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 8 | College Counseling Center |
| Rosa | Female | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 5 | College Counseling Center |
| Richard | Male | Caucasian | Masters | 30 | Community Mental Health Center |

**Results**

Categories and sub-categories for each research question are presented. Additionally, categories that emerged that did not fall under the two research questions are included.

The specific Research questions that guided this study included:

1. How do clinical site supervisors describe identifying problematic behavior demonstrated by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

2. How do clinical site supervisors respond to problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

## Categories Describing Identifying Problematic Behavior

The first research question explored how site supervisors described identifying problematic behavior. The analysis identified three categories of how site supervisors described identifying intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors: observation of the intern counselor-in-training, during supervision sessions, and from external sources. Within each category, I identified sub-categories.

Table two, an excerpt from the codebook developed for this study, provides context for the responses from site supervisors in relation to their description of identifying intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors. The term "operational definition" provides a descriptive definition for each sub-category to be applied by the researcher and peer coder when examining or describing the data. These three categories with the corresponding seven sub-categories are a representation of how site supervisors described how they identify problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training.

Table 2

*Categories Identifying Problematic Behavior*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Observation | Observed by Staff | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as being observed and/or reported by office or administrative staff |
| | Observed by Site-Supervisor | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor outside of the supervision session |
| | Observed by Site Supervisor During Review | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor while reviewing tape, session, or documentation outside of the supervision sessions and or prior to a supervision session |
| Supervision | Counselor-in-Training Self-Identification | Language describing the intern counselor-in-training discussing, addressing, or admitting to potentially problematic behaviors or issues of concern that could interfere with the placement at the internship site |
| | Site Supervisor Identifying During Supervision Session | Language describing the site supervisor discovering problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training during the supervision session |
| External Sources | As Reported By Clients | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report or complaint by a client or client representative |
| | As Reported by University Supervisor | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report by University or Faculty Supervisor |

**Observation.** Through the use of observation, participants identified three sub-categories in which they describe identifying problematic behaviors in intern counselors-in-training. Participants identified these behaviors through the observations of staff, by their own

direct observation of the intern counselor-in-training, and by observation during a review of materials outside of the supervision session. These three sub-categories within the observation category provided information on the use of observation when working with intern counselors-in-training. The first sub-category shows the importance of office or administrative staff in the development and observation of interns. The second and third categories rely specifically on the site supervisor's observation of materials through live supervision and the review of the intern counselor-in-training documentation and recordings.

*Observed by staff.* Participants within this study spoke of the importance of working with their colleagues in identifying the progress of the intern counselors-in-training. Samantha stated that they "Check in with the staff and get their comments and observations as they are the ones that will see the interns the most." Richard supported this with describing gathering information through staff, "I get input or information from the admin staff." While Jean spoke of intern counselors-in-training missing important information or not thoroughly assessing a client's situation thus relying on colleagues to assist in ensuring that the best care possible is provided to the clients "Sometimes the office staff has to let me know that the intern missed some pretty significant information." There was a sense of commitment to working as a team from the participants who spoke about working with their staff as a team and those who rely upon their staff to assist them in working with interns. Jean specified that they work as a team, "We approach it almost as a team and everybody pitches in with our interns." Rosa gave a similar report of their approach, "We very much have a team approach."

*Observed by site-supervisor.* Participants spoke of discovering problematic behavior through their own observations outside of the supervision session of the intern counselor-in-training. Deanna stated, "The intern seemed disinterested, didn't appear to want to participate in

the training workshop" speaking of observing the intern during a workshop on working with clients. Participants were reluctant to discuss observing problematic behaviors and focused on giving specific examples. Beverly described a situation with an intern counselor-in-training that struggled with following the rules and regulations of the site and how this translated into professional behaviors.

> We had an intern that had difficulty following the norms and we wondering why can't you change this behavior but at the same time the longer it occurs it is starting to become a problem and how is this translating into other professional behaviors.

*Observed by site-supervisor during review.* Participants spoke a lot about problematic behaviors being noticed during the reviewing of the intern counselor-in-training's materials such as documentation or counseling session recordings. George spoke of reviewing the intern counselor-in-training case documentation and noting an issue to be addressed. "I review their files and look in their files and I see that they are not doing their notes properly or they are not doing their treatment plans." Beverly stated, "Doing both live and video tape observation has helped us observe the direct behavior between the client and the counselor" thus indicating that observation occurs on multiple levels. Through the use of observation, site supervisors are able to note or identify problematic behaviors, however, identification through observation was not the only developing category. Participants stressed the importance of supervision and working with the intern counselor-in-training on an individual basis. This appears to be a very important component to the site supervisors.

**Supervision.** The second category, supervision, describes the identification or recognition of intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior during the supervision session. Participants identified two sub-categories in which they describe identifying

problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training during the supervision session. These were intern counselors-in-training self-identifying problematic behaviors during the supervision session and site supervisors themselves identifying problematic behavior exhibited during the supervision session.

*Intern counselors-in-training self-identification.* The first sub-category, intern counselors-in-training self-identifying problematic behaviors, was described as both actual incidents of self-reporting and as an important component to the development of the intern counselor-in-training. Participants became very excited when discussing intern counselors-in-training self-identifying problematic behavior. "The intern willingly admitted that they didn't get as much attention and training as they would have liked" said Beverly. Jean stated, "Sometimes during supervision, maybe they will mention something that happened." While Luke specified, "I think it is very important for interns to be willing to show how they have had an issue or where they are struggling."

*Site-supervisor identification during supervision.* Site supervisors described the second sub-category, site supervisor identification during supervision, as an essential skill that they must utilize to aid in the development of intern counselors-in-training. Participant Ten discussed the discovery "Eventually it came out in supervision that the intern had decided that they did not like individual counseling and that this was not the field for them," and that this had an impact on how services were provided to clients Participant Ten further stated "The intern started out the semester and saw clients the first couple of weeks and then they started coming up with excuses for why they were unavailable to do counseling." Jean added "During our supervision session when we listen to a tape I might identify something to do with a client where maybe it is out of sync with what is expected of the intern." Identifying through supervision highlights a crucial

component of a site supervisor's duty, during the interviews; participants seemed to take this very seriously with a serious tone.

**External sources.**  The final category, external sources, describes participants learning of intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors through external sources.  Within this category two sub-categories emerged.  The two sub-categories included receiving reports or complaints from the clients of the intern counselor-in-training and the university or faculty supervisor submitting a report about concerning behavior.  The categories and sub-categories within Table two provides information regarding how site supervisors describe identifying problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training.

*Reported by clients.*  Participants spoke of learning of an issue within the counseling setting from reports from clients.  Beverly spoke of receiving complaints from the intern counselor-in-training's client regarding an inappropriate relationship, "I found out because the client made a complaint."  While Luke spoke of a problem not initially being reported and instead being discovered because, "Clients bailed on the intern or they kept requesting to be changed to a different counselor."   This particular sub-category seemed to be a source of stress and concern to participants.  This was noted through their tone and statements of concern for the client.

*Reported by university supervisor.*  Alternatively one participant reported that the intern counselor-in-training's faculty supervisor may notify them of a potential issue.  Luke stated "I received a phone call from the professor saying that the intern never brought in any tapes to class because the clients would not allow taping, so I looked into it and found out that was not the case."   During the interview, Luke appeared to be fine with this particular incident and was more shocked to receive the phone call.  However, during the interviews when three of the

participants discussed interactions with university faculty or supervisors there was a tendency to sound strained, as if this relationship has been stressed at times.

**Categories Responding to Problematic Behavior**

Research question two explored responses of how site supervisors respond to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior.

Table three, an excerpt from the codebook developed for this study, provides the responses from site supervisors as to how they respond to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors. The analysis identified three categories of how site supervisors describe responding to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors: collaboration with others, site supervisors' reactions, and interventions used by the site supervisor. Within each category, sub-categories were identified.

Table 3

*Categories Responding to Problematic Behavior*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Collaboration | With Colleagues | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with a colleague or other site supervisors about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| | With Supervisor/ Director | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with either a supervisor or program/facility director about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| | With University Faculty | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with University Faculty about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| Reaction | Shock | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of shock or surprise, neither negative or positive, regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Frustration | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of frustration or anger regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Sadness/ Concern | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of sadness, concern, or worry regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| Intervention | Work With Intern | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing working or intervening through working with the interns to address problematic behavior or issues |
| | Termination | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing or using the term termination to address intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |

These three categories with the corresponding eight sub-categories are a representation of how site supervisors respond to problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training. These sub-categories provide details on the site supervisors' state of mind when learning of or

responding to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors.  Participants also discussed how they responded when working with the intern.  Sub-categories within the Intervention Category include working with the intern and termination.

**Collaboration.**  Site supervisors described their responses to learning or recognizing of an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors in a manner that utilizes collaboration and supervision.   Participants identified collaboration as a response to intern counselors-in-training with three sub-categories of collaboration.  This includes, collaborating with colleagues, supervisors or directors, and with university supervisor or faculty.

*With colleagues.*  Four site supervisors identified seeking to collaborate or consult with colleagues or their supervisor, especially if they wanted confirmation about their interpretation of the behavior.  Beverly stated, "If there is ever something I am a little bit iffy about, I will consult with one of the other counselors that works with me just to see if I am reading this correctly or am I off based in my assumptions."  George supported this with "I'll check in with other colleagues or therapists who I also know do supervision."  Rosa discussed meeting with her colleague to review a recurring incident, "The same thing kept coming up and so my colleague and I met and talked about it."  Participants who spoke about collaboration compared the need of collaboration in a similar fashion of teamwork and stressed the importance of collaborating with colleagues.  Deanna included consultation with colleagues as a recommendation for future site supervisors,

> Don't be afraid to consult with others about it (problematic behavior) whether it's a colleague or a chair of head of a department, I think it helps a great deal to process those concerns and helps to understand what steps to take.

***With supervisor/director.*** Five participants identified their director or supervisor as a source of collaboration. Luke stated, "I pretty much consistently consult with my director because ultimately they are responsible for all of us." George supported this by stating "I usually consult with the clinic director." Samantha spoke of consulting with their program director, "I will talk to the program director for their input." Deanna provided a different perspective as a co-director, "I have a training co-director as we speak regularly about what's going on and I sort of consult with her." Kate mentioned that they start with their director before contacting the university supervisor, "my director first and then she will tell me if it gets bad to call the university."

***With university supervisor/faculty.*** Two participants stated that they rarely consult with the university supervisor and only under circumstances where they absolutely have to. Samantha stated, "It is those ethical type violations or legal violations that I get to where I have to address those with the university." Samantha further indicated that she would contact the university but that typically they do not have to take this step "But really our usual problems are those we can work on here without the university." Kate indicated that they will contact the university supervisor if their program director directs them to do so, "(director) will tell me if it gets bad to call the university." Kate indicated that they rarely feel the need to contact the university supervisor, "Only a few times that were serious enough for me to contact the university, it has to be pretty serious enough for me to contact the university." One participant indicated that they would contact the university supervisor even if they did not agree regarding the intern counselors-in-training progress. William stated, "I would consult at least with my faculty colleagues and they might disagree with me but we can work together to make a decision to employ or not employ a certain intern." William further mentioned the amount of contact with

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the university supervisor; "We have discussions with the faculty clinical supervisor person just not as regular as they could be." I noted that during this interview the participant was interested in receiving more contact from the university but that they contradicted themselves with stating that the rarely feel the need to contact the university.

**Reactions.** In addition to discussing collaborating, participants also described their reactions including shock, frustration, and sadness or concern. Participants provided descriptions for their feelings regarding their discovery of the intern counselor-in-training's problematic behavior.

*Shock.* Two of the participants described shock as an initial reaction followed by additional feelings. Beverly stated that they experienced, "Shock first and then I don't know what the best word to describe would be" while George stated, "Shock and then wow." During the interviews participants who stated that shock was their reaction also stressed the word shock with George stressing both the word shock and wow.

*Frustration.* Three of the participants spoke of having a level of frustration or irritation. George stated, "A lot of times it's exasperation because I know that this intern knew what they did was wrong, but if I was going to pick one word it would be frustration." Others specifically stated frustration. For example Rosa stated, "Frustration is the feeling that stands out." Samantha supported this with "Irritation, I just get irritated because this doesn't have to happen" further stating "I say frustration if it has been an ongoing issue." I noticed that participants were very vocal about their frustration and irritation, often sounding frustrated or irritated when discussing this.

*Sadness/concern.* One site supervisor, Beverly, spoke of both the intern counselor-in-training and the client that was being served, "Sadness and disappointment that we had a client

that was let down and that the client could potentially have an aversion to going to counseling because of this situation." This incident appeared too greatly upset this participant with her stressing concern regarding the client. The participant felt very strongly about having a client being let down and potentially being turned away from participating counseling in the future.

**Intervention.** Participants were asked to describe how they responded upon learning of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior. Through the use of intervention, participants identified two sub-categories of how they responded to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior. This includes working with the intern directly and termination. Often times, the site supervisors spoke of the intern counselors-in-training that they have worked with a sort of fondness and protectiveness, and often speaking of second chances. For example, one site supervisor, Samantha stated, "I believe in second chances" when referring to working with an intern who was struggling in their work with clients. Richard summed it up with the statement, "None of us are perfect, we are all a work in progress and can all stand to be better counselors and I feel that the interns are at the beginning."

***Working with the intern counselor-in-training.*** Participants rarely used the term remediation, often focusing on steps they will take in working with the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior. Participants spoke most often about working with the interns rather than termination. Others spoke of addressing the behavior during supervision. Among the participants, this appeared to be the common and preferred method for responding to problematic behaviors. Participants were very adamant that they preferred to work with the intern directly. Luke stated, "We may change the focus of supervision a little bit, figure out what we're able to do if it is a specific skill or a specific client" and continued this with, "We sat down and I was very clear with them that this behavior must change." Several participants stated that

they prefer to speak with the intern counselor-in-training directly and privately.  Kate stated, "I spoke with the intern directly and let the intern know that I had a lot of concerns" while William stated, "Directly having a sit down with the intern about the behaviors or whatever is going on would be my first step."  One participant did mention that although they prefer to work through problematic behaviors, if the clients are in jeopardy that they will not take any chances.  For example Jean reported,  "I am going to give everyone a chance to try and work through it but I am not going to have my clients pay the price because someone was not ready."  Participants rarely used the term "problematic behaviors," often making statements such as Rosa stating, "Interns are not perfect, that is why they are interns" or Samantha's statement, "I don't really consider this challenging or a problem."  Additionally, site supervisors reported that if there was an issue that might be considered problematic, it might very well be dismissed or thought of in a different manner.  An example of this includes Deanna's statement, "I think each person brings some challenges to the table and that is normal, but those don't really rise to the level of concern or problematic behaviors, in my mind, they are just normal developmental things."  Deanna further stated "I think problem behaviors are really typical and normal as we're developing and I don't want to treat it as something alarming or something bad that they've done."  With several of the site supervisors not wanting to label behaviors or concerns as problematic and others indicating that the belief that this is somewhat expected behavior, support the concern of what is considered truly problematic behavior.

*Termination.*  Only two of the participants stated that they had terminated an intern counselor-in-training.  Kate discussed a time where termination was sought; "We wanted to look at termination once we realized from our observations that the intern was continuing her behavior."  Six of the participants indicated that it would only occur if an egregious ethical

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violation occurred or a violation that would get a licensed counselor fired or loss of licensure. Although Kate spoke of terminating an internship, it was stressed that it is a rare occurrence and the preference is to work with the intern, "Only a few times that were serious enough for me to contact the university when I was considering termination, but we prefer to work with them for awhile and come up with solutions together as a team." Samantha made a similar statement,

> If it is a big big problem that would get someone fired or lose their license, like a serious ethical violation, I will contact the university supervisor to discuss the problem and either termination or significant remediation, but really our usual problems are those that we can work on here.

William supported the stance that termination occurs only for serious violations or negligent behavior stated that, "Termination would certainly be any kind of gross ethical violations or inappropriate negligent behavior but it would have to be pretty significant though for me to actually terminate." Participants Samantha and Richard spoke of problematic behavior as being "Behavior that would get a licensed counselor fired," from Richard. With Samantha stating "If I had committed those I would be fired and license lost." Additionally, Participants Rosa and Richard spoke specifically of "Egregious ethical violations" when describing what they considered to be problematic behavior and something to consider for termination.

## Further Emerging Categories

In grounded theory qualitative study, emerging categories may appear that were not initially expected nor connect with the research questions (Birks & Mills, 2012; Charmaz, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). In Table four, emerging categories are listed with their corresponding sub-categories. The analysis identified three emerging categories discussed by site supervisors when talking about intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors. Challenges

site supervisors face; motivations to be a site supervisor; and their experiences with university faculty or supervisors.  The categories in Table four, an excerpt from the codebook developed for this study, are a representation of emerging categories that do not correspond to the initial two research questions, the first category addresses challenges that site supervisors face.

Table 4

*Further Emerging Categories*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Challenges Supervisors Face | External to Agency | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are external to the agency or internship site |
| | Internal to Agency | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are internal to the agency or internship site |
| | Site-Supervisor as a Person/ Personal Reasons | Language or words describing personal or self factors that are of concern to the site supervisor |
| Motivations to be a Site Supervisor | Growth | Language or words that describe growth as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | For the Profession | Language or words that describe service to the counseling profession as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Part of the Job | Language or words that describe being a site supervisor as a part of the job as a factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Past Experiences | Language or words describing the site supervisors' previous experiences as a student or intern as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Personal/ Self | Language or words describing personal or self reasons as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| Experiences Working with University Supervisors | Positive | Language or words describing the site supervisor as having positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Negative | Language or words describing the site supervisor as having neither negative or positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |

**Challenges site-supervisor face.** In response to the experience-near opening question, participants described what they found to be challenging when working as a site supervisor. Within this, three sub-categories emerged where participants described external to the agency factors, internal to the agency factors, and personal reasons as areas that are considered to be of challenge. When I asked about challenges to being a site supervisor, participants tended to speak faster. This also appeared to be an area that the participants wanted to discuss and assisted with starting the interview in a manner that elicited a lot of information. The participants responded well to this as an opening question.

*External to agency.* The first sub-category highlights challenges that site supervisors face that are external to their agency. Jean noted, "Sometimes there are changes made in the requirements but they are not always communicated to us by the intern's university and that can be challenging in that I do not know what is expected." Another site supervisor, William, expressed their frustration, "I get frustrated with the process and the lack of communication from the university especially when they change the forms or requirements and it seems every year they change the evaluations and what they want their interns to do." While another, Beverly, mentioned receiving interns from different universities meant that they were not all trained the same, "There is not a consistent practicum site, I feel that the looseness is also a factor in readiness which can be challenging for me."

*Internal to agency.* Alternatively from challenges coming externally from the agency is the second sub-category, challenges that are internal to the agency. Internal to the agency challenges included administrative duties, time, and determining where the intern is developmentally compared to the needs of the clients. Deanna stressed that it was challenging when "Balancing the needs of the center with the needs of the students" while Richard reported,

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"Balancing time and agency policies to where the intern is at developmentally and what the university may want from us is a big challenge." Several participants noted the lack of time available, William stated, "There are times when supervisees require more time than what you have scheduled on paper," and furthered this with

> It is hard to say no to an intern, it is hard to say come back later I can't talk to you right now, so I meet with them and meet the need and that just eases into whatever other thing I thought I was going to do like paper work or administrative stuff.

*Personal reasons.* The last sub-category connects with challenges the site supervisor believes to be on a more personal basis. Participants noted that personal reasons were often a source of challenge when serving as a site supervisor. Several participants noted the immense responsibility with William stating, "It is a huge responsibility, it needs to be taken seriously within my other duties as a counselor." Beverly furthered this statement by speaking about their concern over, "The incredible feeling of responsibility and liability, making sure that the intern is able to provide effective and professional services to clients and if it does go awry, it is up to me to head it off." Several site supervisors noted moments where they question their ability to be a site supervisor. For example, Luke stated, "A big part is, am I doing enough on the evaluation side both informally and formally to really communicate to the interns so that they learn a lot about themselves." The combination of external and internal factors while being influenced by the personal factors appear to influence the experiences of site supervisors in addition to working with intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors.

**Motivations to be a site supervisor.** The second category in Table four provides information on the participant's motivations to became a site-supervisor. In response to the experience near question about what it meant to the site supervisor for this experience to happen

to them, participants described their thoughts and feelings.  All of the site supervisors spoke of their reasoning or purpose in being a site supervisor.  Four sub-categories within this category include witnessing growth, a part of the job, to make up for past experiences, and for personal or self-reasons.

*Growth.*  For many, the idea of observing growth in the intern counselor-in-training was the most rewarding aspect of all.  Participants who were interested in growth also seemed to be interested in paying it forward.  Also, within this sub-category I noted that participants were very excited about witnessing the growth of intern counselors-in-training.  Jean summed it up as, "I like watching them grow, watching them gain confidence with their skills" while Samantha stated, "I love working with interns as they learn and grow and explore what population they want to work with and what kinds of interventions they like to use."  Another, William, supported this,

> I like seeing an intern develop as a counselor, seeing them put into practice what they
> have been learning didactically as a student and getting it on an experiential level so
> especially turning theory into practice and seeing the joy and the learning within.

*For the profession.*  In addition to watching the intern counselor-in-training grow, site supervisors spoke of being a supervisor for the growth of the profession in a paying it forward style.  For example, Richard stated, "It is very rewarding and it is a paying it forward type of thing" while Beverly stated "It is something that I can do to help contribute to the profession and help future generations of counselors find their way along the path," and yet another, Samantha, noted, "I think of it as paying it forward."

*Part of the job.*  For some site supervisors, it is not necessarily for paying it forward or for the intern, instead they consider it to be a part of their job.  The third sub-category

participants described their job as the reasoning for being a site supervisor. Samantha stated, "It is a part of my job and it is something that I enjoy doing and overall I love my job." While Richard stated, "I like the feeling like I am contributing to our profession by working with interns, like paying it forward but not really because it is a part of my job."

*Past experiences.* The fourth sub-category was described as a type of compensation for past experiences of the site supervisor. For some site supervisors, it is a very personal reason to serve as a site supervisor. For example, Beverly mentioned that being a site supervisor has "Definitely helped me learn about myself just as much as it does I think help the students learn about their process through counseling" and Deanna stated, "I think I learn a lot from them, the new stuff they are learning in class or they might tell me about books that I haven't read." Beverly described her journey,

> I didn't necessarily have the best supervisors in my journey and I had site supervisors that were less than fantastic and then post degree I had even less enthusiastic supervisors, so I feel a little bit of passion and motivation to be the best supervisor that I can and make up for the idea that I didn't have it growing up so let me try to provide it to the best of my ability.

While Richard spoke of one particular supervisor they had, "I had a pretty crappy supervisor once that let me know they couldn't stand working with interns, I want to be different than that for my interns."

*Personal/self.* The last sub-category in the category motivations in being a site supervisor, spoke of more personal reasons. A few of the participants spoke of learning from the interns as a motive in supervising interns. Deanna stated, "I love working with the students, I think I learn a lot from them whether it is about what they are learning in class that is newer than

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what I was taught or they might tell me about books that I haven't read." Deanna furthered this with, "I really find that supervising helps me to develop as a therapist, it improves my work, makes me stay more current with the literature and with what is going on." Beverly noted a more mutually beneficial learning relationship, "It definitely helped me learn about myself just as much as it does I think help the students learn about their process through counseling."

**Experiences working with university supervisors.** The third category in Table four provides information on the experiences of the site supervisor when interacting with university faculty or supervisor regarding the intern counselor-in-training. In response to the experience near question of "tell me about a time you contacted or considered contacting the university supervisor" participants replied their experiences fell within two subcategories of positive or neutral with a negative slant. The majority of the participants had very strong opinions either positive or negative. All of the site supervisors spoke of a reluctance to contact university supervisors unless it was an absolute necessary.

*Positive experiences.* The first sub-category, positive experiences, was the least mentioned. Deanna was the single participant who indicated that they have had only positive experiences, "The times I have had to contact the professor it has been productive and so far it has matched their (the faculty supervisor) concerns that they already had." This particular participant was the only one to mention positive experiences and speak in a positive manner regarding working with faculty.

*Negative experiences.* On the other end of the spectrum, seven of the site supervisors' noted strained or negative interactions, the second sub-category focused on these experiences. I noted that several of the participants had very strong negative opinions, providing detailed accounts of their experiences. Three participants spoke of incidents where they reached out to or

attempted to get in contact with a faculty supervisor.  Kate spoke of an incident where she felt

unsupported,

> they weren't very supportive over at the school and I told them about the things the intern
>
> was doing and that there were unethical behaviors and their response to me was that the
>
> intern was in their last semester and that they would talk to the intern.

Samantha spoke of a similar incident,

> If I do contact the university it is not always positive.   There was a time I contacted the
>
> university supervisor immediately about two interns that I was considering termination
>
> and they asked that I please continue to work with both interns.  I agreed even though I
>
> know I shouldn't have and within two weeks there was a serious ethical violation and I
>
> again contacted their person at the university and terminated them only to find out that
>
> they were allowed to finish their internships at the university in the secretary's office.

Samantha further stated that contacting a faculty supervisor,

> Does not always go how you think it would go, I have found over the years that at the
>
> beginning faculty will be very supportive saying things like if you need me call me or let
>
> me know if this intern needs extra help, but usually I only get communication every year
>
> and rarely get a response if I do try to contact someone.

Participant further spoke of their treatment by university faculty and supervisors as being

negative, "There are times I have noticed that the university supervisor may treat me or the

program director in a condescending manner."  While Jean stated, "I reached out to their

university supervisor both by phone and email, I didn't get any calls back."  Jean further reported

lack of communication indicating that after contact with university faculty, they received very

little communication from the university until it was decided to terminate the internship.  Jean

noted that a recent change in university policy was not communicated, causing a high level of frustration. "It was not communicated to us and the interns could not count some of their work which delayed their graduation and then delayed the start of the next set of interns."  Two of the participants mentioned that universities frequently change the evaluation forms to a longer format and at times they do not receive the most updated version.  For example Samantha stated,

> Getting longer evaluations that ask for me to complete more and more paperwork with questions on there that are ridiculous and unnecessary, sometimes wanting so much detail that it takes even longer to complete than it does to meet with the intern or complete notes on my clients.

## Summary

This chapter focused on the data reviewed for common categories and sub-categories. Demographic information about the 10 participants was provided.  The results of the data analysis provided information about the experiences of site supervisors working with intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior.  The implications of the findings are discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER V DISCUSSION

The internship experience is one of the most significant educational experiences for counselors-in-training, since it provides the intern counselor-in-training with the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom. A site supervisor at the internship site provides supervision for this valuable experience. While not expected or desired, site supervisors may have to address problematic behavior exhibited by the intern counselor-in-training. The site supervisor is responsible for the quality of services and well-being of the clients served by intern counselors-in-training. Due to the firsthand practice of the internship experience, and the possibility of causing harm to clients, it is imperative to address concerns of problematic behavior during internship (McCutcheon, 2008). The counselor education field is challenged with identifying problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training due to the lack of a clear definition of what constitutes problematic behavior (Evans, et al., 2012; Trimble, et al., 2012). Furthermore, there is a lack of research examining the needs of site supervisors or their experiences working with intern counselors-in-training. Of the studies that investigated student counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors, the viewpoints of students and faculty have been examined, however, few examined site supervisors (Boxley, Drew, & Rangel, 1986; Evans et al., 2012; Gaubatz & Vera, 2006; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Huprich, & Rudd, 2004; Lamb, et al., 1991; Rosenberg, et al., 2005; Ziomek-Daigle & Christenson, 2010). In addition to understanding how problematic behavior is identified, it is important to understand how it is addressed once it has been identified. In response to an absence of research in this area, this study examined site supervisors' experiences in working with intern counselors-in-training

exhibiting problematic behaviors. This included examining how site supervisors identify and respond to problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training. This was completed through the examination of qualitative data from interviews conducted with 10 site supervisor participants. This chapter provides a discussion of these findings, limitations of the study, potential implications, and future recommendations for future research.

<div align="center">**Discussion of the Findings**</div>

The findings of this study provide information about the reported experiences of site supervisors related to identifying and responding to problematic behavior. Additionally, emerging data was found regarding the site supervisors' purposes in serving as a site supervisor and their experiences collaborating with university faculty. The results in the current study provide a perspective that has not been previously researched within the counselor education field.

**Identifying Problematic Behaviors**

The first research question explored how site supervisors describe identifying problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training. In order to be able to identify intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors, a definition of what constitutes problematic behavior must be constructed. Clear definitions can provide site supervisors, counselor educators, and counselors-in-training with guidelines for appropriate types of behavior, and for specific skills needed (Trimble et al., 2012). The counselor education field is challenged with identifying problematic behaviors exhibited by counselors-in-training (Evans, et al., 2012; Trimble, et al., 2012). The data collected in this study highlight areas that are of concern or are a part of the experience of being a site supervisor for intern counselors-in-training.

Site supervisors described discovering concerning behavior through observations from staff, direct observation by the site supervisor, observation during the supervision session, reported by the intern counselor-in-training, reported by clients, or reported by the university. Evans, et al. (2012) identified an additional area, peer reporting, that site supervisors did not report as a method of discovering concerning behavior. Additionally, Rosenberg et al. (2005) addressed the use of peer reporting of concerning behavior indicating that peer reporting is not an ideal method of identifying counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior. In a 2014 study by Parker et al., focused on peer reporting, finding that peer motivation had a large impact on if the peer reported. Within this current study one participant mentioned having a discussion with a peer of one of the intern counselors-in-training at their site. However this was not a description of identifying concerning behaviors but rather a discussion of supporting a peer. The description of using observation at the clinical internship site is similar to that used by counselor education programs in determining whether or not a counselor-in-training is demonstrating problematic behaviors. Similar to the evaluations and assessments in place in counselor education programs, site supervisors use observations to evaluate an intern counselor-in-training's progress (Evans, et al., 2012; Gizara & Forrest, 2004; Trimble, et al., 2012).

Supervision is an additional mode described by site supervisors as a tool to monitor intern counselor-in-training progress. In the second category, participants described the discovery of problematic behavior through the supervision process both through self-identification by the intern and identification by the site supervisor. Self-identification of problematic behaviors was reported by several of the participants. This is supported as a method reported in a study by Hart and Falvey (1987) who examined site supervisors in the north western portion of the United States and noted that self-report of students was the top method of feedback within supervision.

Self-identification of problematic behaviors was also noted in a 2012 study by Evans et al., who noted that nearly 58% of their participants admitted to experiencing problematic behavior at some point during their counselor training program. Combining the results from the 1987 study by Hart and Falvey, the 2012 study by Evans et al., and the current study indicate that self-identification may be a vital tool in identifying problematic behaviors. In addition to observation and supervision as a method of identifying problematic behavior, site supervisors described learning of problematic behavior through reports submitted by clients of the intern counselor-in-training and reports from the faculty supervisor.

The almost unanimity of the participants in considering many behaviors not to be problematic and instead to be part of typical developmental behaviors suggests that site supervisors may have a different definition of problematic behavior than those who prepare counselors-in-training in counselor education programs. Participants made statements such as this event or behavior is problematic, but it is not a problem. Furthermore, the fondness and protectiveness witnessed during the interview process suggests that site supervisors may develop a strong working alliance with their supervisees that sometimes appear almost parental with a focus on observing the intern counselor-in-training growing during the internship process. Jacobs et al. (2011) discussed the significance of empathy and that while that is necessary, it can be both wonderful and helpful but also a source of conflict for those working with counselors-in-training. This relationship appears to impact how site supervisors interact and work with their assigned intern counselors-in-training thus leading to an impact of how problematic behavior is defined and viewed. Empathy and the importance of the relationship that appeared in this study may be explained through a study completed by Lazovsky and Shimoni (2007) where the site supervisor as a mentor was examined. The connection expressed by the participants appears to

be strong and an area in which counselor educators may want to know more about.  Counselor

educators might find it beneficial to collaborate with those who supervise their student

counselors-in-training to develop an understanding and agreement on what is expected.

**Responding to Problematic Behaviors**

The second research question explored how site supervisors responded to intern

counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors.  Participants described responding to

intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors through consultation with

colleagues, their supervisor or director, or with the university faculty.  Additionally, participants

described their reactions of shock, frustration, and sadness or concern.  In the third category,

participants described their responses to problematic behavior in terms of either working with the

intern counselor-in-training or terminating the internship experience.  Nearly all of the

participants identified a form of consultation as an initial response to becoming aware of the

intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior.  This supports Gizara and Forrest

(2004) findings where site supervisors initially consulted with colleagues on an individual basis

and also consulted with a director or supervisor of the agency.  A few of the participants in this

current study spoke of being a part of a supervision team, which supports participants from

Gizara and Forrest (2004) who recommended supervisors participate in a supervision group.

With this in mind, data from the current study suggests that supervisors may benefit from

participating in a supervision group or meeting; the counselor education program could

potentially facilitate this if the supervisor does not have access to one at their agency.

As a whole, participants in this study described their initial thoughts and reactions to

learning of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior as one of shock,

frustration, and sadness.  This is similar to a finding by Gizara and Forrest (2004) whose

participants spoke of the importance of the relationship between the intern counselor-in-training and the site supervisor and described the experiences as "horrible, painful and very sad for everyone involved" (p. 136). While the participants in this current study did not speak of the experience as horrible or painful, they too spoke of the relationship, thus indicating that for site supervisors the relationship plays a significant role in the supervision process and internship experience. Based on Gizara and Forrest (2004) study the relationship between the site supervisor and the intern counselor-in-training appears to influence how the site supervisor responds to various situations as well as their thoughts and feelings towards problematic behavior or the intern counselor-in-training. This may connect with the "barriers to making an accurate assessment" discussed by McCutcheon in 2008 (p. 211) and the current study through the participants description that the behavior was not actually a problem. Although McCutcheon did not identify the relationship as a barrier, data collection from this study indicate that it may indeed be an impediment to true evaluation and response.

Considering the influence of the intern/supervisor relationship on the evaluation, site supervisors may benefit from more contact with university supervisors or faculty. Site supervisors might find it beneficial to receive resources, training, and support from university faculty. This could also clarify that the role of site supervisor appears to be very different from the role of university faculty (Manzanares et., al., 2004; Motley, Reese, & Campos, 2013). This is supported by CACREP's requirement of counselor education programs to provide training to site supervisors supervising their student counselors-in-training (2009). Data from within this study indicate that site supervisors may appreciate further developing the relationship with the faculty supervisor, which may also assist in repairing the described relationship into a more

positive one where site supervisors feel comfortable and confident in connecting with faculty supervisors.

Often, problematic behaviors in counselors-in-training are addressed through remediation plans. Within this study, participants rarely used the term remediation and instead opted to use the phrase "working with the intern." Remediation plans may be developed in collaboration with the counselor-in-training and counselor education faculty (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Johnson et al., 2008; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Lamb et al., 1987; McCutcheon, 2008). This may include a variety of interventions that the intern counselor-in-training must complete in order to continue in their counseling education program (Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Schwartz-Mette, 2009; Vacha-Haase et al., 2004). Multiple frameworks, models, and responses have been developed to address remediation of counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors (Bemak, Epp, & Keys, 1999; Dufrene & Henderson, 2009; Kress & Protivnak, 2009; Lamb et al., 1987; Wilkerson, 2006). However, within this study only one participant identified a model that they use occasionally when working with intern counselors-in-training suggesting that supervision models are not typically applied during supervision by site supervisors. This may be due to site supervisors lack of knowledge surrounding supervision models or the limited amount of time and resources available to site supervisors. The majority of site supervisors spoke of termination from the internship site as a last resort. This phenomenon was illustrated in this study through the site supervisors' expressing hesitancy to terminate counselors-in-training from their clinical sites. Tedesco (1982) stated that termination is a distressing experience for all involved and found that termination occurs only 2% of the time at APA-accredited sites. Which leads to the question of site supervisors responsibilities in the gatekeeping process as discussed by Hutchens, Block, and Young (2013). The consistent response of collaboration with colleagues or directors

and working directly with the intern suggest that site supervisors are committed to serving as a site supervisor and working to aide in the development of their assigned intern counselor-in-training.

**Further Emerging Categories**

Throughout the interview process, site supervisors spoke about what they perceived to be challenging, their purpose in serving as a site supervisor, and their experiences when collaborating with faculty. Site supervisors spoke about challenges that included external and internal factors of the agency as well as challenges that were on a more personal basis. Several of the participants questioned their preparedness of being a site supervisor; this is supported in the 2004 study by Gizara and Forrest whose participants noted a feeling of being unprepared to serve as a site supervisor. An additional connection between this study and the study by Gizara and Forrest (2004) is the description of the significant amount of responsibility that correlates to being a site supervisor. This suggests that site supervisors feel the need for additional training and potentially support in serving as a site supervisor.

Site supervisors described their experiences that influenced their interactions with intern counselors-in-training. While these experiences may not be in direct connection to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior, it appears that they may they be a part of what it means to be a site supervisor and an influential aspect when their problematic behavior has been noted. This suggests that university responsibility may include more than just reviewing or connecting with site supervisors when something is not going well. Additional training or communication with university faculty or supervisor may benefit the site supervisor and the delivery of supervision to the intern counselor-in-training thus improving their overall counseling training experience. This may include workshops or training opportunities or a group

meeting of site supervisors.  This could also include the faculty supervisor visiting the internship site to meet with the site supervisor in-person.  The 2016 CACREP standards require counselor education programs to provide opportunities to site supervisors to prepare for their work in supervising intern counselors-in-training.  Additionally, CACREP requires that site supervisors be provided with a written agreement detailing what is expected of them and the expectations for the intern counselor-in-training.  Within this study, site supervisors frequently noted the desire for increased clearer communication from university faculty.

## Limitations

The findings of this study need to be considered with the limitations.  Data collected for this study was limited to the individual single interviews of the 10 participants, which lasted between 20 and 45 minutes.  The single short interviews limited the amount of prolonged exposure that is desirable in qualitative studies.  Conducting follow-up interviews for a longer amount of time may have assisted with ensuring trustworthiness.  Moreover, collection additional demographic type information such types and amount of training that participants received in supervision may have led to more insight into their experiences as site supervisors.  The manner of data collection and small number of participants has limitations that impact the saturation of the data, potentially leading to not reaching saturation.  For example, in grounded theory the more methods of data collection, the more saturation is provided.  A focus group or member check may have increased the saturation level or increased the amount of data analyzed.  Additionally, having more participants from various types of counseling settings may have provided a richer data set due to the inclusion of diverse counseling professionals.  The use of chain method sampling may have related to an overrepresentation of college counseling site supervisors.  There was not an equal amount of participants in the various counseling settings

and there was no representation from additional types of counseling settings such as private practice or psychiatric settings.

The categories and sub-categories were developed by a single researcher with an agreement from a peer coder to review and ensure for validity. It is possible that additional or other reviewers may have constructed the categories and sub-categories in a different manner. Qualitative analysis has the limitation that they may be subjective differences in the coding, interpretation, and analysis of the data (Creswell, 2013). While an external peer reviewer was used to minimize this limitation, it is imperative to acknowledge this as a limitation of data analysis (Creswell, 2013)

## Recommendations for Future Research

This study was exploratory in nature, providing the framework to develop a theory to explain the experiences of site supervisors and to predict future experiences, reactions, or responses. It is clear that there is a significant need for additional research on this topic, including more opportunities to explore how site supervisors define problematic behavior and to explore how intern counselors-in-training are assessed by site supervisors (Hensley, Smith, & Thompson, 2003; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007). Further exploration if site supervisor experiences may include expanding to explore the type and amount of supervision training the supervisor has received. Also addressing or further exploring site supervisors expressing contradictions with an event or behavior is problematic, but it is not a problem. Inquiring further into the experiences through the use of focus groups and additional interviews may provide for a more thorough understanding of how site supervisors identify and respond to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior.

Additionally, further exploration could provide the counselor education field with additional valuable information to improve counselor education training programs through having a more in-depth understanding of the counseling internship experience and providing additional support or understanding to the site supervisor (Hart & Falvey, 1987; Manzanares et al., 2004; McCutcheon, 2008; Vacha-Hasse et al., 2004). Additional qualitative studies could incorporate the use of focus groups and interviews with site supervisors, intern counselors-in-training, and counselor educators to expand on findings from this study to create a deeper understanding of the relationship between the site supervisor and the intern counselor-in-training. Yet another area for future research could explore the connection or disconnection between site supervisors and university faculty through interviews, surveys, and focus groups. This could include an examination of the relationship between a pair of site supervisors and university faculty to determine what makes for an effective relationship. Additionally, studies might explore the impact of program accreditation or the use of honorariums given to site supervisors on the experience of site supervisors and the relationships between site supervisors and university faculty.

**Implications**

This study explored how site supervisors described identifying and responding to intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors. Literature that focuses specifically on site supervisors' experiences is limited and instead focuses primarily on counseling education programs. This study identified the relationship between the intern counselor-in-training and the site supervisor as being of great importance and influence. This relationship suggests that site supervisors and their intern counselors-in-training have an impact on each other that at times puts the university supervisor on a different relationship level. Given this relationship, it is

recommended that university faculty strive to establish a working alliance with the site supervisors of their student counselors-in-training in an effort to develop an understanding of the different roles.

With consideration to how student counselors-in-training are evaluated by counselor education programs, modifying or further developing a set of standards to provide guidance for site supervisors with the understanding of the relationship between site supervisors and intern counselor-in-training may greatly benefit the intern counselor-in-training.  Additionally, information from this study this may assist counselor education programs in developing a training curriculum for site supervisors that addresses possible students' experiences during their internship.  It is important to note that in the development of any materials or additional standards that the limited amount of time available to the site supervisor must be considered.  A potential avenue to provide materials could include offering a free or reduced cost workshop or training session that incorporate both serving as a site supervisor, monitoring clients of interns, monitoring for potential problematic behavior, and providing improved counseling services while also being a site supervisor.  In this manner, site supervisors may justify the time spent away from their clients and responsibilities so as to make the workshop cost effective and beneficial on multiple levels.  An additional method of providing resources and training may include online formats such as webinars or a site supervisor group meeting in an online conference format.  It is also important for counseling educations programs to develop resources and training materials such as a counseling session evaluation rubric, handouts, or information on supervision activities that site supervisors may be able to utilize while working with intern counselors-in-training.

**Summary**

This study found that site supervisors have a unique style of identifying problematic behavior in intern counselors-in-training. Additionally, this study found that site supervisors tend to have an impactful working relationship with their intern counselor-in-training that may come across as protective at times. Site supervisors will continue to work with intern counselors-in-training, they will continue to encounter behavior that may be of concern and yet that may not be of big importance to the site supervisor. However, that is not to say that this is the case for all site supervisors and their intern counselors-in-training, every relationship is unique, every site is unique. The further development and modification to counseling education programs will aid in the preparation of future counselors and provide needed resources for site supervisors.

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**Appendix A**

**Auburn University Institutional Review Board (IRB) Approved Research Protocol Form**

For Information or help contact **THE OFFICE OF RESEARCH COMPLIANCE (ORC)**, 115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University
**Phone:** 334-844-5966     **e-mail:** IRBAdmin@auburn.edu **Web Address:** http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/index.htm

**Revised 2.1.2014**     Submit completed form to **IRBsubmit@auburn.edu** or **115 Ramsay Hall, Auburn University 36849.**

Form must be populated using Adobe Acrobat / Pro 9 or greater standalone program (do not fill out in browser). Hand written forms will not be accepted.

**1. PROPOSED START DATE of STUDY:** 6/10/2014

**PROPOSED REVIEW CATEGORY (Check one):** ☐ FULL BOARD   ☑ EXPEDITED

**SUBMISSION STATUS (Check one):** ☑ NEW   ☐ REVISIONS (to address IRB Review Comments)

**2. PROJECT TITLE:** A Grounded Theory Study on How Site Supervisors Identify and Respond to Counselors-in-Training Who Exhibit Problematic Behaviors

**3.**

| Elizabeth A. Hancock | Doctoral Candidate | SERC | eah0038@auburn.edu |
|---|---|---|---|
| **PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR** | **TITLE** | **DEPT** | **AU E-MAIL** |

| 2084 Haley Center | 334.268.9285 | hancock.elizabeth@gmail.com |
|---|---|---|
| **MAILING ADDRESS** | **PHONE** | **ALTERNATE E-MAIL** |

**4. FUNDING SUPPORT:** ☑ N/A ☐ Internal ☐ External Agency: _____     ☐ Pending ☐ Received

For federal funding, list agency and grant number (if available). _____

5a. List any contractors, sub-contractors, other entities associated with this project:

_____

The Auburn University Institutional Review Board has approved this document for use from 6/15/14 to 6/14/15

b. List any other IRBs associated with this project (including Reviewed, Deferred, Determination, etc.): Protocol # 14-224 EP 1406

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## PROTOCOL PACKET CHECKLIST

**All protocols must include the following items:**

☑ **Research Protocol Review Form** (All signatures included and all sections completed)
(Examples of appended documents are found on the OHSR website: http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)

☑ **CITI Training Certificates** for all Key Personnel.

☑ **Consent Form or Information Letter** and any Releases (audio, video or photo) that the participant will sign.

☑ **Appendix A**, "Reference List"

☑ **Appendix B** if e-mails, flyers, advertisements, generalized announcements or scripts, etc., are used to recruit participants.

☑ **Appendix C** if data collection sheets, surveys, tests, other recording instruments, interview scripts, etc. will be used for data collection. Be sure to attach them in the order in which they are listed in # 13c.

☐ **Appendix D** if you will be using a debriefing form or include emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists (A referral list may be attached to the consent document).

☐ **Appendix E** if research is being conducted at sites other than Auburn University or in cooperation with other entities. A **permission letter** from the site / program director must be included indicating their cooperation or involvement in the project. NOTE: If the proposed research is a multi-site project, involving investigators or participants at other academic institutions, hospitals or private research organizations, a letter of **IRB approval** from each entity is required prior to initiating the project.

☐ **Appendix F** - Written evidence of acceptance by the host country if research is conducted outside the United States.

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### FOR ORC OFFICE USE ONLY

**DATE RECEIVED IN ORC:** 6/3/14 by BK    **PROTOCOL #** 14-224EP 1406

**DATE OF IRB REVIEW:** 6/15/14 by BO    **APPROVAL CATEGORY:** 45 CFR 46.110(6,7)

**DATE OF IRB APPROVAL:** _____ by _____    **INTERVAL FOR CONTINUING REVIEW:** 1 year

**COMMENTS:**

**6.** **GENERAL RESEARCH PROJECT CHARACTERISTICS**

### 6A. Research Methodology

Please check all descriptors that best apply to the research methodology.

Data Source(s): ☑ New Data ☐ Existing Data

**Will recorded data directly or indirectly identify participants?**
☑ Yes ☐ No

**Data collection will involve the use of:**

Educational Tests (cognitive diagnostic, aptitude, etc.)
✓ Interview
Observation
Location or Tracking Measures
Physical / Physiological Measures or Specimens (see Section 6E.)
Surveys / Questionnaires
Other: _____

Internet / Electronic
✓ Audio
Video
Photos
Digital images
Private records or files

### 6B. Participant Information

Please check all descriptors that apply to the target population.
☑ Males ☑ Females ☐ AU students

**Vulnerable Populations**
☐ Pregnant Women/Fetuses ☐ Prisoners ☐ Institutionalized
☐ Children and/or Adolescents (under age 19 in AL)

**Persons with:**

☐ Economic Disadvantages ☐ Physical Disabilities

☐ Educational Disadvantages ☐ Intellectual Disabilities

Do you plan to compensate your participants? ☐ Yes ☑ No

### 6C. Risks to Participants

Please identify all risks that participants might encounter in this research.

☑ Breach of Confidentiality* ☐ Coercion
☐ Deception ☐ Physical
☐ Psychological ☐ Social
☐ None
☐ Other:

*Note that if the investigator is using or accessing confidential or identifiable data, breach of confidentiality is always a risk.

### 6D. Corresponding Approval/Oversight

- Do you need IBC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, BUA #_____ Expiration date _____

- Do you need IACUC Approval for this study?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  If yes, PRN #_____ Expiration date _____

- Does this study involve the Auburn University MRI Center?
  ☐ Yes ☑ No

  Which MRI(s) will be used for this project? (Check all that apply)
  ☐ 3T ☐ 7T

  Does any portion of this project require review by the MRI Safety Advisory Council?
  ☐ Yes ☐ No

  Signature of MRI Center Representative: _____
  _Required for all projects involving the AU MRI Center_

  Appropriate MRI Center Representatives:
   Dr. Thomas S. Denney, Director AU MRI Center
   Dr. Ron Beyers, MR Safety Officer

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**7. PROJECT ASSURANCES** A Grounded Theory Study on How Site Supervisors Identify and Respond to Counselors-in-Training Who Exhibit Problematic Behaviors

## A. PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR'S ASSSURANCES

1. I certify that all information provided in this application is complete and correct.
2. I understand that, as Principal Investigator, I have ultimate responsibility for the conduct of this study, the ethical performance this project, the protection of the rights and welfare of human subjects, and strict adherence to any stipulations imposed by the Auburn University IRB.
3. I certify that all individuals involved with the conduct of this project are qualified to carry out their specified roles and responsibilities and are in compliance with Auburn University policies regarding the collection and analysis of the research data.
4. I agree to comply with all Auburn policies and procedures, as well as with all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection of human subjects, including, but not limited to the following:
   a. Conducting the project by qualified personnel according to the approved protocol
   b. Implementing no changes in the approved protocol or consent form without prior approval from the Office of Research Compliance
   c. Obtaining the legally effective informed consent from each participant or their legally responsible representative prior to their participation in this project using only the currently approved, stamped consent form
   d. Promptly reporting significant adverse events and/or effects to the Office of Research Compliance in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable to direct this research personally, I will arrange for a co-investigator to assume direct responsibility in my absence. This person has been named as co-investigator in this application, or I will advise ORC, by letter, in advance of such arrangements.
6. I agree to conduct this study only during the period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
7. I will prepare and submit a renewal request and supply all supporting documents to the Office of Research Compliance before the approval period has expired if it is necessary to continue the research project beyond the time period approved by the Auburn University IRB.
8. I will prepare and submit a final report upon completion of this research project.

My signature indicates that I have read, understand and agree to conduct this research project in accordance with the assurances listed above.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Elizabeth A. Hancock | *[signature]* | 6/3/2014 |
| **Printed name of Principal Investigator** | **Principal Investigator's Signature** | **Date** |

## B. FACULTY ADVISOR/SPONSOR'S ASSURANCES

1. I have read the protocol submitted for this project for content, clarity, and methodology.
2. By my signature as faculty advisor/sponsor on this research application, I certify that the student or guest investigator is knowledgeable about the regulations and policies governing research with human subjects and has sufficient training and experience to conduct this particular study in accord with the approved protocol.
3. I agree to meet with the investigator on a regular basis to monitor study progress. Should problems arise during the course of the study, I agree to be available, personally, to supervise the investigator in solving them.
4. I assure that the investigator will promptly report significant incidents and/or adverse events and/or effects to the ORC in writing within 5 working days of the occurrence.
5. If I will be unavailable, I will arrange for an alternate faculty sponsor to assume responsibility during my absence, and I will advise the ORC by letter of such arrangements. If the investigator is unable to fulfill requirements for submission of renewals, modifications or the final report, I will assume that responsibility.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Dr. Melanie Iarussi** | *[signature]* | 6/3/14 |
| **Printed name of Faculty Advisor / Sponsor** | **Faculty Advisor's Signature** | **Date** |

## C. DEPARTMENT HEAD'S ASSSURANCE

By my signature as department head, I certify that I will cooperate with the administration in the application and enforcement of all Auburn University policies and procedures, as well as all applicable federal, state, and local laws regarding the protection and ethical treatment of human participants by researchers in my department.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Dr. Everett Davis Martin | *[signature]* | 6/3/14 |
| **Printed name of Department Head** | **Department Head's Signature** | **Date** |

Signature Authority for Dr. E. Davis Martin, Jr.

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8. **PROJECT OVERVIEW: Prepare an abstract that includes:**
(**350** word maximum, in language understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study):

a) **A summary of relevant research findings leading to this research proposal:**
(*Cite sources; include a "Reference List" as Appendix A.*)

b) **A brief description of the methodology, including design, population, and variables of interest**

a) The impact of the counseling internship experience on a counselor-in-training may have career long implications. The knowledge, skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviors learned and utilized during the practicum and internship experience, may be applied in their interaction with clients and colleagues in the future (Bradley & Fiorini, 1999). Literature examining problematic behaviors of counselors-in-training during internship has been limited and sporadic. Previous studies have found that internship is a time when a significant portion of counselors-in-training demonstrate behavior that is of concern to the site supervisor and sometimes labeled problematic (Brear, Dorrian, & Luscri, 2008; Johnson, Elman, Forrest, Robiner, Rodolfa, & Schaffer, 2008; Palmer, White & Chung, 2008; Vacha-Haase, Davenport, & Kerewsky, 2004). With limited research on what site supervisors experience when working with counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behaviors, there is a need to further explore the types of problematic behaviors of counselors-in-training while at the internship site.

b) This study will incorporate the use of grounded theory, a qualitative research method. Designed to generate or discover a theory, grounded theory is a type of qualitative research utilized when little is known about a particular subject or topic (Birks & Mills, 2011; Corbin & Strauss, 2008; Creswell, 2013; Patton, 2002). Grounded theory methods entail methodical, yet flexible strategies for the collection and analysis of qualitative data to develop a theory or explanation grounded in the data (Charmas, 2006; Corbin & Strauss, 2008). Specific inquiry methods to be utilized include semi-structured interviews to be audio recorded and transcribed with all identifying information removed and the audio recording destroyed upon completion of the transcription process. The participant population in this study will include clinical site supervisors who have been providing supervision to intern counselors-in-training for a minimum of five years.

9. **PURPOSE.**

a. **Clearly state the purpose of this project and all research questions, or aims.**

The purpose of this study is to begin building a theory about site supervisors' experiences with problematic behavior exhibited by counselor trainees while at their internship site.

Research Questions
1. How do clinical site supervisors describe identifying problematic behavior demonstrated by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?
2. How do clinical site supervisors respond to problematic behavior exhibited by counselors-in-training while at the internship site?

b. **How will the results of this project be used? (e.g., Presentation? Publication? Thesis? Dissertation?)**

The results from this research project will be used to fulfill the educational requirement of dissertation, published in professional journals, and presented at professional meetings.

4

10. **KEY PERSONNEL.** Describe responsibilities. Include information on research training or certifications related to this project. **CITI is required.** Be as specific as possible. (Include additional personnel in an attachment.) *All key personnel must attach CITI certificates of completion.*

Principle Investigator __Elizabeth A. Hancock_____ Title:__Doctoral Candidate__ E-mail address _____eah0038@auburn.edu_____

Dept / Affiliation: __SERC_____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

As the primary researcher, Elizabeth Hancock will conduct the interviews, transcribe the interviews removing all identifying information and conduct data analysis.

Individual: _____Dr. Melanie Iarussi_____ Title: __Assistant Prof__ E-mail address _____mmi0004@auburn.edu____

Dept / Affiliation: __SERC_____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

As the faculty advisor, Dr. Melanie Iarussi will supervise data collection and the analysis of data.

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

Individual: _____ Title: _____ E-mail address _____

Dept / Affiliation: _____

*Roles / Responsibilities:*

11. **LOCATION OF RESEARCH. List all locations where data collection will take place.** (School systems, organizations, businesses, buildings and room numbers, servers for web surveys, etc.) **Be as specific as possible. Attach permission letters in Appendix E.** *(See sample letters at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm)*

Data will be collected via telephone, Skype or in person at a location of the participants choosing within a 150 mile radius of Auburn, Alabama.

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**12. PARTICIPANTS.**

    a.   Describe the participant population you have chosen for this project including inclusion or exclusion criteria for participant selection.

         ☐   Check here if using existing data, describe the population from whom data was collected, & include the # of data files.

The participant population in this study will include clinical community mental health site supervisors who have been providing supervision to intern counselors-in-training for a minimum of five years. This will only include participants who are 19 years or older.

Participants must:
- be a clinical site supervisor who directly supervises intern counseling students
- have been providing supervision for at least 5 years in a community agency type setting
- have completed a master's degree in a counseling or related field
- be 19 years old or older

    b.   Describe, step-by-step, in layman's terms, all procedures you will use to recruit participants. *Include in Appendix B a copy of all e-mails, flyers, advertisements, recruiting scripts, invitations, etc., that will be used to invite people to participate. (See sample documents at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm.)*

1. Site supervisors will be recruited via email through listservs from state counseling associations including: Alabama, Colorado, Florida, Illinois, Indiana, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oregon, South Carolina, Texas, and West Virginia. Participation requests will be sent via email through listservs of state mental health counselor's associations including: Arkansas, Colorado, Iowa, Illinois, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, Rhode Island, Texas, and Virginia. Participation requests will be sent via email to listservs of the American Mental Health Counselors Association, American College Counselors Association, Association for Humanistic Counseling, and Association for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender Issues in Counseling.
2. If needed, follow-up email invitations will be sent every 2 weeks following the initial email invitation, participants will receive no more than 3 requests.
3. Participants will be asked to forward the email invitation to anyone who may be interested in participating.

    c.   What is the minimum number of participants you need to validate the study? _____8_____

         How many participants do you expect to recruit? _____8+_____

         Is there a limit on the number of participants you will include in the study? ☑ No ☐ Yes – the # is _____

    d.   Describe the type, amount and method of compensation and/or incentives for participants.

         (If no compensation will be given, check here: ☑ )

         Select the type of compensation: ☐ Monetary    ☐ Incentives
                                  ☐ Raffle or Drawing incentive (Include the chances of winning.)
                                  ☐ Extra Credit (State the value)
                                  ☐ Other

         *Description:*

6

**13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.**

  a.  Describe, step-by-step, all procedures and methods that will be used to consent participants.  If a waiver is being requested, check each waiver you are requesting, describe how the project meets the criteria for the waiver.

☐  Waiver of Consent (including using existing data)

☐  Waiver of Documentation of Consent (use of Information Letter)

☐  Waiver of Parental Permission (for college students)

1. Through the email invitation, potential participants will be instructed to contact the primary researcher via phone or email if interested in participating in the study. At this time, the primary researcher will respond via email with the consent form and request an initial phone conversation to complete the screening process to determine participant suitability.
2. Participants will be instructed that, if they decide to participate, to return a copy of the signed letter of consent to the resercher via email or fax, at which time an interview will be scheduled.
3. Prior to the start of the interview, the primary researcher will review the letter of consent verbally with the participant.

  b.  Describe the research design and methods you will use to address your purpose.  Include a clear description of when, where and how you will collect all data for this project.  Include specific information about the participants' time and effort commitment.  (*NOTE: Use language that would be understandable to someone who is not familiar with your area of study. Without a complete description of all procedures, the Auburn University IRB will not be able to review this protocol. If additional space is needed for this section, save the information as a .PDF file and insert after page 7 of this form.* )

During the semi-structured interview, participants will be asked about their experiences as a clinical site supervisor working with intern counselors-in-training.  The interview will take place at a time and location of the participants choosing, via Skype, phone, or in-person.  This interview will be audio-recorded using a digital audio recorder.  At the end of the interview, participants will be thanked for their time and reminded about the possibility of a follow-up interview should the researcher have additional questions.
Throughout the research process, the interviewer will maintain an audit-trail to document the steps taken by the researcher in an effort to allow for the examination of the research methods used.
Upon completion of the interview, the researcher will transcribe the interview and remove all identifying information.  The transcription with identifying information removed will be kept and analyzed using qualitative data analyis methods that look for common patterns within the transcripts.
Participants total expected time commitment is expected to be between 1.5 to 2 hours. This includes the 45 to 60 minute initial interview and a potential follow-up interview of 30 to 45 minutes.

7

**13. PROJECT DESIGN & METHODS.** *Continued*

    c.   List all data collection instruments used in this project, in the order they appear in Appendix C.
        (e.g., surveys and questionnaires in the format that will be presented to participants, educational tests, data collection sheets, interview questions, audio/video taping methods etc.)

        Screening questions
        Demographic questions
        Interview Questions
        Digital Audio recorder

    d.   Data analysis:  Explain how the data will be analyzed.

        Transcripts will be analyzed using open coding to identify common patterns. Coding will continue using axial coding to begin connecting and organizing themes into categories and sub-categories. This will be followed up using selective coding and identifying a core category while examining how the data interacts and connects with each other. At this point, a preliminary theory will be developed (Corbin & Strauss, 2008).

**14. RISKS & DISCOMFORTS:** List and describe all of the risks that participants might encounter in this research. *If you are using deception in this study, please justify the use of deception and be sure to attach a copy of the debriefing form you plan to use in Appendix D.* *(Examples of possible risks are in section #6D on page 2)*

        There is a risk of breach of confidentiality and a risk of feeling discomfort associated with discussing thoughts, opinions, and experiences associated with being a site supervisor.

8

15. **PRECAUTIONS.** Identify and describe all precautions you have taken to eliminate or reduce risks as listed in #14. If the participants can be classified as a "vulnerable" population, please describe additional safeguards that you will use to assure the ethical treatment of these individuals. *__Provide a copy of any emergency plans/procedures and medical referral lists in Appendix D.__ (Samples can be found online at http://www.auburn.edu/research/vpr/ohs/sample.htm#precautions)*

To protect confidentiality, the researcher will transcribe audio recordings removing all identifying information within forty-eight hours of completing the interview. Prior to transcribing, audio recordings will be stored on a password protected computer within a password protected file. Audio recordings will be destroyed upon completion of the transcription process.

To protect confidentiality, any identifying information obtained in the recruitment, consent, or scheduling process will not be connected to the transcription.

The researcher will work to create a safe, comfortable environment for the participant to share thier experiences.

**If using the Internet or other electronic means to collect data, what confidentiality or security precautions are in place to protect (or not collect) identifiable data? Include protections used during both the collection and transfer of data.**

Participants will be encouraged to not provide any identifiable information prior to, during, or after the interview process. The interviews will be recorded using a digital audio recorder and stored on a password protected computer. The interviews will be transcribed with all indentifying information removed. Upon completion of the transcription process, the audio recordings will be deleted. No identifying information will be connected to the transcribed interview or audio recordings.

16. **BENEFITS.**
    a. **List all realistic direct benefits participants can expect by participating in this specific study.**
       *(Do not include "compensation" listed in #12d.)*   Check here if there are no direct benefits to participants. ☐

    Participants may benefit from telling their story about being a site supervisor and being connected with their experience as a site supervisor.

    b. **List all realistic benefits for the general population that may be generated from this study.**

    Findings from this study will be used to inform counselor education programs and accreditation bodies about how to further enhance counselor education training programs to address problematic behavior prior to internship. This may assist in the educational and training development of future counselors who will interact with clients and the general population.

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17. **PROTECTION OF DATA.**

    a.   Data are collected:

        ☐  Anonymously with no direct or indirect coding, link, or awareness of who participated in the study (Skip to e)

        ☑  Confidentially, but without a link of participant's data to any identifying information (collected as "confidential" but recorded and analyzed as "anonymous") (Skip to e)

        ☐  Confidentially with collection and protection of linkages to identifiable information

    b.   If data are collected with identifiers or as coded or linked to identifying information, describe the identifiers collected and how they are linked to the participant's data.

    c.   Justify your need to code participants' data or link the data with identifying information.

    d.   Describe how and where identifying data and/or code lists will be stored. (Building, room number?) Describe how the location where data is stored will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security. If applicable, state specifically where any IRB-approved and participant-signed consent documents will be kept on campus for 3 years after the study ends.

    e.   Describe how and where the data will be stored (e.g., hard copy, audio cassette, electronic data, etc.), and how the location where data is stored is separated from identifying data and will be secured in your absence. For electronic data, describe security

        The hard copy of the letter of consent will be stored for a period of 3 years in a locked filing cabinet in the office of faculty advisor, Dr. Melanie Iarussi, Haley Center 3010.
        Audio recordings will be stored on a password protected computer. The recordings will be destroyed upon completion of transcription process.
        Transcriptions with all identifying information removed will be stored on a password protected computer.

    f.   **Who will have access to participants' data?**
        *(The faculty advisor should have full access and be able to produce the data in the case of a federal or institutional audit.)*

        The faculty advisor, Dr. Melanie Iarussi, will have full access to the data.

    g.   When is the latest date that identifying information or links will be retained and how will that information or links be destroyed? (Check here if only anonymous data will be retained ☑ )

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**Appendix B**

**Recruitment Email**

**Subject:** "Invitation for Clinical Site Supervisors to Participate in a Research Study"
Research Participants Needed for a Grounded Theory Study on How Site Supervisors
Identify and Respond to Counselors-in-Training Who Exhibit Problematic Behaviors
Conducted by Elizabeth Hancock, doctoral candidate at Auburn University.

Participants must:
- be a clinical site supervisor who directly supervises intern counseling students
- have been providing supervision for at least 5 years in a community agency type
  setting (e.g., community mental health agency, substance abuse treatment facility,
  college counseling center, correctional facility, etc.)
- have completed a master's degree in a counseling or related field
- be 19 years old or older

**What?** Participate in a grounded theory study consisting of one audio recorded interview, a
demographic information form, and a possible follow-up interview for a total of 1.5 to 2
hours.

**Where?** Via telephone, Skype, or in-person (within a reasonable location). Interviews will
be audio-recorded and transcribed to remove all of your identifying information.

**Why?** To increase understanding of the experiences of clinical and community mental
health site supervisors who supervise intern counseling students and how they identify
and respond to problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counseling students.

If you are interested in participating, would like more information, or have any questions
about the study, please contact Elizabeth Hancock at EAH0038@AUBURN.EDU or 334-
268-9285.  You may also contact my dissertation chair and supervisor, Dr. Melanie Iarussi
at MMI0004@AUBURN.EDU with any questions or concerns.

**Appendix C**

**Consent Form**

**AUBURN**

UNIVERSITY

DEPARTMENT OF
SPECIAL EDUCATION,
REHABILITATION AND COUNSELING

## (NOTE: DO NOT SIGN THIS DOCUMENT UNLESS AN IRB APPROVAL STAMP WITH CURRENT DATES HAS BEEN APPLIED TO THIS DOCUMENT.)

### INFORMED CONSENT
for a Research Study entitled
"A Grounded Theory Study on How Site Supervisors Identify and Respond to Counselors-in-Training Who Exhibit Problematic Behaviors"

**You are invited to participate in a research study** to explore clinical site supervisors' experiences working with intern counselors-in-training who exhibit problematic behavior. This study is being conducted by Elizabeth A. Hancock, a doctoral candidate in the Counselor Education and Supervision Program, under the direction of Dr. Melanie Iarussi, Assistant Professor in the Auburn University Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling. You were selected as a possible participant because you have identified yourself as a clinical site supervisor of intern counselors-in-training, you are willing to share your experiences as a site supervisor through an audio-recorded individual interview, and are age 19 or older.

**What will be involved if you participate?** If you decide to participate in this research study, you will be asked to participate in a semi-structured audio recorded interview, via either telephone, Skype, or in-person, which will last approximately 45 to 60 minutes, and possibly one follow-up interview. Your total time commitment will be approximately 1.5 to 2 hours.

**Are there any risks or discomforts?** The risks associated with participating in this study include possibly experiencing some discomfort discussing your experiences of working with students who exhibit problematic behavior. To minimize any discomfort, the researcher will work to create a safe, comfortable environment for you to share your experiences. Your identity will be known to the researcher for the purposes of communicating with you. Your identifying information will not be linked to your interview, and data analysis will be conducted with anonymous data.

**Are there any benefits to yourself or others?** If you participate in this study, you can expect to be connected with your experience as a site supervisor and telling your story of being a site supervisor. It is the hope of the researcher that the findings of this study will be used to inform counselor education programs and accreditation bodies about how to further enhance the counselor education training programs to address problematic behavior prior to internship and provide training and support to site supervisors. I cannot guarantee that you will receive any or all of the benefits described.

Participant's Initials _____ 2084 Haley Center, Auburn, AL 36849-5222; Telephone: 334-844-7676; Fax: 334-844-7677    Page 1 of 2
www.auburn.edu/serc

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**Will you receive any compensation for participating?** There will be no compensation received for participating.

**Are there any costs?** If you decide to participate, you will not incur any costs.

If you change your mind about participating, you can withdraw at any time during the study. Your participation is completely voluntary. If you choose to withdraw, your data can be withdrawn as long as it is identifiable. Your decision about whether or not to participate or to stop participating will not jeopardize your future relations with Auburn University or the Department of Special Education, Rehabilitation, and Counseling, or the researcher.

**Your privacy will be protected.** Any information obtained in connection with this study will remain confidential. Information obtained through your participation may be used to fulfill an educational requirement, published in professional journals, and presented at professional meetings. Audio recordings will be destroyed after they are transcribed and the transcriptions will be deidentified and stored in a secure location.

**If you have questions about this study**, please contact Elizabeth Hancock at eah0038@auburn.edu or (334) 268-9285. A copy of this document will be given to you to keep.

**If you have questions about your rights as a research participant**, you may contact the Auburn University Office of Research Compliance or the Institutional Review Board by phone (334) 844-5966 or email at IRBadmin@auburn.edu or IRBChair@auburn.edu.
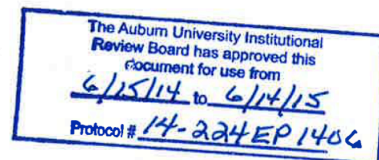
**HAVING READ THE INFORMATIO PROVIDED, YOU MUST DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT YOU WISH TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH STUDY. YOUR SIGNATURE INDICATES YOUR WILLINGNESS TO PARTICIPATE.**

_____          _____  6/3/2014
Participant's signature     Date    Investigator obtaining consent    Date

_____          _Elizabeth Hancock_____
Printed Name                        Printed Name

**Appendix D**

**Screening Process Questions**

1. What type of setting (e.g. community mental health agency, substance abuse treatment

    facility, college counseling center, correctional facility, etc.) do you work in?

2. How many years of providing supervision to intern counselors-in-training do you have?

3. What is your educational background?

**Appendix E**

**Interview Questions**

1. Can you tell me about the most challenging aspects of being a site supervisor?

2. Can you tell me about a challenge you have had with intern behavior and or counseling skills?

3. Tell me about a time you have expressed concern to a university supervisor.

**Appendix F**

**Code Book**

| Category | Sub-Category | Code | Operational Definition | Data Exemplar |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Observation | Observed by Staff | IO – S | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as being observed and/or reported by office or administrative staff | 1. "The staff noted…the intern friending clients on facebook, the intern did not know what not to share with the clients"<br>2. "Sometimes the office staff has to let me know that an intern did not thoroughly access a suicidal client, did not come and get me, or tell that that they have somebody in crisis" |
| | Observed by Site-Supervisor | IO – SS | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor outside of the supervision session | 1. "The intern seemed disinterested, didn't want to participate in the training"<br>2. "One intern had difficulty following the norms of regular interaction (parking violations)" |
| | Observed by Site Supervisor During Review | IO – DR | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor while reviewing tape, session, or documentation outside of the supervision sessions and or prior to a supervision session | 1. "I'm watching their session and the client just insinuated that they're having suicidal thoughts and I'm watching the intern not address it at all"<br>2. "I was listening to the interns tape…the intern did not sound appropriate in working with the client" |
| Supervision | Counselor-in-Training Self-Identification | IS – SI | Language describing the intern counselor-in-training discussing, addressing, or admitting to potentially | 1. "Sometimes during supervision, maybe they'll mention something that happened"<br>2. "The interns willingly admitted that they |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | problematic behaviors or issues of concern that could interfere with the placement at the internship site | didn't get as much attention and training with regards to ethics and diagnosis as they would have liked" |
| | Site Supervisor Identifying During Supervision Session | IS – SDS | Language describing the site supervisor discovering problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training during the supervision session | 1. "Sometimes interns are unwilling to be open to the supervision process, they can get to be resentful or resistant, they aren't open to the supervision process"<br>2. "Eventually it came out in supervision that the intern had decided that they did not like individual counseling and that this is not the field for them" |
| External Sources | As Reported By Clients | IE – RC | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report or complaint by a client or client representative | 1. "I found out because the client made a complaint"<br>2. "Clients bailed on the intern (couldn't understand the intern)"<br>3. "Clients kept requesting to be changed to a new counselor" |
| | As Reported by University Supervisor | IE – US | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report by University or Faculty Supervisor | 1. "I received a phone call from the professor saying that the intern never brought in any tapes to class because the clients wouldn't allow taping, I looked into it and that was not the case" |
| Collaboration | With Colleagues | RC – C | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with a colleague or other site supervisors about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training | 1. "If there is ever something that I'm a little bit iffy about I will consult with one of the other counselors that works in the center just to see if I am reading this correctly, am I off based in my assumptions, what is my line of thinking"<br>2. "We very much have a team approach and our consultation (with each other) is ongoing around a lot of matters" |
| | With | RC – SD | Language or words describing the site | 1. "I pretty much consistently consult with |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Supervisor/ Director | | supervisor collaborating with either a supervisor or program/facility director about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training | my director because ultimately they are responsible for all of us and if I report to them that I'm concerned I need to make that this person is aware of what's going on especially if something needs to be done"<br>2. "I usually consult with the clinic director…I mean our agency is pretty small in terms of staff and the clinic director is very supportive and shares the attitude that I have in terms of he's not punitive he's not there to ream out the interns … if I have a student that has an issue Ill go talk to him and you know a lot of times get feedback" |
| | With University Faculty | RC – US | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with University Faculty about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training | 1. "It is those ethical type violations or legal violations that I get to where I have to address those in a serious manner and with the university"<br>2. "I had a supervisee who was struggling and not prepared,,, I reached out to their university supervisor" |
| Reaction | Shock | RR – S | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of shock or surprise, neither negative or positive, regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior | 1. "Shock probably first of and then just I don't know what the best word to describe"<br>2. "Shock and then wow" |
| | Frustration | RR – F | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of frustration or anger regarding the discovery of the | 1. "If I were to pick one word I would pick frustration because you know some of the issues that come up with certain students I |

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|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior | know that it's a matter of either them being stubborn or them being resistant or sometimes just them just being careless"<br>2. "Frustration was definitely the feeling that stands out" |
| | Sadness/ Concern | RR – SC | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of sadness, concern, or worry regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior | 1. "Sadness and disappointment that we had a client that was let down and that the client could potentially have such an aversion to going to counseling because now you know if you can't trust your counselor who can you trust type thing…so just a lot of empathy for what that client had gone through"<br>2. "With some students I would say it is more of a concern not that angry or I don't trust you concern but more of a concern" |
| Intervention | Work With Intern | RI – I | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing working or intervening through working with the interns to address problematic behavior or issues | 1. "I think problem behaviors are really typical and normal as we're developing and I don't want to treat it as something alarming or something bad that they've done more of an opportunity to work through it in supervision as much as possible"<br>2. "I was very clear with them that this behavior must changes because you are getting a reputation for being late, it is not only going to harm your relationship with clients but there are going to be some other problems" |
| | Termination | RI – T | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing or using the term termination to address intern counselors-in-training exhibiting | 1. "Unless the behavior was very egregious behavior and the intern made a sexual advance to a client I mean that is ethical violation of the nature I don't think |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | problematic behavior | remediation is on the table for things that are that problematic but in the realm of not really ethical" |
| | | | | 2. "I think that serious ethical violations that would get a regular counselor fired would be what I consider to be a big deal cause I mean they are still developing as counselors when they are still interns so it would have to be a firing deal … serious ethical violation you know egregious ethical violations like sex with a client or harming a client" |
| Challenges Supervisors Face | External to Agency | E – EA | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are external to the agency or internship site | 1. "Sometimes there are changes made in the requirements but they are not always communicated to us by the intern's university and that can be challenging in that I do not know what is expected" |
| | | | | 2. "There is not a consistent practicum site, I feel that the looseness is also a factor in readiness which can be challenging for me" |
| | Internal to Agency | E – IA | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are internal to the agency or internship site | 1. "Balancing the needs of the center with the needs of the students" |
| | | | | 2. "There are times when supervisees require more time than what you have scheduled on paper" |
| | Site-Supervisor as a Person/ Personal Reasons | E – SSP | Language or words describing personal or self factors that are of concern to the site supervisor | 1. "It is a huge responsibility, it needs to be taken seriously within my other duties as a counselor" |
| | | | | 2. "A big part is, am I doing enough on the evaluation side both informally and formally to really communicate to the interns so that they learn a lot about |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | themselves" |
| Motivations to be a Site Supervisor | Growth | E – MG | Language or words that describe growth as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor | 1. "I like watching them grow, watching them gain confidence with their skills"<br>2. "I like seeing an intern develop as a counselor, seeing them put into practice what they have been learning didactically as a student and getting it on an experiential level so especially turning theory into practice and seeing the joy and the learning within" |
| | For the Profession | E – FP | Language or words that describe service to the counseling profession as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor | 1. "It is something that I can do to help contribute to the profession and help future generations of counselors find their way along the path"<br>2. "I think of it as paying it forward" |
| | Part of the Job | E – PJ | Language or words that describe being a site supervisor as a part of the job as a factor in being a site supervisor | 1. "It is a part of my job and overall I love my job" |
| | Past Experiences | E – PE | Language or words describing the site supervisors' previous experiences as a student or intern as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor | 1. "I had a pretty crappy supervisor once that let me know they couldn't stand working with interns, I want to be different than that for my interns." |
| | Personal/ Self | E – PS | Language or words describing personal or self reasons as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor | 1. "Definitely helped me learn about myself just as much as it does I think help the students learn about their process through counseling"<br>2. "I think I learn a lot from them, the new stuff they are learning in class or they might tell me about books that I haven't read" |
| Experiences | Positive | E – USP | Language or words describing the site | 1. "The times I have had to contact the |

| Working with University Supervisors | | | supervisor as having positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior | professor it has been productive and so far it has matched their (the faculty supervisor) concerns that they already had" |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Negative | E – USN | Language or words describing the site supervisor as having neither negative or positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior | 1. "If I do contact the university it is not always positive" <br> 2. "There are times I have noticed that the university supervisor may treat me or the program director in a condescending manner" |

Table 1

*Participant Demographics*

| Participant Pseudonym | Gender | Ethnicity | Degree Program | Years Providing Supervision | Type of Counseling Setting |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Jean | Female | Caucasian | Masters | 7 | Family Community Counseling Center |
| Beverly | Female | Caucasian | Masters | 5 | College Counseling Center |
| Luke | Male | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 25 | College Counseling Center |
| William | Male | Asian | Ph.D. – ABD | 9 | College Counseling Center |
| Kate | Female | African American | Masters | 5 | Residential Treatment/Correctional |
| George | Male | African American | Ph.D. – ABD | 7 | College Counseling Center |
| Samantha | Female | Native American | Ph.D. | 9 | Corrections Counseling |
| Deanna | Female | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 8 | College Counseling Center |
| Rosa | Female | Caucasian | Ph.D. | 5 | College Counseling Center |
| Richard | Male | Caucasian | Masters | 30 | Community Mental Health Center |

Table 2

*Categories Describing Identifying Problematic Behavior*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Observation | Observed by Staff | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as being observed and/or reported by office or administrative staff |
| | Observed by Site-Supervisor | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor outside of the supervision session |
| | Observed by Site Supervisor During Review | Language that describes the discovery of problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training as observed by the site supervisor while reviewing tape, session, or documentation outside of the supervision sessions and or prior to a supervision session |
| Supervision | Counselor-in-Training Self-Identification | Language describing the intern counselor-in-training discussing, addressing, or admitting to potentially problematic behaviors or issues of concern that could interfere with the placement at the internship site |
| | Site Supervisor Identifying During Supervision Session | Language describing the site supervisor discovering problematic behaviors exhibited by intern counselors-in-training during the supervision session |
| External Sources | As Reported By Clients | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report or complaint by a client or client representative |
| | As Reported by University Supervisor | Language that describes the identification of intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior through report by University or Faculty Supervisor |

Table 3

*Categories Responding to Problematic Behavior*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Collaboration | With Colleagues | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with a colleague or other site supervisors about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| | With Supervisor/ Director | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with either a supervisor or program/facility director about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| | With University Faculty | Language or words describing the site supervisor collaborating with University Faculty about problematic behaviors being exhibited by intern counselors-in-training |
| Reaction | Shock | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of shock or surprise, neither negative or positive, regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Frustration | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of frustration or anger regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Sadness/ Concern | Language or words describing the site supervisors feelings of sadness, concern, or worry regarding the discovery of the intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| Intervention | Work With Intern | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing working or intervening through working with the interns to address problematic behavior or issues |
| | Termination | Language or words describing the site supervisor discussing or using the term termination to address intern counselors-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |

Table 4

*Further Emerging Categories*

| Category | Sub-Category | Operational Definition |
|---|---|---|
| Challenges Supervisors Face | External to Agency | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are external to the agency or internship site |
| | Internal to Agency | Language or words describing factors that create cause for concern that are internal to the agency or internship site |
| | Site-Supervisor as a Person/ Personal Reasons | Language or words describing personal or self factors that are of concern to the site supervisor |
| Motivations to be a Site Supervisor | Growth | Language or words that describe growth as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | For the Profession | Language or words that describe service to the counseling profession as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Part of the Job | Language or words that describe being a site supervisor as a part of the job as a factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Past Experiences | Language or words describing the site supervisors' previous experiences as a student or intern as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| | Personal/ Self | Language or words describing personal or self reasons as a motivating factor in being a site supervisor |
| Experiences Working with University Supervisors | Positive | Language or words describing the site supervisor as having positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |
| | Negative | Language or words describing the site supervisor as having neither negative or positive experiences when interacting with the site supervisor about an intern counselor-in-training exhibiting problematic behavior |

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