EXPERIENTIAL SUPERVISION AND 
PERSONAL GROWTH OF COUNSELOR TRAINEES

by

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ABSTRACT

This research project was conducted to determine if Experiential Supervision contributes to personal growth in counselor trainees in three specific areas 1) Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, 2) Increased Self-Confidence, and 3) Independence. Data collected for this study included the interviews of six experiential supervisors as related to Experiential Supervision.

Personal counseling is a valuable growth experience for counselors in training (Wise et al., 1989, p. 326). Although not a substitute for personal counseling, Experiential Supervision may offer some of the same personal growth benefits to counselor trainees (Burns et al., 1990, p. 47). Corey, Corey, and Callanan (1993) describe the importance of personal counseling for the counselor trainee to help increase personal awareness. They state:

We are not speaking of therapy for remediation of deep conflicts but of therapeutic experiences aimed at increasing awareness of oneself in the world. There are many ways to accomplish this goal: individual therapy, group counseling, consultation with colleagues, continuing education (especially of an experiential nature), and reading. (p. 34)
Five interview questions, developed by the researcher, led to the findings of this study. The interviewees were all supervisors that used an experiential model/format in their training of supervisees. Areas explored in the interview included usage of the experiential model, goals with the supervision process, activities used in Experiential Supervision, perceived personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision, counselor trainees' perceived responses to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth, and if the activities of Experiential Supervision differed if the trainee was in an internship/practicum or a professional in the field.

All six of the supervisors describe the importance of learning experientially therefore included an experiential model in their training of supervisees. The supervisors also described this model as an aid in new perspectives for the trainees in order to prevent them from getting blocked by personal issues in the therapy process. All six supervisors describe a type of role modeling for the trainees. There were many common activities used by the supervisors in their process of Experiential Supervision. Overall the supervisors described perceptions of personal growth being achieved in the areas of 1) Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, 2) Increased Self-Confidence, and 3) Independence in the counselor trainees. Most felt that
the activities would not significantly change if the counselor trainee was a professional in the field or in an internship/practicum setting.
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CHAPTER 1
THE PROBLEM

Introduction

Personal counseling is a valuable growth experience for counselors in training (Wise et al., 1989, p. 326). Corey, Corey, and Callanan (1993) describe the importance of personal counseling for the counselor trainee to help increase personal awareness. They state:

We are not speaking of therapy for remediation of deep conflicts but of therapeutic experiences aimed at increasing awareness of oneself in the world. There are many ways to accomplish this goal: individual therapy, group counseling, consultation with colleagues, continuing education (especially of an experiential nature), and reading. (p. 34)

Wise et al. (1989) have indicated the benefits of a personal counseling experience for counselors in training as:

a) increased understanding of the change process and the position of being a client.
b) increased self-awareness and ability to separate personal issues from client issues.
c) a most effective opportunity to see another therapist in action. (p. 327)
One benefit of personal counseling for counselors is personal growth. Personal growth affects the counselor trainee in numerous ways, one of which is the need for counselors to know themselves well and to be able to use themselves well in the counseling process. The counselor trainee then can be characterized by a growing confidence and self-awareness (Wise et al. 1989, p. 327, 334).

Personal counseling is not always available to all counselor trainees. Although not a substitute for personal counseling, Experiential Supervision may offer some of the same personal growth benefits to counselor trainees that the personal counseling process promises (Burns et al., 1990, p. 47).

Experiential Supervision is a type of supervision that encourages and focuses on the trainees themselves. Through a variety of techniques such as video taping, audio taping, role playing, and other techniques, the trainees are able to take a look at their own issues that may create blocks in the therapy process. This type of supervision differs from some other models of supervision in that it is not limited to skill building or theory building only, rather it also allows creativity to be a learning tool as well. Many supervision styles focus on discussing a case and finding an intervention, whereas Experiential Supervision may include this didactic part it also would include focus on how the
trainee is becoming blocked by personal issues in the therapy process (Shalit, 1990, p. 115). A further description of Experiential Supervision is presented on page 7 in Erel Shalit's quotes of other professionals' perspectives of this model. Anthony Williams (1995), in his article Visual & Active Supervision: Roles, Focus, and Technique describes the importance of visual and active methods, used often in many Experiential Supervisions:

No matter how erudite it is, supervisors' advice is only useful if their trainees can receive what is said. Sometimes they cannot: They cannot notice information about themselves, others, or relationships that would allow them to move forward. The supervisors' counsel does not fit their "map of the world", a map made up of interlinked experiences, expectations, and emotions that restrain them from "hearing" what their supervisors or their clients say. I will suggest that visual and active methods are always useful ways of lifting these restraints, so that trainees are open to new information about themselves and their clients. I propose that these methods cope well with the ways our minds work on complex problems such as occur in the supervisory setting. (p. xv)

There are many personal growth areas that can be explored. There have been five areas that seem to be related to the counselor trainee, these include 1) increased awareness of personal projections, 2) increased self-confidence, 3) self-directedness, 4) independence and 5) interdependence (Shalit, 1990 p. 115; Benshoff, 1993, p. 91). Because of the researcher's interest, three of the five personal growth areas described above have been
selected as the areas of focus in this study. These three areas are increased awareness of personal projections, self-confidence and independence.

Erel Shalit (1990) states that:

The supervisory relationship deals with the supervisee's professional self (obviously an entity which is one expression of the person's total self), at the tangent of her/his exposure to being at the helping as well as the help seeking end of relationships. (p. 109-110)

The concept of the "total self" of the counselor trainee must also be included in the process of supervision if the professional self is to fully emerge.

Experiential Supervision is seen by some (Shalit, 1990, p. 115) as providing personal growth, which enhances both the professional and personal self of the counselor trainee. It has already been stated that the professional self is one facet of the total self, and within this study three significant personal growth elements will be further described.

Experiential Supervision contributes to other areas of growth in the counselor trainee; therefore, an interplay between techniques is often used.

... The supervisor can shift his or her approach from one of skill orientation to one of personal growth orientation depending on immediate supervisory goals and the supervisees ability to gain maximum benefit from the supervisory experience. Adjusting supervisory
and interpersonal style to maximize communication at a supervisee's stage of ego development enables the supervisor to promote supervisee growth. (Cebik, 1985, p. 232)

According to Erel Shalit (1990) "The therapist's growth and its facilitation can be defined in terms of a set of developmental crises" (p. 111). Working through developmental crises often transcends into personal growth within counselor trainees. Ronald Cebik (1985) states that "when personal growth is seen as a normal process, competition and conformity in the training of counselors must give way to a maximizing of a person's effectiveness wherever that person may be in the developmental process" (p. 232).

Supervisory and training goals range from personal growth of the student to the development of skills-focused objectives. . . Some researchers have suggested that personal-growth activities can also significantly contribute to preventive efforts for maintaining the mental health of counselors and promoting their professional development. (Wise et al, 1989, p. 326)

Perhaps recognition of the Experiential Supervision model, and its effectiveness in the enhancement of the growth of the counselor trainee, will lead to further understanding and usage.
Background of the Study

Experiences are a vital part of being. Therefore, learning through experiences can take on new dimensions in the personal and professional self. Personal growth related to experiences can be applied into the total self of the counselor trainee.

The world of experience is known through our senses. We gain awareness of it through sense of self, interaction with others, and our relationship to the world around us. What we learn from our experiences is a function of the depth of our involvement in life. (Connell, Mitten, & Whitaker, 1993, p. 246)

Much importance related to therapy lies within the experiential process. In Christopher Monte's (1991) book, Beneath the Mask: An Introduction to Theories of Personality, he describes the experiential process (in the therapeutic setting) related to Roger's Experiential Theory:

In 1957 the focus in therapy had shifted to a mutual expression of feelings by both the client and counselor. Experiencing became the technical term to describe the internal, directly felt emotional processes that the client and counselor struggle to put into words... The therapist experiences an empathic understanding of the client's internal frame of reference and endeavors to communicate this experience to the client. In short the counselor tries to see the world as the client sees it and to communicate that he or she does so... (Monte, 1991, p. 703-704)

Experiential formats of supervision were developed from the experiential schools or modes of psychotherapy. The
experiential schools or modes of psychotherapy place emphasis on the "growth of the self, supposedly, attained by an expansion or re-direction of inherent resources. . . . (Shalit, 1990, p. 113)." The experiential formats also place emphasis on the subjectivity and subjective awareness rather than critical analysis of the counselor trainee (Shalit, 1990, p. 113).

The formats of experiential supervision provided by the schools of experiential psychotherapy seem to have crystallized along two clear-cut but interacting lines:

1. Using imagery or role play techniques to better understand the patient or the family in therapy. . .

2. Getting acquainted with the medium by personal exposure, whereby supervision and personal therapy are often interwoven. (Shalit, 1990, p. 114)

The three personal growth elements mentioned previously will be described in detail in Chapter 2. Herein a description of what other professionals view as important about Experiential Supervision will be emphasized as a background to the model. Erel Shalit (1990) in his research, quotes other professionals:

Charny (1986) differentiates experiential from other kinds of supervision mainly by its emphasis on the supervisees subjectivity and affect instead of "the objective diagnosis and dynamics of the case" . . . Enright (1971) states, "Competence in clinical work in the mental health profession requires accessibility to the flow of inner experience. The first and most subtle cue to some state in the other -- anxiety, hostility, sexiness, etc. is awareness of some similar
or complementary state in oneself" ... Also, Minz (1983) believes "that the supervision of Gestalt therapists is best conducted on a level which is primarily, though not exclusively, experiential" ... Duhl (1983) understands experiential learning to mean "that we ask that the trainees base their constructs on active personal experience" ... This again, hints at a position of subjectivity rather than distancing, experience rather than scrutinization, and utilization of modes such as imagery and role play. (Shalit, 1990, p. 115)

Mentioned above, there are many possible personal growth benefits that could be related to Experiential Supervision. Throughout the literature, personal growth is emphasized as an important facet in the professional development of the counselor trainee. Greenspan et al. (1991) describe five questions important to assessing supervision, "has supervision provided a supportive relationship? increased your clinical skills? helped you meet job requirements? added to your professional development? enhanced your personal growth (p. 38)?" The last one is the area of focus for this study.

**Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of this study is to determine the personal growth benefits obtained by counselor trainees from the Experiential Supervision process. The definition of personal growth in this study will be limited to three significant areas extrapolated from the literature. The three personal growth areas that will be described are: 1)
increased awareness of personal projections, 2) increased self-confidence and 3) independence.

Experiential Supervision is not a replacement for personal counseling, however may have similar personal growth areas that are promised in the process of personal counseling. Burns and Holloway (1989) indicate that "... part of a supervisor's role may include a type of therapeutic process designed to increase trainees' counseling skills through personal growth, therapy should not become the primary activity of supervision" (p. 48). It is part of the objective of this study to determine if Experiential Supervision contributes to the similar personal growth areas.

Research Question

Does Experiential Supervision contribute to increased awareness in the three following personal growth areas: 1) increased awareness of personal projections, 2) increased self-confidence and 3) independence in the counselor trainee?

Theoretical Basis for the Study

It is important that a counselor have personal growth in several areas in order to help clients to also have growth. As stated briefly in the Introduction, personal
counseling is a valuable growth experience for counselors in training (Wise et al., 1989, p. 326), however, personal counseling is not always available to all counselor trainees. Experiential Supervision is not a substitute for personal counseling, but may offer some of the same personal growth benefits to counselor trainees (Burns et al., 1989, p. 48).

**Significance of the Study**

This study will help determine the effectiveness of Experiential Supervision in fostering personal growth in counselor trainees. A conceptualization of the relationship (between Experiential Supervision and the three personal growth areas) through selected supervisor's descriptions may allow for greater understanding of the benefits derived from this model. A greater understanding could lead to increased inquiry into choosing Experiential Supervision for both counselors and supervisor trainees. A clear description and definition of this relationship could also expand or encourage others to do further research related to this area of study.

This study will contribute to the knowledge and importance personal growth has on counselor trainees. Counselor trainees using this model of supervision may learn more about personal issues that could block the therapy
process etc. This study may help contribute to the literature already in circulation on Experiential Supervision and aid other supervisors in choosing a supervision model.

Operational Definition of Terms

**Cathectic:** adj. Psychoanalysis. of, having to do with or resembling cathexis (1. the libido fixed upon a particular object. 2. the affective value of an object.) (Nault et al., 1969, p. 325).

**Countertransference:** Reactions to clients involving the counselor’s own projections; any projections by a therapist that can potentially get in the way of helping a client (Corey et al., 1993, p. 43).

**Gestalt Therapy:** A wide range of techniques designed to intensify experiencing and to integrate conflicting feelings. Techniques include confrontation, dialogue with polarities, role playing, staying with feelings, reaching an impasse, and reliving and re-experiencing unfinished business in the forms of resentment and guilt (Corey, 1991, p. 452).

**Isomorphic:** 1. Biology. having a similar appearance or structure, but different ancestry (Nault et al., 1969, p. 1111). also: Notions of what happens in supervision is reflected in therapy, and what happens
in therapy is reflected in supervision. A parallel process (Williams, 1995, p. 11).

**Transference:** The process whereby clients project onto their therapist past feelings or attitudes they had toward significant people in their lives (Corey et al., 1993, p. 41).

**Transcend:** 1. To go beyond the limits of powers of, exceed. (Nault et al., 1969, p. 2203).

**Assumptions and Limitations**

The sample is local and homogeneous and therefore the findings of the study may be specific to the group. It cannot be assumed that the resulting information is generalizable to all supervisors or supervision models, to all geographical areas, or to all counselor trainees. Selection of the sample was not randomized. Predictions and conclusions cannot be made on this type of research.

The interview data is a collection of the supervisor's perceptions, though it is assumed that these perceptions are accurate. The researcher chose to interview the supervisors, rather than the counselor trainees, because supervisors are trained at observing behavior. The researcher assumes that supervisors, which are also counselors, can observe trainees and can note subtle changes in behavior.
The interview method of data collection can be an advantage because it allows for a gaining of in-depth information. The interview can lead to additional variables that may allow discovery of other areas of importance in this study. Immediate feedback from the face to face interview may lead to more accurate information that may not otherwise be easily obtained through other methods. All of the information obtained from the participants is from human life experiences, rather than in a controlled environment that may be manipulated.

**Organization of the Remainder of the Study**

The remainder of this study contains four additional chapters and an Appendix A. Chapter 2 contains the literature review. In this chapter the three personal growth areas are further explored and described. Chapter 3 includes an overview of the chosen methodology, the sample and population, and the data collection procedures utilized. Chapter 4 includes the findings of the study. Chapter 5 is an overview of the study including a discussion of the literature reviewed, and the interview process and results. Conclusions and recommendations for future research related to this subject are included in this chapter. Appendix A contains all of the transcripts from the audio taped interviews.
CHAPTER 2
THE LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Following the introduction to this chapter there will be four additional sections. The first section, Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, is concerned with the process of projections and how they can interfere with the counseling process. This section describes the importance of the counselor trainee's awareness of his or her own projections and the projections of clients. It also includes ways in which projections can cause blockages in the counseling process.

The second section, Increased Awareness of Self-Confidence, deals with the significance of counselor awareness of self-confidence and its contribution to the counselor and client. This section is also highlights the effectiveness of the counselor trainee in relation to the growth issue of self-confidence, and a conceptual background of how self-confidence can develop in counselor trainees.

The third section, Independence, discusses the counselor trainee's independence from supervisors, colleagues, and others. A developmental background will
also be highlighted as to the importance of independence in the counselor trainee. In this section the process the trainee works through will be further described.

The fourth section, a summary of the literature, will conclude this section. A brief discussion of the findings in the literature will be included in this section.

It is important herein to describe once again what is meant by Experiential Supervision (for review see also pages 2 and 6 in Chapter 1). Experiential Supervision is a type of supervision that encourages and emphasizes on the counselor trainee and his/her experiences that could create blockages in the therapy process. This can be done through a variety of techniques including things such as role play, video taping, audio taping, live supervision, and other activities. Instead of being focused exclusively on skills, theory, case review, or interventions, Experiential Supervision also focuses on issues from within the counselor trainee that lead to getting stuck. In general, Experiential Supervision encourages trainees to struggle with their own personal growth and to develop their own personal power (Boylin et al., 1992, Abstract: p. 43-59). Williams (1995) describes the importance of this insight below:

No therapy practitioner is simply learning a set of skills "out there," far removed from the core of his or her identity. The nature of the vocation -- why people
feel drawn to it in the first place -- and many factors in the nature of the work, which is always about personal difficulties in living, mean that a trainee's evolving professional identity is intimately connected with his or her personal identity. (p. 21)

With this review in place, a description of the personal growth areas focused within this study can follow.

**Increased Awareness of Personal Projections**

In this section increased awareness of personal projections is the area of focus. Projections can also be called transfersences and countertransferences. Herein the term "transference" and "countertransference" may be used in lieu of the term "projections" due to the various authors choice in terms throughout the literature.


> We know a projection is at work when there is an energetic charge. Projections are unclaimed self-perceptions. Projections are parts of ourselves that are on their way home yet are still disowned. We find it more comfortable to have these aspects outside of ourselves, rather than to embrace them as a part of who we are. (p. 96)

Transference and countertransference are areas of counseling that require personal awareness and growth in the counselor and counselor trainee. If unattended to, transference and countertransference could impede the clients progress and growth (Corey et al., 1993, p. 40). Transference, the process whereby clients project onto their
therapist past feelings or attitudes they had toward significant people, could be projections of error even if the therapist's actions may serve to trigger them (Corey et al., 1993, p. 41).

A counselor with little awareness and personal growth in the area of transference issues could have serious consequences in the therapeutic process. Augustus Napier, Ph.D. and Carl Whitaker M.D. (1973) state: "Perhaps the most serious problem in family therapy, the therapist's transference, can also be a powerful stimulus to his personal growth" (p. 235). Watkins' identifies five transference patterns:

1. Counselor as ideal. The client sees the counselor as the perfect person who does everything right, without flaws. . . The danger here is that counselors, their egos fed, can come to believe these projections! . . . They (clients) lose themselves by trying to be just like their ideal.

2. Counselor as seer. Clients view the counselor as expert, all-knowing, and all-powerful. . . Again, a danger is that the counselor may feed on this projection and give clients advice based on his or her own need to be treated as an expert.

3. Counselor as nurturer. Some clients look to the counselor for nurturing and feeding, as a small child would. . . A danger here is that the counselor may get lost in giving sympathy and feeling sorry for the client. . . In the process, the client never learns the meaning of personal responsibility.

4. Counselor as frustrator. the client is defensive, cautious, and guarded and is constantly testing the counselor. . . It is essential that counselors avoid reacting defensively to the client, a response that would further entrench the client's resistance.
5. Counselor as nonentity. . . . The client regards the counselor as an inanimate figure without needs, desires, wishes, or problems. The counselor is likely to feel overwhelmed and discounted. If counselors depend on feedback from their clients as the sole means of validation of their worth as counselors, they may have difficulty in managing cases in which this phenomenon exists. (as cited in Corey et. al., 1993, p. 41-42)

Carson et al. (1992,) consider it important that the counselor trainee have a thorough understanding of his or her own motives, conflicts, and "weak spots" (p. 636). It is the purpose (in part) of this study to assess whether or not Experiential Supervision fosters this type of growth. The ways in which this could be achieved will be described later in this section.

The problems of transference are by no means confined to the client; the therapist may also have a mixture of feelings toward the client; this is called countertransference (Carson et al., 1992 p. 636). Personalization skills help trainees become comfortable in counseling relationships and with their own feelings, values, and attitudes as these relate to counseling; and to accept challenges without defensiveness. The supervisory relationship and helping trainees with personal problems or defensiveness have been considered relevant aspects of supervision by supervisors and trainees alike (Burns et al., 1990, p. 51-53).
Areas of countertransference that can interfere with the therapist's effectiveness are as follows:

1. Being over protective with clients can reflect a therapist's deep fears.
2. Treating clients in benign ways may stem from a counselor's fears of their anger
3. Rejection of clients may be based on perceiving them as needy and dependent.
4. The (counselor's) need for constant reinforcement and approval.
5. Therapists' seeing themselves in their clients.
6. The development of sexual or romantic feelings between clients and therapists.
7. Compulsively giving advice.
8. A desire to develop social relationships with clients. (Corey et al., 1993, p. 44-47)

According to Winter and Holloway (1991), it is important that counselors are aware and address their own issues. "... Counselors preferred to focus on their own concerns related to personal growth issues, such as countertransference, self-efficacy, and self awareness" (p. 98). They found that ..."The greater interest of advanced trainees in their personal growth in relation to the client is consistent with the Littrell et al. (1979), Stoltenberg (1981) and Bartlett (1983) supervision models that suggest that counselors increase in experience, they prefer to increasingly focus on personal issues" (p. 98).
Shalit (1990) describes the four stages of Experiential Supervision. The stages include (1) Entrance, (2) The patient, (3) The therapist and (4) Sharing.

Entrance: During this stage important aspects of the trainee's personality, increasing her/his involvement in the stage that concentrates upon the patient as well as laying the ground for the reclaiming of her/his projections can be brought to the foreground. The major purposes of this stage are:

a. to function as a "warm-up" for the group. It may be very brief, depending on the relationship between the supervisor and the group of supervisees.

b. to gain an initial sense of where the group's energy becomes located (cathcted).

c. to increase awareness and sensitivity to elements of ambivalence and resistance, with which parts of the other that the therapist forms, avoids or pushes for contact.

The patient: The patient is of course the focus of psychotherapy. The supervisee's increased understanding of her/his particular patient is the central goal of this part of experiential supervision, but not the only one. Though the emphasis is not yet on her/his countertransference and projections, empathy and identification are essential for the understanding and being with the patient. This means that the therapist should be able to formulate a variety of "hypotheses" (intellectually, creatively and emotionally), try them out, apply some and withdraw others. This "play with ideas" is the nucleus of the experiential supervision, which provides a context for increased freedom.

The therapist: This part is naturally quite a personal experience to the therapist. She/he works with herself/himself, her/his own projections and countertransference. . . For countertransferential explorations it is often useful to have the group act upon some feature that the therapist has discovered in herself/himself.
Sharing: The final part of sharing may, in fact, be the most important one. It enables a closure and "gearing down." During the sharing there is giving and receiving of feedback -- mainly but not only to the presenting supervisee. (p. 117-128)

In Experiential Supervision, the supervisees themselves are the subject of concern. Their projections and countertransferences are emphasized. The cases are presented in a manner that will bring forth elements of psychotherapeutic content and process. The supervisee is encouraged to freely project and "disengage from reality and concerns of objectivity" as regards what: may be the "true" or "real" position of the patient. Then the therapist takes responsibility for the elaborated hypotheses and narrows them down according to what actually takes place between her/him and the patient (Shalit, 1990, p. 117).

Supervision also involves regular observation directly through sitting in on clinical sessions, video and audio taping, one-way mirror observation, simulations, and role-playing of the counseling sessions that can allow for transference and countertransference issues to be further explored. Learning by doing is an expression of Experiential Supervision. It can allow ongoing assessment of skills and areas of clinical strengths and weaknesses, while providing the counselor an opportunity for professional and personal growth and emotional refilling (Powell, 1989, p. 142).
It is part of the supervisor's task to help reveal projective identification. In doing so, the supervisor consults to the system identifying and separating the various threads that have become entangled (Williams, 1995, p. 140).

Supervisors might ask themselves: Has systemic or personal material been stimulated by the session? Has the therapist been "put" into a certain role by the client? Is the trainee attempting to counteract material from the session that has somehow been "projected" or "lodged" into him/her? At a simpler level, it the material from the session or sessions so ghastly that anyone would be "knocked around" by it, and does this therapist need looking after or debriefing (Williams, 1995, p. 140-141)?

Increased awareness of personal projections seems an important growth element not only for the therapy process to be successful, but also for the counselor trainee to be more comfortable with him/herself in that setting and in life.

**Increased Awareness of Self-Confidence**

Increased anxiety and a lack of awareness of difficulties and deficiencies are often characteristics of students [counselor trainees] who begin to see clients. As the counselor trainee works through stages in his or her development, they become less defensive and interested in self-awareness (Wise et al., 1989, P. 329). The counselor trainee then works towards increased self-confidence.
MaryLou Ramsey's (1990) report "The Clinical Supervision Process" describes, in her final stage, the following:

**Attitude Toward The World**
1. supervisee begins to realize problems and conflicts can be coped with, perhaps from a new and more creative angle
2. supervisee [is] able to look ahead, [and have a] sense of direction
3. [has an] acceptance of bad as well as good parts

**Attitude Toward The Self**
1. solid, realistic view of self and competencies possessed
2. awareness of strengths and weaknesses
3. neither frightened by, nor feels guilty for, weaker areas. (p. 15)

A counselor who has little self-confidence may feel anxious in the counselor role. A counselor in training that avoids anxiety, could react as an over-functioner or an under-functioner. An over-functioner may take charge or nurture; and an under-functioner may assume a position of weakness encouraging others to take care of him or her. "Often one of these patterns is found to be a predominant style by which a counselor in training reacts inappropriately to anxiety-producing situations in a counseling session and thus inhibits appropriate responses to clients" (Lawson et al., 1988, p. 163).

The lack of self-confidence can be anxiety provoking in itself. A trainee may be stuck on trying to find the "right way" or the "right answer" rather than feeling comfortable
with him/herself enough to use his/her own internal resources (Williams, 1995, p. 55). Williams (1995) describes below the way lack of self-confidence and anxiety can create a trainees struggle with the therapy process:

Learning anything new in front of someone -- playing the piano while one's teacher listens, being instructed on the use of a computer, drawing from life in a class, riding a horse as the others canter confidently off -- means coping with feelings of inadequacy, inferiority, shame, and fear. Learning how to do therapy under the gaze of a supervisor is worse: Because of the material that therapy evokes, trainees in the supervisory process sometimes are required to face their innermost and mysterious self. This confrontation releases feathers of excitement and joy but also thuds of pain and confusion. Pained and confused trainees do not have much room left for clinical wisdom. They "lose it." They focus on their own shame and fear, rather than on what is being said by clients or the supervisor. Only when anxiety diminishes can they have the inner freedom to be available to new information. (p. 55)

The concept of a trainee finding "one right way" may be a direct result of lack of self-confidence, as mentioned above. Selvini et al. (1991) describe the importance of self-confidence related to building a personal model.

There are no personal models which can be copied: therapists must find there own methods. It is possible to reproduce a therapeutic strategy but not the idiosyncratic characteristics employed by the individual therapist, such as the tone of voice, posture, and so on, used to develop that strategy. (p. 38)

If a trainee does not feel self-confident it could stifle their own creativity in the development of their own model.
This seems to take place over time, through a process of learning about oneself through the supervision.

Lawson and Gausheil (1988) have written an article concerning enhancement of counselor's personal development. They have stated "Some counselor educators believe that persons in counseling will be able to progress to no higher level of psychological and emotional health than the level of their counselor" (p. 162). Increased awareness in the counselor trainee's self-confidence is important in order to effectively help clients in this area.

This commitment to enhancing counselor's personal development is predicated upon the belief that counselors' effectiveness is significantly increased by their ability to deal effectively with their own personal and interpersonal issues that might otherwise inhibit their emotional or psychological growth and development. (Lawson & Gausheil, 1988, p. 162)

Augustus Napier, Ph.D. and Carl Whitaker, M.D. (1973) wrote an article on the "Problems of the Beginning Family Therapist." Within this article there were many points they addressed that dealt with the counselor trainees self-confidence:

Lack of Leadership. . . Families usually test the therapist's strength. . . Many inexperienced therapists are reluctant to challenge the family. . . The family quickly senses this indecisiveness. . . The experienced therapist is more authoritative. . . He moves with confidence. . . (p. 230)

. . . And there are many other aspects of his experience that the therapist can and should share: his boredom,
his anxiety, his anger, his vulgarity, his irresponsible silliness, his wit, human condition. In openly acknowledging his emotional life of the moment, the therapist teaches, in the most intimate way, self-acceptance. This openness is particularly powerful if the therapist is free enough of pressing internal conflicts to fully participate in and respond to the family. (p. 241)

Elizur (1990) also describes points in which a trainee can become paralyzed in the process of therapy due to lack of self-confidence.

In general, the stress of the therapist increases in proportion to the degree of incongruence between the supervisor's and the family's perceptions of the problem and their expectations for change. In such situations therapists experience themselves caught in the middle. There are some general reasons for such a gap in the training relationship. Trainees are often induced into the families' perspective. They lack confidence with their newly acquired skills and so feel an inner pressure to accommodate, and thereby gain the families' acceptance. They are also influenced by the families' emotional climate so that restructuring interventions, such as changing the mood and escalating stress, become difficult for them. (p. 271)

"Once students are comfortable with their skills and personal growth they begin to develop a therapeutic personality and a sense of professional identity. The counselor in training is now characterized by a growing confidence and integration of skills and self-awareness" (Wise et al., 1989, p. 334).

Effective counselors have a positive view of themselves and a confidence in their abilities. The interventions they make are based on their values (Corey, 1991, p. 12). It is important to also address that confident counselors also
know their limitations. As an awareness of the counselor trainees limitations increases, he or she can seek to educate himself or herself and develop ways to check out and guard against inadvertent biases (Ramsey, 1990, p. 18). Corey (1991) describes an effective counselor as:

Effective counselors have an identity. They know who they are, what they are capable of becoming, what they want out of life, and what is essential. Although they have a clear sense of their priorities, they are willing to reexamine their values and goals. They are not mere reflections of what others expect or want them to be but strive to live by internal standards. They are able to recognize and accept their own power. They feel adequate with others and allow others to feel powerful with them. (p. 13-14)

Good supervision increases the ability of the counselor trainee to work effectively and feel more self-confident and self-assured. If supervision is negative with constant criticism the counselor trainee could lose confidence (Grosh et al. 1994, p. 81; 126). Styles of supervision that promote self-confidence in trainees seemed to have more creative challenges and trainees were stimulated to think through their problems on their own (Williams, 1987, p 248). Self-confidence may be a benefit received from Experiential Supervision.
Independence

In the beginning of the supervision process the counselor trainee may exhibit extreme dependence in the supervisor. The supervisor can be idealized and viewed as an all-knowing, omnipotent figure. The supervisor can also be seen as omnipotent in general, but unnecessary, or irrelevant to the issue the counselor trainee may be dealing with (Ramsey, 1990, p. 13). As the counselor trainee works through the process of supervision one goal would be to promote more independence, and less dependence on the supervisor for answers.

In Williams' (1987) study "Parallel Process in a Course on Counseling Supervision" he discusses dependency in early trainees. He states:

...the class had been rather harsh on the Lolly Bag demands and early dependence of the counselors under their charge, they were taking a developmental approach by the end of the year, regarding it as natural and appropriate for beginning counselors to be demanding this way. (p. 249)

Williams' then went on to describe the supervisors' change from giving advice, to allowing the trainees to search for their own answers.

Independence is an important area of personal growth, including a broader scope than just in the supervision process. Since counselors bring their total self into the
sessions with their clients, and Corey (1991) described (as stated in the previous section) that counselors bring their values into the counseling session (p. 12), it is important to look at independence from different angles. Corey (1991) states:

Kohut has maintained that people are their healthiest and best when they can feel both independence and attachment, taking joy in themselves and also being able to idealize others. Since mature adults feel a basic security grounded in an identity that involves a sense of freedom, self-sufficiency, and self esteem, they are not compulsively dependent on others, but neither do they have to fear closeness. (p. 114)

Counselors are often teaching clients about independence. It appears important that the counselor trainee also have an ability to be independent and interdependent. It is important that the counselor trainee eventually gain a more differentiated understanding of the areas where he or she can be more independent, and those where he or she still needs help. The counselor trainee then can begin to see the supervisor more as a consultant, and become more aware of personal motives in the process (Ramsey, 1990, p. 17).

Anthony Williams (1995) describes the importance of the supervisor creating a sense of independence for the counselor trainee. He states:
Maturana and Valera (1980) propose that living systems -- like grogs, persons, colonies of ants, or groups of humans -- are autonomous, self-creating organizations that simply go on being themselves in their own way. If they are too disturbed by something "outside," that disturbance is perceived as a threat to autonomy, and the system splits out the intruder or intruding idea. This is sometimes called "resistance" by therapists. On the other hand, when a disturbance comes from the outside that seems to enhance the system's autonomy, the system will re-form around that disturbance; it comes to mean something different to itself. (p. 190)

The importance emphasized is that the supervisor create a sense of autonomy or independence during the supervision of the trainee. This will allow the trainee to not feel threatened by the supervision process, but welcome feedback that encourages their growth in this direction.

During the beginning stages of supervision trainees often describe feeling of loss of autonomy or independence. As the trainee experiences more and develops this usually diminishes.

Supervisees frequently tend to become defensive and 'attempt to dilute supervision'. Others have written about an extreme sense of helplessness and incompetence, fears of loss of dignity and even disgrace, threats to autonomy and a sense of loss of ego boundaries, and conflicts over control, authority and compliance. Although these are extreme reactions that diminish in the course of supervision, they need to be acknowledged by the supervisor as universal threats that limit the supervisees' range of functioning and result in an avoidance of anxiety provoking issues. (Elizur, 1990, p. 271)
In a study done by Worthington and McCullough (1992) they found that often a supervisor with the similar theoretical background may produce more independence in the counselor trainee.

Thus, supervisors may rarely match their methods to their supervisees, yet such matching is predictive of perceived effectiveness of supervision and autonomy of intern supervisees. Taken together, these results suggest that for effective supervision, internship sites pay special attention to assigning interns to supervisors who already share a theoretical similarity to the intern. (p.262)

It seems apparent that increasing more independence in the trainee can help the trainee establish a personal model, more comfort with him/herself in relation to the client and the supervisor. It seems that growth in this area is necessary for success in the trainees practice and self.

Summary

From a review of the literature above, it seems that there are a variety of developmental stages that trainees must encounter along the path of their supervision process. It also appears that trainees highly regard supervisors who display respectful, appropriate confrontation, and who emphasize personal growth issues over the teaching of technical skills (Williams, 1995, p. 93). It seems that the
issue of personal growth is a very important aspect in the development of competent counselors.

Meeting a supervisee on their own developmental level was also discussed throughout the literature as an important aspect in the relationship between supervisor and trainee. Developmental levels were described as significant in the process of building self-confidence and independence in the earlier sections.

The careful blending of techniques derived from various theoretical models enables the supervisor to meet supervisees on their own developmental level given the relevant process and content issues and to choose without theoretical restriction the interventions of choice. (Glickauf et al, 1991, Abstract: p. 625-635)

Also relevant seems to be the encouragement to seek supervision outside of the agency or place of work. Many trainees feel intimidated or uncomfortable to disclose issues involving themselves with their immediate supervisor at their place of employment. Grosch et al. (1994) discuss the question of quality.

The odds of getting high quality supervision at work are slim. One way to secure effective supervision is to contract for supervision with a seasoned supervisor outside the agency. . . Outside supervision provides a safe context in which to work on specific learning goals, distinct from those of the agency, and to explore countertransference reactions or why one habitually gets stuck or overinvolved with certain types of clients. . . One way to lower cost of supervision is to form a supervision group of three to five professionals, who split the cost. . . (p. 125)
CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The objective of this study is to determine the personal growth benefits obtained by counselor trainees from the Experiential Supervision process. In this study the three significant personal growth areas that will be described are: 1) increased awareness of personal projections, 2) increased self-confidence and 3) independence.

Experiential Supervision is not a replacement for personal counseling, however, the counselor trainee may receive benefits from the Experiential Supervision process that are similar to the benefits derived from personal counseling. Burns and Holloway (1989) indicate that "... part of a supervisor's role may include a type of therapeutic process designed to increase trainees' counseling skills through personal growth, therapy should not become the primary activity of supervision" (p. 48). It is part of the objective of this study to determine if
Experiential Supervision contributes to the similar personal growth areas.

**Identification of Research Methodology Used**

A descriptive method's purpose is to describe systematically the facts and characteristics of a given population or area of interest (Merriam, Simpson, 1984, p. 58). A form of descriptive research is the causal/comparative research design. A causal/comparative research design is an effective method that allowed the researcher to look for a relationship between Experiential Supervision and personal growth. This type of research was not used to predict, but rather to seek results indicating cause because of this relationship (Merriam, Simpson, 1984, p. 58).

**Methodology**

An interview format was used to collect data from six local (living in the Phoenix, AZ area) supervisors who use Experiential Supervision in their supervision model. Because the nature of this design involves an interview format, the face to face interview could also lead to more accurate responses by including observations of communication styles. Appendix A includes the transcripts from each interview. This design could allow for other
discoveries to be made, through the interview process, within this area of study.

Sample

The sample included a group of six selected local supervisors that use Experiential Supervision as part of their supervision process. A total of eight supervisors were contacted (by referral from one another), one declined due to time restraints and the other did not reply to the contact. All of the supervisors that participated in the study were geographically located in the Phoenix, Arizona, area and promote personal growth in their counselor trainees. Four of the selected supervisors are professors at the graduate level and teach at Ottawa University.

Of the six supervisors interviewed for the study, five use a group supervision model and one primarily uses an individual supervision model. All of the six participated in their own supervision process prior to becoming a supervisor themselves. Though not designed as part of this study, all of the six are affiliated with a marriage and family orientation.

Each of the supervisors were assigned a number in the order that they were interviewed. The supervisors must have met only one criteria to be selected for the study of
using or have used an Experiential Supervision approach when supervising trainees.

Each supervisor's professional credentials, highest academic degree, years counseling, and supervision experience are described below:

Supervisor #1: Ph.D.; Approved Supervisor AAMFT; Supervisor for Group Psychotherapy; Supervisor for Sex Therapy (AASECT); 20+ years counseling; 10+ years supervising.

Supervisor #2: Ph.D.; AAMFT Clinical Member; NASW Diplomate; Clinical Social Worker Diplomate; AASECT Member; ABECSW Diplomate; 30+ years counseling; 20+ years supervising.

Supervisor #3: M.S., Counseling; Approved Supervisor AAMFT; 25 years counseling; 20 years supervising.

Supervisor #4: Ph.D.; Arizona Psychological Association Member; American Suicidology Association Member, Associate Member AAMFT; 14 years counseling; 5 years supervising.

Supervisor #5: M.A., Marriage and Family Therapy; MFCC in California current and active; CMFT in Arizona; AAMFT Clinical Member; CAMFT (California Association of Marriage and Family Therapists) Clinical Member; 10 years counseling; 5 years supervising.

Supervisor #6: M.C., Counseling; Approved Supervisor AAMFT; AAMFT Clinical Member; CMFT; 20+ years counseling; 10+ years supervising.

**Instrumentation**

The sample was a non-randomized, local and homogeneous group and therefore the frame of reference used to describe this study may not be generalizable to all supervisors or
supervision models. The interview data was based on the perceptions of the interviewees, although it is believed to be accurate data. Because of the nature of this study, no direct predictions can be made from this research. However, this research may be valuable for other trainees and supervisors considering this model for use. The scientific aspects of reliability are not readily applicable to this study. The researcher has a personal and professional interest in the Experiential Supervision model.

Five interview questions were used during this inquiry. All questions pertained to Experiential Supervision and personal growth. The questions were used to elicit discussion from the respondents about the personal growth areas that are influenced through this model of supervision. The nature of the interview was structured but also allowed for identification of other data that may have contributed to the purpose of the study.

Because the interview format was structured it increased the consistency from one interview to the next. Because the interview was face to face it allowed the researcher more exploration with the respondent. The questions could be further explored if an area arose that was different from other respondent answers.
The five interview questions were:

1. (A). Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?
   (B). What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

2. What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

3. What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

4. How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

5. Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?

In addition, any other feedback related to other areas the supervisor felt was important was encouraged. This allowed exploration of all possibilities regarding the sought information. By asking for further feedback it allowed the researcher to consider other areas that could be
studied at another time. At the end of the interview process, professional information specific to each supervisor was obtained for demographics.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected through structured interviews with the supervisors. Prior to the interview process, the nature of the study was briefly discussed with each supervisor to ensure that the supervisors understood the process that would occur during the interview. Topics that were discussed included the confidentiality of the supervisor, collection of data via audio tape (transcriptions are included in Appendix A), and a screening process to ensure that the supervisors used this model of supervision.

Each supervisor was interviewed separately, and referrals for other possible interviewees were volunteered. The supervisors were interviewed in the order they were contacted.

The questions were read to the supervisors one time and were repeated if necessary. The supervisors answered one question completely before the next question was read. Data were collected via audio tape. The data were then transferred into a typed document to aid in the analysis of the data. The presence of the recording device did not appear to inhibit response.
In analyzing the data the researcher looked for any commonly repeated themes or differences in response patterns. These commonalties or differences were drawn directly from the transcriptions of the audio taped interview and are presented in Chapter 4.
CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The data in this chapter is arranged numerically by the interview questions presented earlier in Chapter 3. The results will be described both in a narrative format and table format.

Question #1

Question #1 was a two part question:

Part A: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

Three out of the six supervisors describe having this type of supervision themselves, therefore they felt it was a natural progression to include it into their own practice. All six of the supervisors discussed the importance of learning experientially therefore the model seemed to best fit this type of learning and growth.

Part B: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

All six of the supervisors felt it was important to aid in new perspectives for the trainees in order to prevent them from getting stuck (blocked by personal issues) in the therapy process. All discussed a type of role modeling for
the trainees and providing a safe environment. All six describe the goal of increasing the trainees awareness of motives.

A brief description of goals are in Table 1 below:

| Supervisor #1: | Team Work/Systems  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Stimulation/Excitement  
|                | Experience Enhancement  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  
| Supervisor #2: | Team Work/Systems  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  
| Supervisor #3: | Team Work/Systems  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Stimulation  
|                | Relationship Skills  
|                | Patterns, Awareness of  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  
| Supervisor #4: | Team Work/Systems  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Stimulation/Excitement  
|                | Experiential Growth  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  
| Supervisor #5: | Team Work/Systems  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Trainee's Personal Awareness  
|                | Trainee as Therapeutic Tool  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  
| Supervisor #6: | Systems focus  
|                | Safe Environment/Comfort  
|                | Trainee's Personal Awareness  
|                | Skill Building  
|                | Personal Growth  

Table 1. GOALS OF EXPERIENTIAL SUPERVISION
All of the supervisors interviewed described a multifaceted array of goals. Many of them had common themes and all were working to build professional (skills) and personal growth.

**Question #2**

What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

See Table 2. below for the ratios of the commonly addressed activities included in Experiential Supervision.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th># of Respondents</th>
<th>Activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Role Play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Discussion of Case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Family of Origin Activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Genograms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Team Participation/Consultation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Live Supervision</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Audio and Video Tape</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There were many other activities mentioned such as letter writing to families or clients. Diagnoses and assessments are often included in the skills building part
of this model. Supervisor #4 was not set up for video taping but expressed a desire to do so.

**Question #3**

What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

The researcher defined the personal growth elements as: 1) Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, 2) Increased Self-Confidence, and 3) Independence in the counselor trainees. See Table 3 for the results as related to these three areas:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor # Projections</th>
<th>Personal Projections</th>
<th>Self-Confidence</th>
<th>Independence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Supervisor #2 described trainees as having some dependence upon the supervisor initially when beginning their supervision and somewhat throughout the supervision.
process. Supervisor #6 specifically said she wouldn't use the word transference as one of the personal growth areas and then went on to describe other areas. Overall a majority agreed on the three areas in Table 3.

Other personal growth areas mentioned by the supervisors included ideas such as: the ability to work as part of a team, self-acceptance, loyalty to the group and clients, better listener, thoughtfulness, empowering ingenuity and creativity, clearing boundaries from family of origin and past relationships. Most agreed that the growth received in supervision transcends into the trainees professional and personal self, and that it was the nature of the profession that the personal self effected the professional self.

**Question #4**

How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

All six of the supervisors agreed that there was an initial period of time that the trainees felt anxiety and some insecurities talking over their issues. All six supervisors agreed that the trainees got over this initial anxiety and then enjoyed the supervision process. The success rate is described as high with all of the
supervisors. Supervisor #6 discussed some differences in new trainees (students or right out of graduate school) as having more of this initial anxiety than professionals already in the field, which will be further described in the last interview question analysis.

**Question #5**

Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?

Both Supervisor #5 and #6 agreed that the intern may need more guidance based on less experience and therefore they would have different activities for them. The other four supervisors believed that the activities would be the same. Both Supervisors #3 and #4 believe that anxiety may be higher in the trainees, but not necessarily. All six agreed they would take all trainees from "where they are."

See Table 4 below for the responses of all six supervisors.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervisor #</th>
<th>Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Not Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Not Significantly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Summary

The researcher began this inquiry into this study with an objective to determine if Experiential Supervision contributes to personal growth in counselor trainees. A literature review of books, journals, and abstracts was conducted to determine what areas of the research to focus on. The researcher defined personal growth as: 1) Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, 2) Increased Self-Confidence, and 3) Independence.

The researcher developed five questions that were used to collect data related to this study. The researcher identified six supervisors who used an Experiential Supervision approach in the supervision for counselor trainees.

The interview process consisted of contacting each supervisor for screening to confirm they were using Experiential Supervision in their practice. If the supervisor was using this method, then a meeting was set up. The meeting consisted of reading the questions and allowing the supervisor to respond as related to their own
experience. This interview was audio taped and later transcribed for ease of the researcher's data collection, and was included in Appendix A.

The interviews were then examined by the researcher and predominant descriptors were drawn from the material and tallied for presentation in Chapter 4. The material from the interviews confirmed that Experiential Supervision does contribute to the three personal growth areas of 1) Increased Awareness of Personal Projections, 2) Increased Self-Confidence, and 3) Independence in counselor trainees.

Conclusions

This research demonstrated that the inquiry that Experiential Supervision contributes to personal growth in counselor trainees is true. Curiosity, speculation, and an interest lead the researcher to further explore this area of study and found that the research data supports the original concept. All six of the supervisors described increased personal growth in the counselor trainees as a direct result of Experiential Supervision. A majority of the supervisors felt the three personal growth areas, focused in this study, were increased by Experiential Supervision.

The researcher found many commonalties in the responses given by the supervisors. All of the supervisors have a similar orientation of marriage and family work, though this
was not intended by the researcher. The supervisors interviewed all felt that personal growth was an important facet to counselors and should be a component included in the supervision process.

All of the supervisors interviewed describe the importance of the inclusion of Experiential Supervision in their practice based on their perception the quality of learning that comes from this model. Three of the supervisors had this type of supervision during their own personal training and felt it contributed to their own growth.

Throughout this study there was much information gained by the researcher in addition to the intended study. For example, two of the supervisors discussed the supervision model in relation to a developmental stage that matched their own life. One supervisor discussed the concept of supervision like "grandparenting" and another described it like "parenting." Both were in those specific areas in their own personal lives and felt it reflected in their supervision model. This developmental concept could be an area for further research at a later time.

Each supervisor contributed new ideas and a perspective that was unique to their own experience (See Appendix A for more detail). Many described the transcendence of personal life experience into the professional and total self. This
appeared true in the way each supervisor conducted their Experiential Supervision process. Though there were many commonalties in the supervision process the differences appeared congruent with the uniqueness of the supervisor as a person. For example, one supervisor emphasized the importance of using a team. Though five of the six supervisors were using a team format, this supervisor felt it was "necessary" because counselors are building teams in families. This idea was also described as a very important part of the supervisor personally as well.

There were comments from most of the supervisors post interview about their own enjoyment in participating in the study and new insights were also gained on their behalf. One of the supervisors described the benefit of taking another look at what she was doing personally in the supervision process. This supervisor described her own evolution into the experiential model and her own personal growth in that journey. She had discussed not taking a look at her motives and style "for some time" and that she greatly benefitted from doing so. This may lead to another area of research; what could be the benefits for supervisors to continue with their own supervision process?

The last area of focus in the conclusions, is the area of personal counseling. Since it is difficult to require counselor trainees to seek personal counseling and issues
such as cost etc. arise often, the process of Experiential Supervision may be useful in enhancing the area of personal growth. Each supervisor discussed some of the same benefits derived from Experiential Supervision as with personal counseling. If the issue was too complex or unrelated to supervision, then a referral for personal counseling is made.

**Recommendations**

A common orientation arose from the data in that each supervisor was affiliated or oriented with a marriage and family approach. Since this study was limited due to time restraints, it was not feasible to include more participants. A study that would allow time for interview of more Experiential Supervisors could lead to more knowledge on how the professional or theoretical of orientation could be related to the type of supervisor one becomes. Isomorphism was discussed frequently with the supervisors and all agreed that the type of supervision they do is also the type of therapy they do.

Drop-out of beginning counselors and burn-out, or deadening, of therapists already in the field was also a concern of many of the supervisors interviewed. Expanding this research to look at the effects Experiential Supervision has on the Drop-out/Burn-out rate of therapists
as compared to other, more didactic, types of supervision may be another area of focus in the future.

Another recommendation for future research is how the Experiential Supervision process could impact the therapy process. Since the concept of isomorphism was addressed often, it could be important to examine how the type of supervision a counselor receives directly impacts the therapy that counselor does.

One recommendation from issues that arose from the literature review in this study was that supervision be sought outside the place of work. This recommendation was made based on the quality of in-agency supervision and on the comfort level of the therapist to self-disclose. Finding a small group (usually colleagues or fellow students) to split fees, and a supervisor that works in this capacity, can help create a team that can be more open with feedback and with aiding in ease of self-disclosure.
REFERENCES


APPENDIX A

SUPERVISOR INTERVIEWS
Interview

Supervisor #1

Interview Date: October 15, 1994

Supervisor #1 Credentials/Academics include: Ph.D. Clinical Psychology; M.A. Interdisciplinary Studies; M.S. Counseling Psychology

Certifications include: Approved Supervisor AAMFT; Supervisor for Group Psychotherapy; Supervisor for Sex Therapy (AASECT)

Years Counseling: Over 20

Years Supervising: Over 10

Interview

S1: As of 1994 the rules are now, in 93 they were proposed, and the rules are now around the country for supervisors and we can give some psychotherapy, be involved in some peripheral kinds of psychotherapy for our supervisees, and if it's a big personal problem that's interfering in their work with clients then we are required to refer them into therapy themselves. And so I have referred two people into therapy since I have started being a supervisor, and I am seeing one person now with a significant other next week because his relationship is interfering, he's worrying so much about it that it's interfering with his work; and if it becomes very intense or very extensive or I see it's serious enough then I will refer him too.

R: What do you do with them when they come in, do you just talk to them as a couple? or...

S1: Yes I will be, I'll be doing psychotherapy with them. I'll be doing marriage counseling with them. Just ordinary, regular, marriage counseling, it's probably an ordinary communications problem. What I think the difficulty really is that he has a very offhand manner and he tends to seems cold and whenever he is challenged he retreats into behavior that's not warm, and I guess friendly. And he's done that with significant others, really important people in his
life, and he's doing that with clients now too. If he gets in a place that's painful for him then he becomes superior, he tends to look at the ceiling and get a sarcastic tone. So I can guess that's this is what this is going to be about.

R: So he knows that and he's just decided to ask his supervisor that maybe he'll have his wife come in?

S1: (Yes), That he's concerned about what she's telling him, and he maybe, it seems to me that he's doing some things that upset him or maybe hurting his clients feelings or he doesn't feel sufficiently engaged in their work and their complaints are that he doesn't really care.

R: I'll bet that will hurt his practice.

S1: Yes, he won't even get started.

R: No

S1: So I thought my job as his supervisor was, I've been reflecting some of that back to him, and I've told him what some of the clients have told me, and as professionally as I can, and now I think that he needs to see that it's something that he does in every area of his life and not just in therapy and I think that it can change and he'll be a better therapist.

R: Do you see his, When you supervise him do you see his clients also then?

S1: I have been, yes. I referred the clients in.

R: Oh I see...

S1: And I've sat in with him with clients and I've sat in with him in group... and he's learned a lot, he's a really good candidate he just has this defense mechanism that he probably has used in other times, well I'm sure he's used in other times in life but I'll bet it hasn't served him well then either.

R: Well that seems real beneficial.

S1: I think it would be very helpful for him to find out that he really does that, also I'm videotaping him.

R: How nice.

S1: Yes, because he doesn't believe he does it.

R: That'll be one of my questions...
S1: Okay

R: The first one is why did you decide to include experiential supervision in your practice?

S1: Probably because I was told to in my supervision training. I took some trainings in Marriage and Family Supervision and Group supervision from the Gouldings in Watsonville California, and that's what they do. And as they coached us that's what they had me do, so, and it's livelier and I had so much fun there with Bob and Mary Goulding and learned so much that I wanted to be like them, so, and that's their specialty. They used T.A. and they used Gestalt and they make us "BE" whatever we're dealing with, we have to look at things through all kinds of different perspectives. And they always do everything in group.

R: So it keeps you interested?

S1: Yes, it's entertaining and it makes us work hard.

R: So, because you were told to but because you have a passion for it seems like?

S1: Yes I do, I think it's easy for me because I think they trained me well. Then I went to Santa Fe and I took supervision training their too, and I think I brought some of the Gouldings philosophy to that experience because whenever I got stuck I sorta "became", I acted it out instead of talking it out, rather than just talk about it and it seemed to work so much better and that's what I require.

R: Is that because, I'm trying to relate to my own personal experience, but sometimes when you talk it out you can rationalize a lot of things?

S1: Right, and we're all pretty good by now about writing case notes, about somebody about five feet eight, and a divorced woman, ...with a monotonous voice (uh hu uh hu) and I think that's important too, I don't want to leave that out because we do that also. But I want my supervisees to be that man, and to feel as if they are that man and to speak from their hearts and about what he wants, and what he needs, and show us how he relates..

R: The human connection.

S1: Yes, let us see him. And then we'll all make suggestions, and we'll all get involved in the supervision... And then we hypothesize, and we will speak to that supervisee and we'll say what if?, and why don't?, and
maybe you could. And then we'll also speak to the man, how would it be for you if?

R: And they get to respond.

S1: As the man.

R: Great some new insight.

S1: Right, and sometimes somebody else will play that man, to explain.

R: To get the counselor

S1: To explain how they feel.

R: And that counselor gets to step back and see somebody else be in that role.

S1: Yes.

R: Is that counselor going to be the counselor, or is that counselor just observing somebody else be the counselor?...

S1: We do all of it! ... oh my, and the time goes by fast when we're doing that, and I think we care more about our clients sometimes.

R: It's an hour that you usually do it in?

S1: It's by the hour, and we'll be doing four hours in a row pretty soon, with breaks in between of course, it's because everybody wants a turn.

R: Sure that's what they're there for. the next question is: What do you feel your goals are with experiential supervision?

S1: To be as real as possible, to be exciting, to stimulate, to help people care..., to keep it lively, to allow possibilities to emerge, and we certainly what we're able to do now, because we've worked together long enough, is to hypothesize very well-- everybody comes up with ideas. And no idea is too dumb, or too silly, and we often piggyback on one another's ideas, and then the therapist can do what he or she chooses but they have eight other alternatives. And I think they are very ready for the client, because whatever the client says or does may have been -- come up in somebodies mind already, they may be more ready for it than they would have been. So there aren't a lot of surprises that way.

R: So do you see it as a permission thing that somebody else might choose that route?
S1: Yes, evidentially four heads are better than one.

R: Yes, this isn't a part of my questions but I was wondering, you do use other things other than experiential supervision right?

S1: We have to look at diagnoses that they make, and then we tear them up because we don't want to keep them. But I thought it was one of my obligations to make sure that they know how to arrive at a diagnoses, and treatment plans, and progress notes, and so everybody knows how to do it...

R: So the full nine yards you cover.

S1: Yes, but the real emphasis is on the experiential, because that's the part that seems to stick and mean something.

R: What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

S1: I just listed some of the written ones, but also we trade papers that we have written about our experience with somebody, and make comments. We can read one anothers papers.

R: The counselor writes a paper?

S1: Right, writes about somebody or a family problem. One of the reasons we do that is because occasionally we use the Milan method, a modified Milan or changed Milan, and we'll write a prescription for the family, we'll write up the family, and we thank them for all the strengths and abilities that they have shown us and we stroke them for how admirably they have taken care of problems in the past and then we prescribe what we think should happen now, and it's all ready to be read to the family and so we need to have the language really right, so we right it and rewrite it.

R: I guess I've never heard of this method before?

S1: It's exciting, it's really a consultation I think when the therapist has felt baffled by the family or wants extra care for the family and meets with a consultation group, and it's the same team of supervisees and goes over what's happening with the family. Then the team figures out how to make the family proud about what they have already done, and learn not to just to focus on the beginning problem. And to get the therapist off that one problem, so they write a little of the family history and they say "We're really, as a team we're really pleased to hear. . . , We really appreciated so and so's. . . , and we were impressed by ("impressed by" we use a lot) impressed by mothers loyalty
and diligence when a lesser person would have given up, and we can see that this was important in the family, and this particular value was upheld". So we look for all this positive stuff, . . . using formal language . . . and then predict what might happen in the future in a positive way, and read it to the family, have somebody read it aloud then give it to them.

R: That's nice.

S1: Yes, it is. It's very powerful. And that's the consultation and then the therapist goes back and works with the family some more, they've had a lot of strokes from the group of strangers.

R: So that was one of your activities, you also said that you do some role playing?

S1: Oh Yes, role playing all the time, playing the therapist, the family member, or the group member, or the individual that's in therapy. In fact I won't let the supervisee tell about that person until the supervisee has role played that person, and that's so we can get some feel. And then we get to hear about what color their hair is or what their complexion is like. But we already know that person more by having "MET" them, sometimes they are very subdued or deeply depressed or just hang their heads, and we can see that right away. Sometimes they're high and hyper...

R: Sometimes that gives you a better, maybe, perspective anyways to not know all the specific little details and just go...

S1: Sometimes it's a hook to hang it by and it keeps your interest up.

R: What if one of your counselor trainees comes in and they have a personal issue?

S1: And if they tell me?

R: Yes.

S1: Then we'll have to work on it a little bit, and if they don't tell me and I notice it then we'll have to work on it a little bit.

R: So they can actually, within the group, say that "I've had something come up and?"

S1: Yes, they can and then we can work on it individually or they can, if they want to, in group. We've done a lot more work in group than I ever thought we could, because
they know each other and trust each by now. And they are use to talking about their reactions to somebody else, how they feel gut wise with a particular client. And then after they have done that they are able to talk about themselves too.

R: One of the things I was reading, I think it was on Carl Whitakers Symbolic Experiential Family Therapy, and they were talking (I'm thinking it was in the Carl Whitaker one, but somewhere along the line in my reading) about if a counselor that has their own family of origin or family problem and you have a family in session and sometimes you're not able to effectively work with that family because you haven't worked through some of your own stuff, then do you have one of your trainees that come in that says "I have some of my own issue that are going on" are you able to act out {role play} using his family.

S1: Oh yes, we've done a lot role playing with someone you know who had lost her father when she was only a tiny baby, we did a lot of role playing with her. We played members of her family and somebody played her as a tiny baby that didn't know what was going on and I played her mother and somebody played her sister and at the moment that her mother was told of her fathers death and what the reaction was all through though the family, all the different members except for the person that you know who was too little, but it effected her whole life to have lost her father. And everybody's memory of that and so we role played that for her and then she went and worked that out with her real family. Had a reunion and to find out how everybody felt and what it was like.

R: And was that something that was stopping her in her in counseling?

S1: Yes, It was a big issue in her life, a real painful issue in her life. Yes, and we all learned so much from doing that, it made it very real.

R: Any other activities that you can think of that you use, offhand?

S1: Yes, I think that the one that is most difficult and that we are best at, I think is finding and admitting difficulties within ourselves, and other ways of seeing things that we don't agree or somebody is not pulling their share, not showing up.

R: Among the group?

S1: Among the group itself, we haven't had much of that, we've only had one person, that I can remember, in the past who wasn't reliable, and we took care of it.
R: By just addressing it with that person in the group?

S1: Yes, by talking with him and asking him if he cared. He said yes, we did like a... What's that called when somebody is drinking??? Where you get everybody together and they tell how they feel???

R: Oh, an intervention?

S1: Yes, we did an intervention! It was kind of a mini-intervention, but it was important because it is how we work together as a team to help each other work.

R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S1: Well I just heard that one, about behavior that is not acceptable from the team, the hard working team, that's noted, and mentioned and talked about, and changed. There is a lot of buddyship, and taking turns. I think the buddyship is really important... and the ability to be unsure in front of other people, and have them be able to know and tell you and then do it and then report back. And to be able to know things and tell other people. And to be able to stick to your guns when you need to and you feel your right and you have a different feel for it. And to look back with some regret, and to know enough to for that, and to forgive yourself for making mistakes. All kinds of personal growth. Loyalty, for one thing.

R: To each other as a group?

S1: And to your clients.

R: I think personally one of the things I can think of is just feeling really uncomfortable sometimes about what your doing, and helping, that reminded me when you were talking about the support.

S1: And reminding each other that it's slow growth and that big change doesn't happen overnight very often and that it's still worth it. And we do a lot of that.

R: So like validating one another in front of each other?

S1: Yes, and since we are doing solution focused brief therapy mostly with the people that we are seeing, we do it with each other. We point out what did change, what's different, and what we could that we never thought about. Do you remember that supervision in therapy isomorphic? You know that word?

R: No
S1: Isomorphic, in supervision means that the kind of supervision we get is the kind of therapy we do. I think this teamwork thing is real important because then the therapists go do those things with the families. Build teams! And stroke positively and point out when something could be better.

R: There are a lot of personal growth areas that you are looking at.

S1: I think so, I think it is more intense than getting therapy. We all take it so seriously, by that time we have peoples lives literally in our hands and the responsibility makes it pretty serious.

R: Sometimes when they are not our own lives we feel more responsible.

S1: Yes, and we can see what's happening.

R: How do you see the trainees responding to Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

S1: Eagerly, wanting more, getting very tired, and then resting and coming back for more. Where I see it that they are having trouble stopping, getting away from it, they don't take breaks...they keep thinking about it, they think about it a lot. And they call every once in a while because they come up with an idea, or they figured something wrong with that, so if they weren't at that stage of supervisees I would think that they were obsessing (ha-ha). But I think it is appropriate for graduate students to be thinking hard like that.

R: So they are actually, even though a supervision session is a four hour or whatever...

S1: Which is a long one it really gets you going, we have individual one hour a week too (oh I forgot to say that). It actually can be quite a bit of time.

R: It sounds like they are also processing that supervision throughout, whenever they are not seeing you, a week or two week interval?

S1: Yes, They sure are. Just like we do after group or family therapy. We process and process and then it comes.

R: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?
S1: Well I'm just seeing interns, I'm not seeing anybody in a practicum. No I don't see that it is any different, I think by the time the interns have clients, and are working in those forums with those methods then they're doing just what somebody's doing that's in practice for a while, they are a little more uneasy about it.

R: Maybe because they are so new?

S1: They don't trust themselves, but that's why the team is so important, they get lots of feedback and also they have a long ... They can have a consultation, they have one another's telephone numbers too...

R: So they can just call up and ...

S1: Yes, and there is always somebody that they will run it by and they will make suggestions.

R: So you encourage them to have contact ..

S1: Yes, it's a team. I can't take all that responsibility myself, nor would I and I'm not always available.

R: That is all the questions that I have but if you can think of anything else that might be significant.

S1: Let me think about supervision for a minute. Yes, I have some questions that people ask me...

How do I get supervision training? You don't unless you pay a lot of money and go away for it.

Do I have to have supervision training to supervise? No, but you should!

How can I get approved Marriage and Family Therapy supervision? Just (a few in Phx), and I'm sorry there aren't more, there are a lot of interns who, when we create some more then there are more people who can have it.

R: So you guys are in demand right now?

S1: We can be, I will be when I'm retired and I'll do that and not do other things, well I will still teach some at Ottawa.

R: In the field supervision is something that is needed?

S1: AAMFT supervision especially, and in Oregon I will do it also.
R: Is the AAMFT, is there a difference from the NBCC supervision?

S1: Yes, the AAMFT requires a lot more. You can't be supervised by someone who is not an approved supervisor. But I can also create more supervisors, what I should be doing, if I weren't doing all these other things, I would be doing a supervision school and later I will.

R: And that's because Marriage and Family supervisors are needed..

S1: Yes, really needed and there is a big shortage, and I feel a little bit guilty because I'm not doing that. First I have to retire.

R: Don't feel guilty yet..

S1: Alright!

R: Is there anything else you would like to add, it may come to you later...

S1: Well the main thing is that it isn't the supervision, I mean supervision is not therapy, so I am not paying a lot of attention to you as person, I am in case there is something that can reflect in your work, and looking at you and thinking of your client. I look right through you to what is happening to the client and what you are doing with them. A different view point.

R: And you still feel the personal growth element is there.

S1: Sure, I think we have discovered a wonderful model. Good thing I stole it from the Gouldings.

R: The experiential supervision?

S1: Yes, and then taking the teamwork idea from... and putting them together.
Interview

Supervisor #2

Interview Date: January 26, 1995

Supervisor #2 credentials/academics include: Ph.D., Marriage and Family Relations

Certifications include: AAMFT Clinical Member, NASW Diplomate, Clinical Social Worker Diplomate, AASECT member, ABECJSW Diplomate

Years Counseling: Over 30

Years Supervising: Over 20

Interview

R: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

S2: Well now you are talking to an old supervisor so the word experiential was not there, it was just a matter of supervision. But obviously in the days that I was supervising students and professionals we did a lot more, I think, recording than what I see being done now. It was on the basis of the records that we did our supervision, and of course what we saw during the week or the two weeks, whatever the time was that we saw the supervisee. There was no question in my mind that obviously one of the derived benefits from supervision was not only helping this person do a better job but that by osmosis it was incorporated into that persons lifestyle. I think that the supervisors that I work with, the supervisees that I work with; and of course I supervised supervisors later on as an agency director; I think that they all prospered well. It was, if you look at the idea of supervision, is to help that person become a better professional. We're not there to pick out flaws in the character. We're not there to say Oh (tisk, tisk) look what you did. But rather giving that person an opportunity to review what that person did to find out what were the circumstances that came before that, and for him/her to take
in this particular path. I don't see how a person that has been supervised by a good supervisor cannot really gain personally from this professional growth. Listen, what I think the important ingredients and being a good supervisor is for you to have a good supervision or have a good supervisory experience.

R: As a supervisor to have a good supervisory experience?

S2: When you are being supervised. Correct. Because usually you pick up the intent and some of the techniques perhaps and the philosophy of supervision.

R: That's kind of that isomorphic thing, the kind of supervision you get that whole thing.

S2: Yes.

R: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

S2: Again primarily is to basically help that person do as good a job and credible job as you possibly can have that person do. You do that through the recording and through the questions that come about as a result of that. And of course the last thing is the action that that person took.

R: The recording?

S2: The records that person gives you in advance to the supervisory session.

R: Okay. What are some of the activities you include in the Experiential Supervision?

S2: Well when we (co-therapist) did some dual supervision and we worked with a couple, one of our strengths was to feel sufficiently comfortable with one another professionally and personally. We were able to, literally but unconsciously, provide a role model for the kind of relationship that we had that might be applicable or that the people that we were supervising or were working with would feel comfortable with. Yes, there were times that we kind of dressed each other down, but again in the professional sense. There was a disagreement, and we could live with disagreement. Not in a supervisory session but in a counseling, we wrestled a little bit.

R: To show that there was, it was okay to have conflict?

S2: Absolutely. And also to use that particular way of not resolving, but getting some of that anxiety out. People say: You mean this is okay? She (co-therapist) is still alive (laugh).
R: And they felt more comfortable?

S2: Very much so. Very much so.

R: So you kind of role play yourselves?

S2: Yes. . . . but you can't do it unless you feel it, otherwise it kind of comes across kind of phony.

R: Did you ever have them take the position of the client in supervision, and "be" the client?

S2: That's, I think, kind of basic. When you start to talk about the clients with your supervisee, I think its important to go back, even before you talk about the client, to talk about the first time for example, or the most recent time, that your supervisee asked for help. And how difficult that is. You don't say now lets put you in the role of the client. But do you remember your own experiences when you asked for help. How difficult was that for you? And the very fact that people come to us in spite of the fact that is difficult. You got to start of on a very positive foot.

R: So you make it personal for them.

S2: Of course.

R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S2: Well, I don't think that we can really be the professional self in on sense and the personal self in another. I think, in our particular field certainly, it all meshes together. I may have to be very careful with that. There is a positive but also a down side to that when you become over emotional and over involved perhaps. I think that everything you learn in supervision really helps tremendously and in your own personal life I think you become a better listener; I think your much more thoughtful in your presentations; I think you don't often shoot from the hip as often people usually do; there are an awful lot of things really.

R: Do you think that helps to increase your self-confidence?

S2: Without a doubt; without a doubt.

R: What about independence in the counselor trainee?

S2: Well again, there is the up and down. Years ago you never did anything unless you had almost the counselors
approval in advance. The independence, in a way, was taken from you because you knew that you had to be supervised. I mean this was one of the signs of professionalism. And I use that a little sarcastically because simply because you had a supervision opportunity that, an opportunity to be supervised, that didn't really mean totally professional all the time. I think its a good balance between your excitement that you bring into the session, your awareness, your ability to understand what came before. Which encourages you to go on and be helpful. Supervision should not be a thing you wait for to find out how you are doing, this is an ongoing process. I think that's the important thing really in supervision.

R: And do you think that it makes the counselor trainee become more aware of their personal projections?

S2: Yes, I think that when you are supervised and you are really doing this to learn . . . . then you allow yourself to really share with your supervisor those things that are troublesome for you. And you have to get into those things that are troublesome. I remember as a young supervisee I was just mesmerized by the most beautiful woman that was sitting across the desk from me and I let my mind wander. And I brought it back to my supervisor and we got it straightened out. It was very awkward. Or the time I didn't know what to do and I was immobilized because I didn't know what you could or could not do. My orientation to the agency was not particularly good. And when my supervisor gave me permission to do the things that I wanted to do but not yet feeling comfortable in doing it; I was a much more efficient, much more professional, much more helpful person.

R: How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

S2: Well, I'm not doing any supervision now and what I can see basically is a very positive thing from [my co-therapists] experience with the counselor trainees. I am really very impressed with [my co-therapist] but more than that I think that she gives herself and really brings out the best in the trainees.

R: So they are getting a lot out of it?

S2: Without a question in my mind.

R: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?

S2: I think that it is really one in the same because you take the person where they are and you start from there.
The experienced person is going to be held a little bit more accountable certainly for the work that he/she does on the job. But again in essence and in practice it's basically the same thing. You start where that person is and of course I'm sure you recognize that I've had a series of positive supervisors, all women.

R: Interesting.

S2: When I got into the field almost every director that I worked with and every supervisor was a woman and they taught me so very much.

R: That was all the questions that was part of the study. If there is anything else you could think of about Experiential Supervision that could be useful... .

S2: Well just random thoughts, and of course this goes way way back, I think the most positive supervision I said I had been very blessed with was a person who was very comfortable with themselves. Recognize that indeed maybe that the supervisee would go way beyond them in practice, in academe. And how nice it is and really have to try and search your soul and say: "Yes I really feel comfortable because part of his growth or part of her growth is because of my supervision. I am just so delighted with where they are now". Its not uncommon for some of my students to come back with a lot more written a lot more even advanced degree than the doctorate, and its been good.

R: And you feel good about that it sounds like.

S2: Oh yes, I think you have to be a pretty mature individual. Again you are not only there to share what is you learned but to elicit that kind of very positive response and you know that the potential is in that individual.
Interview

Supervisor #3

Interview Date: January 27, 1995

Supervisor #3 credentials/academics include: M.S., Counseling

Certifications include: Approved Supervisor AAMFT

Years Counseling: 25

Years Supervising: 20

Interview

R: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

S3: Well, I suppose it comes from my interest in peoples growth, and that all the people I supervise are not going to be master family therapists. But I feel that we become better therapists by dealing with our own personal issues and we also become better persons by going into this field if we let it affect us. So I work very much of the "person of the therapist" and giving them opportunity to find more out about their own unconscious material through the work they do. So that in a way the therapy work they do is an opportunity to get in touch with their own unconscious process. In that sense it is actually therapy. It's therapy on the therapist.

R: Do you think that makes them more aware of their personal projections?

S3: Oh sure. At least that's what the purpose of supervision is in my opinion.

R: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

S3: I really can't imagine doing any unexperiential supervision. To me the very nature of supervision in an
experience of self. Experiencing the self as a therapist and how it impinges on the client. To me the supervision that I do is supervision of the relationship between the therapist and the client; as well as the supervision of the relationship of the therapist to their own unconscious material or past family material. So I keep an eye, experientially, both on those two relationships: the relationship of the therapist to themselves and the relationship to the client and the interaction between them.

R: Great. What were some of the goals, or was that the goal: looking at the two relationships.

S3: Yes. Part of it is that when people go into supervision they frequently bring a familiar impasse. One that they get into over and over again. Similar to what clients do. Therapists have patterns that stunt them, just as families or couples get into dysfunctional patterns or patterns that operate against successful relationship. So that's part of the focus, to find out what pattern keep hooking the therapist. Maybe it's the pattern of getting over aligned; if they themselves are carrying issues with their own parents for example then they may very much always identify, at least in family work, with the child and the child is often the identified patient. They may stumble time and time again over aligning with the child and not being able to connect with the parents and the parents perspective.

R: And the supervision is helping them become more aware of that...

S3: The supervision I do is not just bringing that to consciousness, sometimes it's just a matter of the therapist discovering: "Oh my gosh". But the impasse is not always resolved by just conscious discovery. Sometimes that allows the therapist to go back into session and connect in a new way with the parents. But if the therapists unresolved issues with their own parents are too big, too intense the problem isn't resolved just by having noticed that: "this happens to me". So in that case I might even go a further step and say: "Would you be willing to do some work with your parents. Would you be willing to come in", so that I could essentially help them take a more adult posture with their parents rather than an upset child. Because it's that upset child that keeps connecting with other upset children and keeps them locked. So depending how I'm trenched and how deep the issues are with their parent, I may then go a step further and say I want to do therapy on you and your parents so that you can come back as a therapist and feel more adult, and have more power to move in the families you treat, and align with the child sometimes when it's appropriate equally be able to see something like parental abuse that at home this child might really be abusing the
parent, and be able to move back and forth and not blind-sided by their own stuff as we say.

R: Sounds wonderful. What are some of the activities that you include in Experiential Supervision?

S3: Well depending on the setting the activities vary. Sometimes people bring in video tapes of their work so that I can actually observe them directly, which is the best form probably even better that being present. Sometimes I do live supervision like with the students in a course, where I am right there and will move when I see something needs to change or the therapist needs help to discover something. That is a very hands on activity where I am right there to intervene in a very personal, physical way with the situation. One step removed would be for them to bring video tapes of their work for me to work with them. Sometimes audio tapes and sometimes now I can listen to a therapist even begin to present the material of their case and I don't need to see it all I can tell pretty much where they're stuck. The more you do this over many years the faster you can help the therapist get to their own issue, which is always what is being looked for. Supervision to me is not simply discussing the case and finding a new intervention. That's what supervision is at its most surface level. I think at its deepest level helping the therapist see why they aren't finding the tools to move, what is their block that keeps them impeded from discovering a way to work with this client. But unfortunately, I think a lot of supervision can just be on that "how to do it" level: "What should I do now? What should I do now?" and never get at why is your creativity blocked? and that has to do more with blockages, unconscious blockages.

R: Within the therapist themselves.

S3: Yes.

R: Do you do any role playing?

S3: Oh yes. Role play sure we have them do that. Have them practice, actually practice coming through with a client in a new way. Like: "The reason that your not getting anywhere is that your afraid to confront this client in a strong enough way that really makes it true, you're just being Mrs. Pleasantry". So I may have the therapist use somebody else in the group supervision to speak her peace to, or rehearsal, just as you would with a client if you were wanting them to come across with more of a voice of integrity.

R: You get to practice it beforehand, before going in.
S3: Right. I'm not thinking of any other activities or tools right now. Over the years I offer my therapists my actual sitting in on difficult cases. I come in as a kind of co-therapist consultant which is a different kind of activity, to really be there. I think that's why, I don't know what you mean exactly by experiential, but for me it means being right there in the experience with the therapist. I can't imagine any supervision that isn't experiential. Supervision is an experience, but I guess some don't focus so much on the experience of the therapist or the "person of the therapist".

R: Right. And that's something you feel is important in your supervision?

S3: It is. I've had both but I was primarily supervised in what I would call an unexperiential program.

R: What was that like?

S3: It was much more technical. The tools of how to assess a family, and intervene, and to simply learn the basics of how to go in. It had nothing to do with uncovering any material of my own personhood. Very skill focused. That was very valuable but I think both are needed. I try to combine both.

R: Great.

S3: That was experiential in the sense that we had to directly go in and . . .

R: And do it . . .

S3: And do it.

R: Exactly. But it was more skill focused rather than person focused.

S3: Yes. Like a particular student is not liking that experiential activity (in a class being taught). Experiential means having experience with someone not way back removed like: "I'll talk to you about what I did". To me experiential means experiencing it, being there. And for some people that's very hard.

R: That is sometimes difficult.

S3: Yes, the experience of having anyone be there.

R: But maybe necessary?

S3: I happen to think so.
R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S3: Well, empowerment is obviously a goal. Empowering a therapist to use their own ingenuity and creativity.

R: Creating some independence?

S3: Yes, and if they do, do some work with their own families often -- speeding up their own developmental progress that might take a lot of years. I think that if one goes into Experiential Supervision you do resolve many of your own issues faster than if you wait for life to boot you into place. And that's the beauty of this profession. That we, through our work if we use is and let it impact us, it's rare that any other work, our work demands our personal growth. Now people can go into this field and stay way back from it, but if people are open to being affected by the process of therapy and letting it alter them, gee they can make all kinds of changes. If they don't, they don't last very long. I think that...

R: They drop out?

S3: They drop out. They get bored. They're not interested in what they are receiving and growing and learning and they become dead and routinized.

R: So this is really important?

S3: Well I know many psychologists that can, many people that regardless of their degree, just don't let it touch them. They're in it to help others and they do not even see the interactive growth process for themselves. I think that's what causes burnout. If they last they go dead, and there are a lot of dead therapists out there.

R: Do you think that increased self-confidence would be something that the therapists would gain from the supervision process?

S3: Hopefully, because this can be a lonely profession. The supervision process offers a connection, a kind of cuddle group, where you can go with your failures and also hopefully the supervision keeps an equal eye to your strengths and successes. If it doesn't, if you just keep looking at where the therapist is weak, just like if you look at a client that way all the time, then it's not growthful and not a self-confidence builder and then the therapist has to escape supervision just as a client would have to escape therapy to gain their own integrity.

R: So it also helps the therapist look at their own strengths, what they are doing right?
S3: That's my focus. More than what you are not doing. Because we are all experts on what you are doing badly. And that's congruent with the kind of therapy I do, I'm always looking for what will work not what's not working.

R: So the kind of supervision you get is the kind of therapy you do, or the kind of supervision you give is the kind of therapy you do?

S3: Yes, they are not significantly different. I'm doing therapy on the supervisee and their relationship to their family of origin or the family they are working with. Like flip-flops.

R: To make them more effective?

S3: Yes.

R: How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

S3: Well the people that come to me like it very much. I think that the therapists are drawn into their own personal growth. If they're not they go to a much more theoretical supervisor which is -- everybody is different and everyone needs to choose a supervisor that fits their style. I don't say that I don't have a theory, a strong theory, I teach it. But I draw it out of the experience. That's why I think I'm an experiential therapist. Rather than having the theory lead, I extract from their experience: "Well then what's your theory? . . . Does this work for you"? I help them build their theory on the basis of their experience, rather than: "Now here's a theory, and we're going to think about it, and I'm going to each you about it, and your job is to go out and implement it". It isn't the person that I am. I am experiential in my work, but those who are much more interested in thinking theory, doing much more rational type of interventions, then they need that type of supervisor. Fortunately there are a lot of different kinds around. So if I see that people are looking for that, and at different times in your growth you need different approaches probably. But see I tend to draw people to work with me in therapy who want to be with me, and I draw those kinds of people into supervision. So my success rate is high because the people who are working with me choose.

R: And they are eager about it, it sounds like?

S3: Yes.

R: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum internship setting or already a professional in the field?
S3: Not too much.

R: How would they if they.

S3: I just make more assumptions about their advanced level of skill. I make more leeway, just as I would if I were talking to a couple who were married for 40 years verses a premarital couple that came to see me. I would see that they would have as much experience. I wouldn't be expecting them to bring 20 years of experience, but I don't really relate or interact experientially that much different. It's more a matter of. . . This is a young therapist whose not so sophisticated yet and also hasn't had some of the life experience. And so what would be different would be that I would encourage that therapist to work within the range of their experience. Not that some people can't do work, for example if you haven't had a family of your own doesn't mean you can't do some work with a family -- but it is more stressful. So I tend to encourage people to work at the level of their own developmental speed. Like if they are single, maybe they're interested in coupling. So to see some couples is a way they can learn and also learn about themselves and "am I ready to do this". Because I always know that therapists are Peeping Tom's and we're wanting to peep into some experience with other folks that's going to help us in our lives. If you tackle at too young an age really complex things and feel like the family would say "who are you to think you can help us honey with something and you're a babe in the woods". That is more difficult and more stressful on the therapist so I would encourage them to work more in tune with their developmental level. Help women who are at your developmental stage with a little push into your next stage, but not like try and be an expert on what happens with parents and kids and I never had one. That's a set up for a therapist to burnout. So as I think about it, I would encourage their focus in their career in a different way depending on whether they are new born therapists or been around the bend awhile. And depending on their age, not just whether their new as therapists but how much life experience have they had. And at (institute) I have quite a mix, some of these women have raised families. They have a lot of life experience. And some are young and still very competent. It's still very individual and assessing how much family experience you've had so far helps. And I'm interested in therapists not burning out.

R: That's all the questions that I have for the study, but if you have anything else that you can think of about supervision that might be important. . .

S3: I once gave a presentation in Washington D.C. at the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists. It's called Supervision as Grandparenting and I presented
the hypothesis that I was doing supervision to get ready to be a grandparent. Because supervision is supervising the therapist who symbolically is the parent of the family, the patient is the child; Therapist is parent, supervisor is grandparent. So as a supervisor I have to not be overly or over competent. So competent that I make the therapist like a parent feel their not to be as good a parent the grandparent could be. Grandparents have a very difficult fine line, and what makes grandparents attractive is when they actually believe in the competency of the parent and assist in that competency rather than like: "Well let me take over the kid you know you guys are really messing it up, Now if I had your family I would really do it right". You know. And so supervision is a little bit like grandparenting in that way.

R: Kind of like a healthy family?

S3: Yes, but to keep the focus on increasing the competency of the therapist. If the focus is always on talking about the child or the patient then the supervisor can come across like: "Well let me tell you what I would do in the situation". The effect is that the therapist wilts and too much of that is like having a real competent grandmother around who always knows what to do with the child problem; rather than saying: "Now I think your going to come up with something creative and you're going to figure out something to solve that". So I see a little similarity in terms of I work from a family model, so I do think of supervision as having something to do with -- like good grandparenting.
Interview

Supervisor #4

Interview Date: January 27, 1995

Supervisors credentials/academics include: Ph.D.

Certifications include: Arizona Psychological Association member, American Suicidology Association member, Associate Member AAMFT

Years Counseling: 14

Years Supervising: 5

Interview

R: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

S4: Well the first reason I decided to include Experiential Supervision was because it was the type of supervision I had, and that's what made me a good therapist. Because all of the clinical information in the world, or didactic, or sitting and talking to somebody about the case, all that was useful. But when I got into the experiential stuff where I role played or I worked on family of origin stuff then it became real, real powerful. So that's the type of supervision I had and that's the type I do. And it's the type that I feel is most useful, everyone should have some of it. It helps the therapist experience and have some experiential knowledge about what's going on. I believe very much in experiential knowledge or experiential embodied knowledge that the body learns by different feelings. Therefore identity and those types of issues are easier to translate. If I've been there, if I've played the role of my client, then it's easier for me to identify with my client than if I just talk about it with you.

R: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?
S4: What Carl Whitaker would say, and what I like, is that the first goal is for me to have fun and for me to grow. So that would be the number one goal. The second goal is to help the therapist grow experientially and to become a better attuned therapist. So personal growth.

R: What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

S4: We do family of origin work. So every supervisee has to do a genogram with me, and then I use that as a background piece so when they are processing a case then I might ask them questions: "How is that client like your mother? How is that client like your father? What sibling in your family is that client". . . you know. . . . whose message they're processing as saying: "This client just makes me feel inept. Whose message is that. Who is that client most like".

R: So it's making them more aware of their personal unconscious?

S4: Right.

R: And their family of origin?

S4: Right.

R: So they are more effective?

S4: That's right. So they are more effective. And then we do a lot of role playing. And between the role playing and the personalized questions that get them in touch with their feelings that's about all that's needed in terms of technique.

R: Do you ever do any video taping or anything like that, Audio?

S4: I'm not set up for that. I get bored listening to audio tapes so I don't ask my therapists to do it. We're not set up to do any videoing, if we were I would.

R: So mainly role playing right now and having them do their genograms and their own family history.

S4: Right.

R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S4: Well I believe as therapists we are always working on our own stuff, and that if we don't always work on our own
stuff it's going to come up to hurt us in our professional relationships. Because if we're not working we're going to transfer, we're going to have fuzzy boundaries, we're going to do things that are not appropriate. If we are always working our stuff with a supervisor, with a therapist, then we keep ourselves pretty clean. So that's one of the goals. I think that the second thing is that the therapist gets a lot of individualized therapy just as secondary gain processing their cases in this way.

R: Do you think that it increases their awareness of their own personal projections?
S4: Yes, increases their awareness of what they are doing.
R: And self-confidence?
S4: And self-confidence and the way they look at a case. Because we get real tunnel vision. We begin to look at a case, especially in our field, to look at a case from a real diagnostic viewpoint which is very limited or myopic. And when they begin to play that role it expands the perimeters of the case.

R: Is it one of the personal growth goals to have the trainees become more independent?
S4: More independent, more autonomous. More able to trust their gut.
R: How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?
S4: Well most of them enjoy it. It's hard at first because it's embarrassing and it brings up their issues. The first time they cry in supervision they're feeling a little inept and like a client. We go through those types of things with them but once we break through that type of resistance and that embarrassment then they love it.
R: So there is a little bit a anxiety and embarrassment at first and then it smooths out.
S4: Yes, and then they love it and they really enjoy it. It really helps them see their client from a different angle.
R: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?
S4: Not really. I've had students and I've had people that have been in the field for several years that chose to do supervision and the experience is pretty much the same. And
the goals don't seem to be any different. The student might get a little more self-confidence and certainly if they haven't passed my way as an instructor they don't know my model, then they get a whole lot of experience a whole lot of stuff that they don't get anywhere else.

R: Because it's newer for them it might be a little more in depth for them?

S4: Right. A little more in depth and academically and personally challenging.

R: That's all of my questions, but if you have anything more about Experiential Supervision that I should know or that you can think of that would be important that would be great.

S4: I think the issue that isn't easily talked about is the issue of trust. I think that it is important that the supervisor and the supervisee have a real bond of trust so that they feel that they can bring up any case and not have me jumping up and down and reacting to them. So regardless of what their issues are, regardless of who they are working with, regardless of what personal issues are coming up for them with a client, they need to have the freedom and the trust to know that what goes on in supervision is just as confidential as what goes on in client-therapist relationships. So trust is a big issue.

R: So it's like the same thing as building the trust in a client-therapist relationship because the same thing goes on?

S4: Right. So they can prevent a lot of pain if they are having a lot of emotional reactions or attachments with their clients. So they have a safe place to talk it out. And they can talk it out and it doesn't have to take place.

R: Are you doing groups?

S4: I do group supervision, that's what I do.

R: How many do you usually have in a group?

S4: Four

R: That way they get that team stuff.

S4: They learn how to act as a team and there is some interaction between them so if I'm processing with a particular supervisee and another one throws in some academic knowledge, usually that's good but sometimes that breaks the process and so some confrontation has to go on about what was uncomfortable about that deep level of
feeling that you needed to take it back to your head. So it gives some group dynamic stuff.

R: Then they can sometimes create their own family of origin stuff.

S4: That's right. I'm sure that it happens.
Interview

Supervisor #5

Interview Date:  February 9, 1995

Supervisor #5 credentials/academics include: M.A.; Marriage and Family Therapy

Certifications include: MFCC in CA current and active; CMFT in AZ; AAMFT Clinical Member; CAMFT (California Association of Marr. and Fam. Therapists) Clinical Member

Years Counseling:  10

Years Supervising:  5

Interview

R: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

S5: I think experiential therapy is a natural progression for the therapist. It's not something that you start out with right out of school, it's something that evolves for the therapist. It's a part of who the therapist is. I believe that sometimes there's a real discomfort with new interns about different tasks, or different methods or different models that they are suppose to use and they lose sight of the relationship itself. Part of experiential therapy is the relationship. Part of supervision is the relationship. It just seems, for me, that it's just a natural part of learning. And it's a part of sharing.

R: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

S5: I think to encourage the intern or the therapist to really get in touch with who they are in the session, so that they become a therapeutic tool not just an intervention that they come up with from Satir, or Whitaker, or Aaron Beck or whatever. So that they themselves become the intervention.
R: So it becomes unique to them?

S5: Right.

R: What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

S5: The very same thing that you would do in experiential therapy. (i.e.) "What's going on with you right now?" or I might use myself and say: "You know what I'm really sensing is this, is that possible?" and use myself as the model.

R: So it's more like a therapeutic relationship sometimes.

S5: If that's what's called for. I think supervision is therapy in many ways because what we do or who we are is going to effect how we treat the client, how we are in session, how we are on the phone.

R: Do you do any role play or things like that with your supervisees?

S5: If it's called for. I might have them play the client or have them play somebody in their family that reminds them of the client.

R: So you do family of origin stuff.

S5: A lot of that. A lot of systems.

R: To help stop any blockages. . .

S5: Or countertransferences, a lot of countertransference.

R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S5: Okay you're asking what the personal growth elements are.

R: Yes.

S5: I think certainly one would be building self-confidence in terms of avoiding self-doubts in the therapy session. I think sometimes self-doubts can take over. If your thinking in an experiential mode you can use that to carry back into what's going on. You can use it yourself as the therapist. You can use it then to bring to the surface whatever is going on because whatever that trigger is is important. Instead of using self-doubt, to replace it. So I think a lot of reframing can take place. Part of experiential therapy or supervision and that reframing then is an
emphasis for growth. So that's certainly one. Another one is just being comfortable with who you are, not feeling like you have to be somebody you've seen on a video who's a master therapist.

R: Sometimes that happens in the beginning.

S5: Well yes, and that's what I was saying before. I'm going on my own experience to. I think that certainly when I came out of school, and I came from a very systems oriented program with a lot of Satir -- we did a lot of sculpting and that kind of stuff, and that doesn't always fit the situation. It may be experiential but if you're not comfortable with it then the client is not going to be comfortable with it. So whole idea is to be comfortable.

R: You have to find a level of comfort or therapy stops?

S5: Yes, and then we become the resistance in therapy. I think there's a level of comfort that comes just by being ourselves.

R: So comfort with yourself, self-confidence, and.

S5: I think humor is growth producing too. There's a lot of humor in the absurd.

R: If applied during the right times it can be useful.

S5: Right. It can be disarming. It can be encouraging. It can be gently prodding or confronting. In supervision that can be growth producing as well as in the therapeutic session.

R: Is it one of your goals to have more the trainees be more independent?

S5: Oh yes!

R: You don't want them to be dependent upon you.

S5: No I don't need that. No, No.

R: And that may go more along with being comfortable with themselves to make sure that they feel comfortable with.

S5: Right. If they are feeling like. . . .umm. . . If they are saying something else that no one else is saying, then my encouragement is to figure out what that's all about.

R: Such as if they are saying something in the supervision process that. . . ?
S5: Like for example lets we're going over a case and I may not see it the same way. I'm not going to discount that. I'm going to ask them to explain it to me because whatever it is that they are seeing is based on their experience even if its not on mine. And their experience may be different than mine, so my interpretation may not be appropriate and theirs might be. And that's okay.

R: So you would just check into seeing how they're coming up with that hypothesis and...

S5: Yes. And what am I missing that they've got or...

R: You might learn some too...

S5: I think it has to go both ways. Gosh do we ever stop learning? Isn't that the whole idea.

R: So we've identified independence...

S5: Reframing self-doubt.

R: Building self-confidence...

S5: I think just coming to terms with the sense of self and letting that be okay, rather than wearing the facade or the mask that we've all been taught to do.

R: Do you think that becoming aware of family of origin issues...

S5: Oh I guess that I just sort of take that for granted that, that happens. Starting with your genogram and just move on through it.

R: So that would be one of your activities also, you use a genogram?

S5: In therapy I do.

R: In supervision too, or?

S5: I'll have them do that. Sometimes doing genograms is a trick especially if you have a highly dysfunctional family with all kinds of marriages and divorces. But if you can, over time, learn how to track a lot of that then you've got a picture. You've got a visual component to work off of to look for the illnesses, to look for the addictions, look for the losses, to look for the secrets. It's kind of your blueprint to add to it.

R: And sometimes that's useful with the supervisees also?
S5: Yes, because if I can see the genogram then I can also start asking questions that maybe they haven't asked. Or see a pattern that they haven't seen only because I've seen it before. It's not part of their experience.

R: Any other personal growth elements that you can think of? We've already talked about countertransference and increasing awareness of personal projections.

S5: Yes, that's a really big one. Especially if the therapist is coming from a background of abuse and they are dealing with clients who are abused. You have to keep your boundaries really really clean. And that can sometimes get a little messy. Then all the therapist's stuff starts surfacing. Then you have to do a tune-up in order to keep them grounded and on track.

R: And so they can do that in the supervision process rather than releasing it in the therapy process.

S5: Right. Maintaining appropriate boundaries.

R: How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

S5: I think initially there is some fear, because in some ways it is taking away a coping mechanism of wearing that mask, or being "the professional", or hiding behind the role. For a lot of people there is a lot of comfort in that. So there is a lot of fear when that starts to erode and they have to replace it with who they really are. You know, just like we do with our clients. Sometimes you'll get a lot of resistance there.

R: And so they have some anxiety also, the supervisee is like a client.

S5: Yes. You try and move them up the ladder from an emotional self, that's sort of responding or reacting, to a part of them that's wiser that can kind of step back and take a look at what's going on and maybe acknowledge it. (i.e.) "ya, maybe I am doing that" and own it. I think if you can get to that place then the supervisor has really done a good job for that experiential piece of looking for the wise self.

R: So it sounds like at first that they have fear and anxiety about disclosing themselves and discovering themselves.

S5: Yes. It's perfectly okay to make the client do that (sarcasm).

R: But not okay for you (laugh).
S5: Right.

R: And then they get more comfortable as they go along.

S5: Yes, and as they get more comfortable then their style really starts to change so they don't keep going back to what they learned they move ahead with what they know, using that wisdom.

R: And that experiential part of them that you were talking about.

S5: Yes.

R: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?

S5: You mean based on their level of experience?

R: Yes.

S5: Yes, I think there probably is some difference based on the stages of development that we all go through. It would be just like a client. You need to take them from where they are at and move them to where they want to go. I think it's pretty unfair to come in with an intern and have an expectation that they are going to completely understand systems concepts and know different kinds of interventions that work with different kinds of situations. It's possible they might if they've had some experience. But for me to have that expectation would be pretty unfair and judgmental. Then I could easily become the critical parent which is not exactly therapeutic. I think that everybody has their own style. Certainly there are some supervisors that believe that confrontation and conflict is a way to learn. And that may be true and it may work well for them. I prefer to do things a little differently.

R: And rather than conflict and confrontation...

S5: I would rather provide sort of a questioning and a strengthening than a real negative critical attitude. And I think the reason that I say that is that I'm aware that I can do that. So it's really my responsibility to catch myself because I don't think that's real helpful. I'm thinking of my own supervision before I was licensed in California. I had pretty crappy supervision.

R: Sometimes we get that.

S5: And you know, the supervision was: "Well tell me what's going on. Okay, I'll see you next week". (laugh)
R: Gave you little insight?

S5: No.

R: So it was hard?

S5: It was staffing at the most, but it certainly wasn't supervision.

R: So you decided to make a difference?

S5: I just felt like we deserve more than that. You know it was a pretty lame excuse for supervision.

R: And sometimes it gets pretty scary out there when we're new and we aren't sure what to do next.

S5: Yes.

R: So the activities do differ somewhat. You take them from where they are.

S5: Just like you would a client.

R: That's all the questions for the study, but if you have any other ideas about Experiential Supervision that you would like to share please do.

S5: Well it's interesting. Since you told me that you wanted to have this meeting I've really tried to evaluate my own style and that in and of itself has been growth producing for me.

R: Well good.

S5: Because I think sometimes we take it for granted that what we do is because we do it, without a rationalization or a justification for it. I'm sure that my supervisors felt that what they did was just perfectly okay based on what they did and what they do without being challenged. And I guess my thinking over the last few weeks as I've been evaluating my style, not only in supervision but in therapy to, is what I've noticed is sort of the evolution of my own style. Thinking back to when I first started with my first family thinking: "oh my gosh" (laugh).

R: You can see your growth?

S5: Yes, I can see the changes of the self and the level of comfort. I think probably the reason I choose to function this way is because with the level of comfort, at least for me, then the client has a sense of comfort and safety. It's a lot easier to get inside and do the work when they feel
that comfort. I can honestly say that I did not feel safe with my first case. (laugh)

R: I think that may be true for most of us.

S5: And I'm sure they had a sense of awkwardness too.

R: They stayed with you a long time (from early conversation) so there must have been something there.

S5: They did, and I suspect that was the relationship.

R: That's really important because you mentioned that before, the relationship.

S5: Yes. Because if those skills can be mastered in the session then the client can take it out and do it all over again. They can replicate it.

R: The same in supervision?

S5: Yes.

R: Well I'm glad that it helped you evaluate yourself.

S5: I liked the opportunity.
Interview

Supervisor #6

Interview Date: February 10, 1995

Supervisor #6 Credentials/Academics include: M.C.; Counseling

Certifications include: Approved Supervisor AAMFT; AAMFT Clinical Member; Certified Marriage and Family Therapist

Years Counseling: Over 20

Years Supervising: Over 10

Interview

R: Why did you decide to include Experiential Supervision in your practice?

S6: I included it because I think that experientially is one of the ways that people learn. It's one of the better ways that people learn. If we don't experience something I don't think we can touch it.

R: Did you have that kind of supervision yourself?

S6: Yes. We would set up situations, scenarios, family scenarios, and role play the different parts, role playing different family members and the therapist, and the supervisor would also.

R: So it was the kind of supervision you got and you kind of got interested in it?

S6: Yes.

R: What do you feel your goals are with Experiential Supervision?

S6: The goals are to help the trainees, the supervisees, to look at the family and look at what it is they are doing from a different perspective. We tend to look at things
through our own glasses so to speak, and if we can put on somebody else's glasses and ummm. . .

R: Get new ideas?

S6: Yes.

R: So to help them look at things differently and get a new perspective and give them something different in the therapy and not get stuck?

S6: Yes, and to get unstuck. Yes, different ideas and different perspectives to be able to be more empathetic with your client.

R: What are some of the activities that. . .

S6: That's funny. I realize that I wish I were answering like something on a page. I'm a person of very few words and I'm very quiet. So in my supervision the supervisees do most of the talking. It's more of a guiding that I do. I'm not really directive or interventional. I'm more reflect the process the supervisee's going through.

R: You reflect more about what the supervisees are doing, or saying, or feeling?

S6: What it is that they bring. And asking questions about their own process.

R: That would be like a client therapist relationship also where the client comes in and processes. . .?

S6: Yes, I would imaging however one is as a supervisor one also is as a therapist again I'm not really directive. I don't give people homework and stuff like that.

R: Well that might of answered part of the next question. What are some of the activities you include in Experiential Supervision?

S6: There wouldn't be any specific activities that I would assign. Unless there might be some reading. If I notice that there is an area that is lacking. Like say we are talking about, and they are dealing with an ethnic family, a Spanish family, and they haven't done much reading or been educated in cultural differences. . .

R: You said earlier that you role played in the supervision you got, do you role play in the supervision your doing now?

S6: I would but it would be rare. I think that if someone is really stuck and that I couldn't figure out another way
just through asking questions to get to it, then I think that would be something that I would use. That we would play the different parts.

R: But usually you have a lot of success with. . .

S6: Just the questions.

R: Do you talk a lot about the therapists feelings and stuff like that where they might be getting stuck?

S6: Yes. And what might be going on with the therapist. Each supervisee gives me a genogram, and talks, in the first session, talks about what their strengths and weaknesses are. And where they see themselves getting stuck, where the blocks are, what particular family of origin issues there are that might get into their way. And it gives you a base to start from. And that, you might say, is experiential.

R: Has to do with their experience growing up. . .

S6: Yes.

R: Are there any other activities you can think of off hand?

S6: No.

R: What do you feel the personal growth elements derived from Experiential Supervision are?

S6: I think that we are always growing and learning in every situation that we are in. Are you talking about them personally, personal growth verses professional growth?

R: Yes, personal growth.

S6: Each supervisee that I have had has talked about how their life is different because of the therapy and the supervision that they are doing. Exactly how it gets to be different I don't know, other than the process of looking at families systemically that, that gets carried over into looking at one's own family and one's personal self and their position in the family systemically also.

R: Have you noticed that they've become more aware of their own projections, countertransferences, because of that?

S6: More aware of biases. More aware, I wouldn't use the word transference, but more aware of. . .as I said before that they look through the world through their own particular glasses. And that we really have to be able to change glasses.
R: What about, as you've worked with them, have you noticed any increase in their self-confidence?

S6: Right. That's a good point. As they gain, over the period of supervision, more confidence and being able to go in and talk with the family without losing their... sweating buckets (laugh). Yes, they have more confidence in all areas of their lives.

R: Is it one of your goals to create more independence in the trainees.

S6: Always! That's one of the reasons why I am not real directive and not real suggestive, because I believe that my role is one of as a guide and that it's really the work that the person (supervisee) is doing and I'm there to make sure that nobody is going to fall off into the Grand Canyon accidentally.

R: So they are kind of independent from the very beginning.

S6: Yes.

R: And they just know that you are there as a resource.

S6: Yes. Boy you're getting to find out about all kinds of different supervision. What a neat thing!

R: It's been a wonderful experience. How do you see the counselor trainees responding to the Experiential Supervision and personal growth?

S6: As I was coming over here I was thinking. The students that I have had have all been people in their late 40's, almost all. I have this one person who graduated with a Ph.D. from a Marriage and Family program and one other young woman that had pretty good training. So most people that I have supervised have been experienced, have been older. So I'm not familiar supervising someone right out of school, a young person. And I think that makes a difference. What was the question that you asked?

R: How they were responding to the supervision... .

S6: Their level of confidence is greater because they have already been working in the field. The supervision, the most of it that I have done, is supervision of supervisors who are wanting to be approved in the AAMFT. So they're already supervisors themselves.

R: So they are pretty aware already of their style, technique, and... .
S6: Yes, it's not somebody that's just learning what it's all about. So maybe that's a different perspective.

R: So when they first start are they nervous, or any uncomfortable. . . .

S6: The one person who is really pretty young, who is just starting out, is really nervous. Every one else had a degree of confidence to begin with.

R: So it sounds like they must enjoy supervision?

S6: Yes. There is still a growth that happens there. I think just because when you go in and talk about a case with someone you learn. And we can't help but to learn about ourselves, and how we look at life, and how we look at people, and what we think about, and how we feel about families. And I think the thing about therapy, I think we have to watch that supervisors are not therapists. Fortunately it's not a situation that I have run into of needing to tell somebody like: "I really think that you need to go in and talk to somebody else". They have mostly been things that we can see that momentarily -- because they are the ones who are doing the supervision and the therapy that the other ones who kind of can't see the connection to the family.

R: So it is important to know that supervision is not therapy and some of the same benefits regarding personal growth may still occur?

S6: Yes.

R: The last question is: Do the activities of Experiential Supervision differ when the counselor trainees are in a practicum or internship setting or already a professional in the field?

S6: Yes. It does make a difference.

R: What do you think you might do differently if you were working with a student verses a professional in the field?

S6: Well given my own experience as a student, I think that there would have to be more, perhaps more directive. . . . More helping that student learn what their strengths and weaknesses are, rather than having somebody come to me and tell me what they are. Even though, I think, through our training we do get some of that. As you actually begin to work you find out more.

R: So there would be more of a focus on having them recognize their strengths and their weaknesses?
S6: Yes. And their style, and really learning who it is they are in that setting. And why, rather than helping somebody -- most of my experience has been helping people who already knows who they are in that setting -- and the urge to having to jump through hoops. They got credentials

R: In what ways would it be the same?

S6: It's supportive, it's encouraging kind of environment. We get stuck, no matter how much experience we have we always get stuck. And wonder what somebody else's opinion would be, what somebody else's different ideas. . . maybe there's more creativity with the, then again there's another difference rather than similarity. When somebody already knows their style your really looking at so many more ways of doing things rather than when somebody is still trying to find that style. The focus is different. But you're asking how it would be the same. . . I think that in the support, and the encouragement, and acknowledgement of where each supervisee is at where ever they are

R: You take them from where they are at?

S6: Yes.

R: Great. That's all the questions that I have for the study, but if you have anything else that you might think is important about supervision that you would like to share, then please do.

S6: I think so much is helping the supervisees know themselves, know their own style rather than be a copy of the supervisor. In essence it's a whole personal growth event.

R: Do you thin it reflects also in their life, not only in their profession, but in every area?

S6: I don't think it cannot.

R: Great. Any other ideas.

S6: It's providing a safe environment to talk about the kind of work their doing. I think that we all feel, or many of us feel, we don't want to be criticized. . . We don't want to do dumb things. So I think that the environment is important. A safe place.

R: Somebody said, through the process of this, that it provides a sort of cuddle group. That we can go in, and whatever we say is going to be okay, and that we've all made the same mistakes and if not we can learn from them. And
this profession might need a cuddle group because it can get kind of lonely. Do you think so?

S6: Yes. I think so. I've done group supervision myself, been supervised. That was a great experience. I haven't supervised a group myself. But yes the support we can give each other. And again there you have a group of four or five supervisees and a supervisor, there is that many more pairs of eyes looking at the same situation. And I think that, that's helpful because then we can see that there isn't just one right way to do something, but how many ways there really are.

R: I think that's one of the things that often happens with new counselors is that we think that we might have to do it one way.

S6: Yes, the right way. "What is it that I'm suppose to do here"?

R: or "What questions am I suppose to ask".

S6: rather than there could be so many....