

## **Philosophy of Supervision: Laurie Ponsford-Hill**

During your time as a student at our agency your supervision will be organized to meet your needs to succeed. My supervision style integrates the understanding of kinesthetic awareness, and each student will gain new skills regarding self-assessment, case conceptualization, metacognition, power imbalance, inclusivity, and how reflexivity as reflection in action is an important component of both professionalism and self-care. My philosophy of supervision is based on my experiences as a life-long learner. My experience is based in the concept that students bring with them their own life experiences in which to build on and learn from as well as add to.

My philosophy is premised on several assumptions. First, that supervision is fundamentally relational. Second, that supervision needs to reflect the diversity of students. Third, that teaching is a continuous back and forth dialogue between student and teacher. Fourth, that supervision needs to provide a safe space in which students can be brave. Fifth, that my supervision style and learning environment is integrative. These assumptions are synergistic and each I will discuss in turn.

First, supervision is fundamentally relational. My experience highlights supervision as always being in relationship with self, others, and the instructional environment. Being self-aware, aware of, as well as sensitive to, context and diversity of belief systems is important in order to be able to acknowledge ideas and perspectives, and as well, to analyze the students own and other's views by engaging in reflexive practice. Further, students come with a wide range of experiences and from diverse walks of life, therefore the supervision/learning process will facilitate students to make associations to material being taught and incorporate this knowledge with their own personal story as well as the stories of their peers. My philosophy of supervision is to model openness to the diversity of experience, by encouraging learning through reflection and application of prior experience by engaging in activities that are accompanied by metacognitive functions, as activities in and of themselves do not promote learning.

Second, supervision needs to reflect the diversity of students and emphasize multiformity rather than uniformity. As such, I aim to strive to allow each student to direct their learning based upon their learning goals to engage students to facilitate personal growth through critical thinking, reflection and self-regulated learning activities. I specifically work to incorporate different styles of learning by providing different opportunities for engagement by having each student sit in with different therapists, provide recommended reading, assigned modalities, demonstrations, and activities that help students experience an active learning, inclusive and engaging environment for all types of learners. In this way I bring an integrative and eclectic approach to my role as an effective supervisor by incorporating different pathways for success to meet expectations of a diverse student population requiring diverse approaches. Therefore, my supervision model is based upon a learning theory of constructivism, ethical principles and reflexivity to provide added opportunities for learning and growth in metacognitive awareness.

Third, supervision is a continuous back and forth open dialogue. The purpose and expectations of learning outcomes need to be made accessible, clear and well defined for both supervisor and students to achieve their goals. I believe that supervision time should encourage active participation and be organized by the student to meet their learning needs to engage and motivate students to do just that. Growth is stimulated by providing information that is relevant to learning outcomes by integrating metacognition into the practicum experience. My approach includes providing access to a variety of resources such as: incorporating supportive interactive activities that relate to the subject matter; individual, dyadic as well as group participation; a balance of visual and written material; meta-cognition techniques such as self-reflective journaling; individual as well as group-based learning activities; art making; genograms; concept maps and engaging outside community resources in and out of the agency. I am also a proponent of encouraging students to maintain a self-reflective practice for their self-care, as they navigate participating in higher education and other commitments. Since students are active agents in their learning, my role is to offer and encourage the use of resources such as: peers, and school resources to facilitate their awareness and growth of self to enhance their work/relationships with others and in the agency.

Fourth, supervision needs to provide safety and bravery. My philosophy as a supervisor is to provide a stimulating and safe environment of learning including values, diversity, sexual orientation, age and culture. As a supervisor I recognize that adult learners have had a wide range of experiences with authority figures. Fostering a safe yet brave environment stimulates growth by broadening awareness to increase sensitivity to individual difference and foster an environment to enhance understanding, try new things and figure out what works, what needs work, future direction and attributes.

Fifth, I strive to match my supervision style and role as a supervisor and the learning environment to be compatible with the mission, vision and the goals and objectives of our agency and the needs of the school system. For example, it is important for students to: work as a team member with other agency colleagues; understand and adhere to policies and procedures; engage in continuous learning; research and writing; employ best practices; and maintain clear boundaries to contribute to the safety and well-being of the counsellors, agency, students, the institution and the public. The process of supervising and my role as supervisor is to provide an environment for students to gain attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to be responsible and effective learners. My goal is to facilitate the student to gain in professional and clinical core competencies in order to gain attitudes, skills and knowledge needed to be responsible and effective as well as be able to integrate theory and practice. I aim to provide students with a well-informed view with a relevance of the concepts and to make connections between the text book and real life every-day issues.