Moving Forward Together and Apart:

Developing new Models of Clinical Supervision from Afar

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Check In

• Who is in the room
• Presentation content
• Shared experiences
From the NASW Code of Ethics

3. SOCIAL WORKERS’ ETHICAL RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE SETTINGS

3.01 Supervision and Consultation
(a) Social workers who provide supervision or consultation should have the necessary knowledge and skill to supervise or consult appropriately and should do so only within their areas of knowledge and competence.

3.07 Administration
Social workers who are administrators should take reasonable steps to ensure that adequate agency or organizational resources are available to provide appropriate staff supervision.
Supervision is viewed as the crucible in which providers of all disciplines acquire knowledge and skills. It is the principal bridge between the classroom and the clinic.

Hoge et al 2014
Functions of Social Work Supervision

Administrative
  Evaluative, organizational, disciplinary

Educational
  Didactic, modeling, mastery

Supportive
  Motivation, job commitment, satisfaction
Over the past decade, an increasing number of NCI cancer centers have expanded their presence within their regions through satellite facilities...Overall in the United States, more than 33 million individuals gained potential access to an NCI cancer center facility...

Onega et al 2017
Challenges Facing Social Workers in Satellite Settings

- Professional isolation
- Increased potential for compassion fatigue, burnout
- Limited access to regular supervision
- Lack of connection with “main campus” facility and staff
It is more difficult to develop a trusting relationship when interacting with a telephone voice than in a face-to-face situation.

Wetchler et al 1993
Challenges Facing Remote Supervisors

- Cultivating supervisor/supervisee relationship remotely
- Fostering connection with “the mother ship”
- Professional isolation of their staff
- Satellite services often more limited
- Risk for compassion fatigue and burnout
- Lack of institutional support and training for supervisors
Utilising innovative means to facilitate distance supervision, including videoconferencing, email and teleconference were seen as facilitators [to access to regular supervision]...

Ducat et al 2015
Techniques

• Telephone
• Email
• Web-based meeting
• Skype
• Video conference
Potential Issues

- Potential for interference in work-life balance
- Lack of visual cues may hinder awareness of resistance or other supervisory issues
- Dependent on quality and availability of technology
- Privacy for supervisee and for patient information
- Digital security
One Cancer Center’s Experience

• Regional sites opened with limited services in 1990’s
• Early efforts to add social work early 2000’s
• Part-time staff hired mid-2000’s covered multiple sites
• Reporting lines evolved
• Supervision always a priority
• Current model: all new sites with full-time social worker, established regional team
One Center (cont’d)

Evolution of individual clinical supervision model

- Current department standard:
  - Weekly for first six months
  - Monthly thereafter

- Regional adaptation:
  - Weekly by phone first six months
  - Face-to-face monthly
One Center (cont’d)

Development of a regional social work team
Integrated to department through attendance at regular staff meetings, work on institution-wide committees

- Monthly regional meeting in person
- Monthly conference call, supervisor facilitates
- Monthly peer conference call
- Ongoing emails and phone calls
Implications

- Ongoing advocacy for access to regular supervision
- Increasing need for creativity in developing models of distance supervision
- More research into effectiveness of remote supervision, needs of remote staff
- Growing awareness of needs of off-site staff for professional development and satisfaction
Supervision is multifaceted and fosters building relationships and core competencies, developing clinical judgment, and managing highly distressed patients and families throughout the disease continuum...With projected shortages and difficulties with staff retention, the need to cultivate creative approaches to supervision is necessary in this complex field.

Abraham Kaba and Damaskos 2015