Supervision of Forensic Interviewers

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The NCAC models, promotes, and delivers excellence in child abuse response and prevention through service, education, and leadership.
Why Peer Review and Supervision?

NCA Accreditation standards for forensic interviewers

“Peer review is a compliment not a substitution for supervision, case review, and case planning.”

- Revised Standards for Accredited Members, Effective-2017
Why Peer Review and Supervision

- Forensic interviewing: complex, difficult to acquire skill
- Best practices often inadequately understood, reinforced
- Training programs provide foundational knowledge (science)
- Utilization skills (art) develop best outside formal training
Why Peer Review and Supervision?

- Formal training does not eliminate inappropriate questioning
- Benefits of formal training short-lived without practice
- Continued monitoring yields improvements over time
- Utilization skills develop best outside formal training
- New interviewers don’t know what they don’t know
- Proactive interference
Supervisor’s Multiple Roles

Supervisee
- Interpret standards
- Provide encouragement, direction
- Facilitate skill, knowledge development
- Ongoing evaluation

Child/Investigative team
- Insure quality services
- Protect interests of child
- Balance team/forensic interviewer needs
- Administrative
Optimal Conditions for Forensic Interviewing Skill Development

- Distribution of practice sessions over time
- Practice opportunities tailored to skill level
- Regular, individualized expert feedback
- Ongoing exposure to “best practice”
Reflective Supervision

“Reflective supervision is the regular collaborative reflection between a service provider and supervisor that builds on the supervisee’s use of his/her own thoughts, feelings, and values within a service encounter. Reflective supervision complements the goals and practices of trauma-informed systems. “

-Van Berckelaer
Reflective Supervision

- Process vs. product
- Strength-based
- Collaborative
- Promotes employee resilience
- Creates safe place for growth
- Consistent with trauma-informed systems
Three Core Components of Reflective Supervision Practice

Knowledge

Skills

Meaning
Knowledge

- Forensic Interviewing is informed by science
- Is ongoing knowledge development part of supervision?
- Does my supervisee have the external information to do his or her job well?
- Does my supervisee have adequate internal awareness of necessary knowledge?
- Is my supervisee comfortable posing questions?
- Does my supervisee feel secure when expressing uncertainty, confusion?
Empirical Knowledge

• Rationale for interview structure
• Expected developmental characteristics, differences
• Question types
• Cultural considerations
• Strategies for overcoming reluctance
• Narrative elements
• Dynamics of child maltreatment, family dysfunction
Self-Knowledge

- Increased awareness of personal forensic interviewing strengths/challenges
- Requires regular review of own recorded forensic interviews
- Reflection: What worked, What would I change?
- How did I feel during this interview?
- Examined emotions provide window to interview behaviors
- Awareness facilitates change
Skills

• When things aren’t working does my supervisee share these struggles so we can develop a plan together?

• Is my supervisee able to match specific interview demands with appropriate questioning skills?

• Is my supervisee able to translate knowledge into effective interviewing skills?
Skills

• Does my supervisee recognize when things aren’t working?
• Is my supervisee able to reflect on what isn’t working?
• Do my supervisee and I collaborate on developing strategies for skill development?
Skill Development

- Obtain assessment of strengths/growth areas
- Use objective tools
- Collaborate on creating goals
- Knowledge/skill components
- Specific, achievable, measurable targets
- Track interviewer’s development
- Regularly review progress
Measureable Targets

- Incorporate 3 rapport/social support strategies
- Increase use of open Wh questions in substantive phase
- Select narrative practice topic from early engagement
- Ask one question at a time
- Begin forensic interview with open prompts
Measureable Targets

• Increase use of open narrative elaboration prompts
• Adhere to interview structure
• Listen to narrative without interruption
• Explain 4 instructions, provide opportunities for practice
• Pose episodically focused questions
Specific Skill Development

- Questioning coding exercises
- Rework questions: closed to open
- Observation of DVD without sound
- Slow motion interviews
- Utilize role play to practice target skills
  - Staged scenarios
  - Paused DVD
  - Allow supervisee to play both roles
Role Playing

“A staged experience around a specific situation which contains 2 or more different viewpoints or perspectives.”

- Make objectives clear
- Break into manageable parts
- Incorporate feedback
Specific Skill Development

Reviews of recorded forensic interviews

• Supervisee specifies feedback desired
• Begin with positive emphasis: “What worked well?”
• Collaborative identification of challenges
• Reflection of thoughts, feelings
• Stop/start DVD at intervals, strategize next questions, steps
• Supervisor/other participants provide feedback
Effective Feedback

- Specific
- Measured
- Aligned with learning objectives
- Relevant
- To the point
Active Learning

- Effective instructional strategy for adult learners
- Helpful for developing concepts, new applications
- Engages different portions of brain
- Provides for choice, actions
- Allows for transfer of knowledge
- Structured activity completes learning cycle
Stages of Learning

- Dependent----self direction
- Developmental process
- Learners progress at different rates
- Ideally cooperative process between trainer/learner
- Prior experience may facilitate/inhibit
Deep Learning

Transformative comprehension comes through a sequence of:

Experience
Reflection
Abstraction
Active testing
Meaning

• Does supervision bring meaning to my supervisee’s work by building competence and confidence?

• Is supervision a place where values and beliefs about our work can be openly discussed?

• Is supervision a safe place for my supervisee to articulate concerns?
Importance of Safety

- Foundational for all trauma informed intervention systems
- Conveys a continuum of support
- Perceived lack of support contributes to burn-out, vicarious trauma, secondary traumatic stress
- Forensic interviewers often feel scrutinized
Indications of “Safe Base”
Supervisee is:

- Open about difficulties
- Reflective in supervision
- Open and honest in supervision
- Willing to learn new things
- Appears able to give candid feedback
- Open to new experiences
Supervision Should Be:

- Balance of knowledge acquisition, specific skill development, evaluation
- Regular
- Strategic, structured
- Reflective
- Collaborative
- A place to grow
Documentation

• Helpful to maintain supervision notebook
• Document processes, don’t identify specific case information
• Instructional focus vs. court preparation
• No routine oversight likely more problematic than Discovery concerns
• Discuss with local Prosecution
Good Supervisors...

“Good supervisors can take you to incredible heights. They help you learn to fly; providing both the wind beneath you and a soft landing for when you fall.”

-Anonymous
Resources


Resources


