Infusing Postmodernism Into Counseling Supervision: Challenges and Recommendations

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Abstract

In this manuscript, two postmodern approaches to counseling supervision are examined: Narrative supervision and solution-focused supervision. Postmodernism is defined, key themes within the postmodern supervision literature are identified, a brief review and critique of the literature on both supervision approaches is provided, and implications for the practice of supervision and future research/ scholarship areas are discussed.

Keywords

Author's Notes

Similar to the counseling process, the nucleus of individual supervision is the interpersonal alliance (Inman, 2006). As such, many processes associated with counseling are similar to those in the supervisory relationship. This includes the impact of philosophical thought, a discipline that has influenced psychological and counseling theories for decades. For instance, Dopson and Gade (1981) stated that Kierkegaard´s philosophy influenced the counseling approaches of Rollo May as well as Carl Rogers. The artful aspect of effective counseling often is guided by the broad guidelines offered by philosophical views of life and nature. In recent years, postmodern tenets have modified how clinicians and supervisors approach their roles as helper and advisor, respectively. Postmodern counseling approaches such as solution-focused therapy have shifted the attention away from problems. These strengths based methods are now also applied in supervision (Knight, 2008).

Postmodernism is based on the assumption that there is no universal "truth" in the world (Hansen, 2002). The socially formulated discussions in which a person participates leads to his or her unique view of their world (Campbell & Ungar, 2004). Unlike modernists, postmodernists do not place absolute value upon rational, objective, and positivist (i.e., empirical) traditions (Ungar, 2006). There is a focus on meaning-making at the individual level with the assumption that their culture is made up of an infinite variety of equally valid viewpoints of the world. The result is a rejection of the epistemological assumptions of several centuries of positivist inquiry (Hansen, 2002; Rosenau, 1992). Postmodernists contend that reality and truth cannot be measured empirically because they are constantly changing entities constructed by each individual through his/her language and interactions. In addition, postmodernists reason that no individual's perspective is any more truthful than another's, as both are accurate social constructions based on life experiences.

Because the field has not produced indisputable truths based on pure objectivity, counseling methods are fundamentally narrative explanatory structures (Hansen, 2002). Supervisory methods may be viewed similarly (Whiting, 2007). Although some empirical research has been conducted on the topic, the supervisory experience invariably depends on the individual characteristics of both supervisor and supervisee, as well as the unique dynamics created in their developing relationship. In both roles, helping clients or supervisees, to better identify, appreciate, and utilize their skills is a fundamental goal. Indeed, encouragement appears to influence multiple supervision techniques (McCurdy, 2006). Assisting clients or supervisees to reflect upon their acquired and inner wisdom to formulate viable solutions to clinical dilemmas, rather than providing answers, helps them to take ownership of their conclusions and to better recall the insights that led to them. According to Whiting (2007) supervision is complex and involves a multileveled dialogue, and numerous stories, which makes postmodern approaches a good fit for meeting these fundamental supervisory goals. The application of postmodernism in supervision allows supervisees to make their own meaning, while collaborating with the supervisor.

Accepting that each person's realities are uniquely subjective, and equally relevant to others' interpretations of life happenings, is essential to respecting clients' points of view (Taylor & Loewenthal, 2001). Postmodern philosophies emphasize these unique, subjective viewpoints, and thus, are well suited for counselors whose therapeutic interventions adhere to here-and-now dynamics. Due to the ever-evolving happenings of therapeutic and supervisory encounters, counselors and supervisors can benefit from the flexibility and open-mindedness offered by a postmodern approach.

Postmodern Approaches to Supervision

The counseling literature has increasingly focused on graduate supervision (Moss, 2009). As the demands for more trained clinicians and educators increase, so too does the requirement for more advanced training and effective supervisory methods. Indeed, clinical supervision is viewed as one of the most integral components of developing essential counseling skills among counselors-in-training (Hein, Lawson, & Rodriguez, 2011). Traditional models are consistently reviewed for efficiency and effectiveness. By definition, supervision involves a clear power differential between advisor and advisee (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). The supervisor's position, experience, and expertise place her/him in an elevated role. Just as postmodern counselors seek to help clients construct their own answers to life difficulties, thus encouraging ownership of solutions, postmodern supervisors harbor a similar ideal (although this is not exclusive to postmodernism).

Many supervisors take an active role in working with advisees, often asking more directive questions and more readily offering specific advice than they might with a client in a counseling setting (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). The rationale includes the need for novice clinicians to efficiently develop the tools necessary to help clients in very real need. Working with supervisees to effectively construct their professional identity includes balancing flexibility for self-exploration while allowing for more prescriptive instruction should the need arise (see Bernard's [1979] Discrimination Model). Given the evaluative role required of many supervisors, the power differential in supervision can be more pronounced than the model adapted by many postmodern counselors who strive put clients on equal power ground as themselves.

A paradigm shift has been evident in the supervision literature (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Specifically, three themes seem to emerge when examining postmodern supervision approaches. First, there is an increased focus of the importance of language in supervision, a central tenet of the postmodern paradigm (Presbury, Echterling, & McKee, 1999). Second, the value of using strength-based approaches over deficit-based techniques (i.e., highlighting and correcting mistakes) in supervision is receiving more attention (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). This reinforces the postmodern notion that no one perspective is "correct." Finally, more and more authors are arguing for the removal of hierarchy within the supervision relationship (Behan, 2003). Again, this demonstrates a belief that supervisors have no greater access to truth than their supervisees. The emergence of these themes will become clearer as the two postmodern supervision approaches are described.

Clinical Applications of Postmodernism

Clinical approaches (e.g., person-centered, systems) often are applied as a framework for the practice of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). This is especially true within marriage and family counseling supervision, where supervisors often select systems interventions to intentionally match their supervisees' theoretical approaches, in an effort to create isomorphic learning opportunities (Carlson & Lambie, 2012). Additionally, a number of writers have examined the impact of postmodern thought on the counseling profession (Hanson, 2010; Naden, Johns, Ostman, & Mahan, 2004; Xu, 2012). This paradigm shift has prompted a variety of new models and approaches for clinical work (Davidson, 2014). As such, new strategies also are being applied to the process of supervision. Although much of this postmodern supervision has occurred within the field of marriage and family counseling, authors are applying postmodern thought and approaches to individual supervision as well (Lyon, 2006; Ungar, 2006).

Pure postmodern approaches assume that the solutions to supervisees' challenge dwell in part within his or her intuition (McCurdy, 2006). Similar to those clients whose issues may dictate more direct interventions, there are times when prescriptive approaches are vital to a supervisee's development. Intuition, while an invaluable resource to clinical decisions, may not by itself be sufficient to guide novice counselors to effective clinical responses. Expert knowledge and concrete direction are sometimes required. While this is generated through experience and continued study, supervisees need a level of mastery in order to ethically treat their client population. Supervisors must consistently balance the need to directly address potentially harmful levels of therapeutic ignorance with the great benefits of permitting supervisees to engineer their own clinical insights – thereby increasing the likelihood that they will take ownership of, and retain, their acquired knowledge (Whiting, 2007). For faculty and/or field supervisors of master's and doctoral counseling students, as with similar relationships in other professional environments, a balance between traditional supervisory standards and their postmodern counterparts such as Narrative Supervision and Solution-Focused Supervision may be effective (Moss, 2009).

Narrative Supervision

Both narrative therapy and supervision are approaches rooted in the idea that individuals define reality by the stories they live and share with others (DeSocio, 2005; Neimeyer, 1993). Practitioners empower clients and supervisees by emphasizing responsibility for life realities. According to Anderson and Vandehey (2006), narrative therapy "has extended the idea that individuals are authors of their own lives" (p. 171). This approach involves an examination and sometimes creation of stories clients tell themselves and others about who they are and how they interact with others. Counselors try to enter their clients' individualized narrative world and

offer suggestions and/or modifications that may lead to an improved story of their life (DeSocio, 2005; White & Epson, 1990). The same process can be applied to supervisory relationships.

As with other postmodern techniques, the narrative approach places emphasis on the language chosen by clients, supervisees, and supervisors. For example, narrative supervisors argue that the label "supervision" suggests a worldview of a developmental hierarchy of vision, experience, and knowledge (Carlson & Erickson, 2001; Edwards & Chen, 1999; Speedy, 2000). In addition, narrative supervisors believe that the hierarchical emphasis present in most supervision undermines the collaborative abilities of the process and inhibits the growth and creativity of the supervisee (Edwards & Keller, 1995). As a result, such supervision tends to be deficit or pathology-based which fosters dependence upon the supervisor for the "correct" answers and viewpoints (Carlson & Erickson, 2001). Narrative supervisors strive to give voice to the supervisee, drawing out possibilities from them whenever possible.

Postmodern supervisors are challenged to construct questions that are less instructive and designed to extract supervisees' knowledge (Ungar, 2006). Although there are many ways to work with supervisees' stories (all of which would constitute narrative interventions), several models and techniques have received specific attention in the narrative supervision literature. In what she labeled a "work in progress," Speedy (2000) presented her rationale for providing a discussion of narrative approaches to supervision arguing,

> The traditional literature of counselling supervision seems to lack uncertainty and timidity. It is mostly written from the supervisor's, or supervisor trainer's, perspective and seems to be full of models, structures, checklists and frameworks. It is not a humble or exploratory literature. There are few stories and little is written from the client or supervisee's standpoint (p. 428).

She challenged supervisors to adopt a stance of naïve curiosity toward their supervisees and to ask deconstructing questions to reflect on supervisee stories.

Carlson and Erickson (2001) described one such approach for supervision using this narrative perspective. The three main supervisory practices or techniques: (1) experiencing privileging practices (honoring supervisees' personal experiences), (2) re-membering practices (helping supervisees affectively and intellectually re-experience a return to membership with significant relationships in their lives), and (3) creating communities of concern (fostering networks of other counselors with whom they can shares stories and experiences). Carlson and Erickson also provided practical steps to help supervisees develop their counselor-identity stories thus helping them develop their preferred style of interacting with clients. Lists of privileging and re-membering questions, which can be used to facilitate conversation, exploration, and storying and eventually, a community of concern, accompany these "steps".

By aiding fellow counselors to identify their own narratives, while adhering to his or her chosen identity concept, postmodern supervisors model compassionate and thoughtful intervention (Ungar, 2006). Bob (1999) presented additional suggestions for the application of narrative supervision and case formulation. She argued that supervision should be approached as a dialogue examining the different realities of the client, supervisee, and supervisor. After sharing these perspectives, "a new story can be developed that will be useful to the client and helpful to the supervisee in sitting with the client" (Bob, 1999, p. 152). Because the viewpoint of the supervisee is considered as valid as that of the supervisor, the supervisee must find the new narrative to be compelling, appropriate, and useful before he/she is asked to use the story in case formulation and eventually in session.

In addition to these more global supervision applications, narrative techniques also have been suggested when working with specific populations. For example, Etherington (2000) recommended the use of a narrative approach when supervising counselors who work with childhood sexual abuse victims. She noted that counselors often struggle to express their feelings about, reactions to, and plans with these clients. Etherington offered narrative recommendations (e.g., "exploding" words or images on to a piece of paper) that may allow supervisee to begin investigating these areas and developing their narrative rather than demanding/expecting a coherent narrative about traumatic events right away.

Proponents of narrative supervision consistently argue that supervisors should attempt to minimize, if not remove the hierarchy within the supervisory relationship. For example, Thomas (1994) noted that supervisors should attempt to honor the request of supervisees to "supervise us or evaluate us; not both" (p. 12). Such views negate the needs of interns whose lack of experience precludes their having the intuition required to construct viable solutions to clinical dilemmas. Other supervisory models help address this deficit. Firth and Martens (2008) contended that "academic developers should restrict themselves to working with the practices that constitute the role and responsibilities of the supervisor as instituted and sanctioned by the university" (p. 287). In many situations, especially academia, clinical supervisors are charged with evaluating and/or grading their supervisees. This process serves a number of purposes, not the least of which is making sure supervisees are prepared for professional practice (American Counseling Association, 2014). This duty to the profession should not be minimized—To do so could result in unprepared and/or inappropriate clinicians harming their clients.

Moving from supervision to co-vision or another model where counselors are viewed as the equal of the supervisor (e.g., White, 1997), leads to questions such as: Why is a supervisor

necessary? What is the reason and/or value for having a more experienced clinician who has been trained in the practice of supervision as a resource? Otherwise, supervision would be nothing more than consultation. Moreover, the ethical and legal responsibilities that come with one's supervisory status could be minimized. There are times when supervisees do not have the knowledge or skills to answer their own questions, create an appropriate narrative, etc. In these cases, the supervisor has an ethical responsibility to own his/her expertise and help their supervisee (Whitening, 2007). Should they fail to do so, client welfare could be jeopardized.

It should be noted that several authors within the postmodern supervision literature have acknowledged this responsibility (e.g., Wetchler, 1990; White, 1997). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) cautioned that relying only on postmodern models will lead supervisors to miss important information about their supervisees because they will be thinking about their supervisee's therapeutically rather than in an educational manner. However, very few authors have explicitly examined when to follow postmodern models and when to move into more of a didactic mode. Prouty (2001) offered an empirically-based decision making model for using hierarchical methods versus collaborative methods within postmodern supervision. In addition, Wetchler's (1990) model contained a clinical education component for teaching skills that supervisees lacked based on assessments gleaned from first using solution-focused interventions. These approaches are examined in the following section.

Solution-Focused Supervision

Time constraints have accentuated the need for brevity in both counseling and supervision systems (McCurdy, 2006). As such, solution-focused approaches may serve as a prominent model for contemporary clinicians and advisors. As with the other postmodern approaches discussed above, much of the writing involving solution-focused supervision

originally came from the family counseling/therapy literature (e.g., Marek, Sandifer, Beach, Coward, & Protinsky, 1994; Selekman & Todd, 1995; Thomas, 1994; Wetchler, 1990). However, authors have applied the model to supervision within non-family contexts (Fowler, 2011; Thomas, 2013) and discussed the benefits of such supervision regardless of context (Juhnke, 1994; McCurdy, 2006; Presbury, Echterling, & McKee, 1999). This approach to supervision grew out of family therapy models (which also have been applied to individual counseling) termed "solution-focused" (e.g., de Shazer, 1988, 1991), "solution-oriented" (e.g., O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989), and "possibility therapies" (O'Hanlon & Beadle, 1999). The primary tenet of these approaches both in therapy and supervision is the amplification of and subsequent focus on strengths, competencies, and successes of individuals (McCurdy, 2006; Triantafillou, 1997). To quote Thomas (1994), "this model assumes that therapists have the resources to solve therapeutic dilemmas" (p. 13).

Wetchler (1990) and Marek et al. (1994) both proposed models of solution-focused supervision. Wetcher's model consisted of two components, the solution focus and clinical education. The majority of supervision is spent identifying the supervisee's successes and exceptions to patterns of difficulty. Using these positives as a base, the supervisee is encouraged to explore ways to increase these successful behaviors/interventions. The clinical education piece only is used when this solution focus alone cannot address supervisee-generated concerns (i.e., goals and questions for supervision).

Marek et al. (1994) built upon this model by adding a more practical framework consisting of goal setting, identifying exceptions, and monitoring progress through scaling questions. The authors focused on the process of goal setting noting that clear, concrete, behavioral goals are essential in this approach so both supervisees and supervisors can assess

movement and development. In addition, de Shazer's (1988) "miracle question" is proposed as a tool for identifying goals and helping supervisees envision a session where they are able to help resolve their client's issues. By exploring a detailed, behavioral picture of such a session, the supervisee can identify the aforementioned concrete goals to work toward.

Selekman and Todd (1995) reiterated many of the interventions that fall within the scope of solution-oriented supervision (e.g., scaling questions, miracles questions, doing something different). However, these authors did add a focus on presuppositional questions and language within supervision. This technique involves the intentional use forward-thinking words of success like "when" and "will" during the questioning/discussion of supervisee goals. This method has been termed "change talk" and the "language of change" within the solution-focused literature (e.g., de Shazer, 1988, 1991; O'Hanlon & Weiner-Davis, 1989; Pearson, 2006). In addition, several additional techniques (e.g., future-oriented questions, externalizing the problem, pattern interruption) also were put forth by Selekman and Todd (1995). This is in keeping with the focus on technique and interventions within the body of solution-focused supervision scholarship.

Supervision from a solution-focused perspective includes the supervisor facilitating the supervisee to explore his or her attributes, skillsets, and resources (McCurdy, 2006). Marek et al (1994) noted, "all supervisees, despite their theoretical orientation, can come to understand their own unique strengths and abilities as therapists through the solution focused supervision model" (p. 60). That same year, Juhnke (1994) also argued that this approach could be applied when working with clinicians who do not take a solution-focused approach to counseling. In addition, Juhnke was the first author to propose a model of solution-focused supervision for clinicians working with clients on an individual rather than marital or family counseling basis. Although

his model and techniques do not differ significantly from those offered within the family therapy solution-focused supervision literature, this application outside of marriage and family supervision created the first explicit attempt to use solution-focused supervision in a non-isomorphic fashion.

Proponents of solution-focused supervision, like other postmodern approaches, present strong philosophical arguments for its contentions (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). However, there has been a relative dearth of empirical evidence to support its conclusions. As a result, most of the writing regarding solution-focused (and narrative) supervision has been theoretical in nature. However, it should be noted that a similar lack of research has been a criticism of the supervision field in general (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Some authors offered case studies/reports as illustrations, but sometimes there is resistance to the idea of conducting research on postmodern approaches, with some authors suggesting that since there is no "truth," it is not possible or necessary to defend their methods scientifically/empirically (Edwards & Chen, 1999). Strong and Gale (2013) confirmed this thought by reporting that there continues to be resistance within the postmodern clinical movement vis-à-vis research.

Like existentialism, postmodernism provides important philosophical theories, approaches, models, and techniques for understanding the human condition and how best to accentuate its attributes and confront its shortcomings (Hoffman, Stewart, Warren & Meek, 2009). Both approaches, however, may lack the level of pragmatic application some supervisors want and/or need to serve as independent alternatives to somewhat more established clinical and supervisory practices. Many supervisors may be hesitant to apply existential-phenomenological approaches due to the fact that they don´t provide readily available manuals (Milton, 2009).

While the lack of empirical support for its practices is apparent, postmodern thought is not alone in this limitation. According to Rayner and Vitali (2014) existential-phenomenological therapies continue to lack empirical data to confirm its effectiveness. Although the number of studies has increased in recent years, more literature is needed to examine the efficacy of supervisory practices in general. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) have noted the need for research into the supervision models that have been accepted and practiced for years (e.g., developmental models).

Postmodern philosophies can be integrated successfully into effective and meaningful supervisory experiences. There are opportunities to blend the many benefits of postmodern supervisory approaches with those from more traditional models. According to McCurdy (2006), "the supervisory process is collaborative, exploratory, developmental, and strengths-based" (p. 146). The supervisee´s intuition is considered an invaluable resource. However, in order for supervisors to accentuate the attributes of a mentorship position, boundaries must be established. Supervisor and supervisee´s roles need to be clearly articulated in order to sustain professional development (Firth & Martens, 2008). Postmodern approaches to supervision shun belief systems that include hierarchical foundations. At the same time it is acknowledged that it is impossible to completely eliminate the inequality of power between supervisor and supervisee even when adhering to postmodern practices (Behan, 2003).

Infusing Postmodernism into Supervision

Like mental health clinicians, supervisors confront time limitations due to managed care and productivity-centered work environments (McCurdy, 2006). Efforts need to be continuously employed to generate more efficient and effective supervisory strategies. One method achieving this is by accentuating the cohesive attributes of traditional and postmodern strategies. For

example, traditional supervisory practices can benefit from postmodern approaches that nurture a supervisee's processing skills, develop problem solving abilities, and bolster feelings of self-efficacy can help foster the independence necessary for efficient internship experiences. Balancing modern and postmodern approaches to supervision is essential to optimal advisory experience. Each approach has merit. In his discussion of career counseling, Sampson, Jr. (2009) argued that comprehending and valuing each approaches' contributions is valuable and necessary. The same process and importance can be generalized to supervisory practices.

Novice clinicians have engaged in academic study regarding their profession's skillsets, strategies, and approaches. Accrediting organizations create standards of excellence that help prepare students for clinical work. However, direct experience is a necessary component for knowledge to be integrated in a person's professional core. In addition, theories, ethics, and standards are also communicated through the supervisory relationship (Lemire, 2009). Moreover, there are times when supervisees desire to learn from the supervisor's experiences and to engage in consultation (Ungar, 2006). These traditional views are in contrast with pure postmodern thought, which rejects hierarchical relationships. Thus, an unwavering following of postmodern philosophies may in part negate the value of the expert status ingrained in the supervisor's role, thereby missing the needs of inexperienced professionals in search of mentorship.

Despite the potential limitations of a postmodern approach to supervision, its philosophies can enrich the experience for both supervisor and supervisee (Whiting, 2007). It can create opportunities for the burgeoning professional to call upon his or her own intuition and knowledge and can encourage him or her to take ownership of solutions. In contrast, simply supplying "the answer" without deep contemplation is unlikely to help the supervisee to fully absorb and integrate the material. A balance is artfully required. Indeed, supervision creates the

forum for supervisees to experience the synergy between assisting clients, embracing the role of professional, harboring concerns, and existing with meaning (Ungar, 2006). Each participant in the supervisory relationship contributes to the quality of professional development, which ideally occurs for both supervisor and supervisee.

Postmodern approaches to supervision clearly have appeal and have been shown anecdotally to produce positive results. As noted by McCurdy (2006), supervision is a developmental process whose small successes manifest into overall growth, development, and success inside both the clinical and supervisory environments. Permitting advisees the time necessary to construct their own answers favors the facilitating role adopted by postmodern supervisors. The ideas of honoring the supervisee's perspective, working to identify supervisee strengths, and raising supervisee awareness regarding power and gender-bias make can enrich the supervisory experience. The case studies that have been provided in the literature offer glimpses into the power of postmodern interventions.

Strict modernists would view supervisor-supervisee relationships with the former's expertise and experience as superior to those of the latter (Lemire, 2009). This format can be conducive to a mentorship relationship, which can accentuate the benefits of modeling quality professional behaviors. However, building and nurturing a collegial relationship – a natural consequence and goal of postmodern supervision approaches – can also enhance the supervisee experience. A supervisee´s feeling of connectedness can be enhanced when supervisors provide cooperative professional development opportunities (McCurdy, 2006). These cooperative experiences in turn may contribute to vigorous, substantive discussions that better both participants' skillsets.

Although the postmodernist might argue for a strict application of a particular approach, integrative supervisors can use various postmodern interventions in their work. For example, these two approaches contain interventions that fit nicely within various "cells" of the atheoretical discrimination model (Bernard, 1979). In addition, supervisors can choose postmodern interventions to facilitate growth within Stoltenberg's (1981) series of levels and Stoltenberg and Delworth's (1987) dimensions of development. Specifically, it seems some of these interventions, which put considerable responsibility on the supervisee, might be more appropriate as the supervisee moves toward autonomy, therefore necessitating increased accountability (Stoltenberg & McNeill, 2010). Autonomy refers to the supervisee´s level of independence within the supervisory relationship.

Future Research and Scholarship

Ungar (2006) advised the following: "In practice, the postmodern supervisor demonstrates sensitivity to the uniqueness of each person being supervised" (p. 67). This approach is the core tenet of two postmodern approaches – narrative, and solution-focused – that has received significant attention in the psychotherapy literature. It is one that is appears compatible with traditional supervisory models, but further research is necessary to quantify its effectiveness. The idea of conducting empirical research about postmodern supervision approaches may sound counter-intuitive. However, less doctrinaire postmodern supervision practitioners and/or researchers interested in examining postmodern approaches have a wide variety of areas worthy of study. Given the large number of models and techniques associated with these two postmodern approaches, it seems that exploration of the effectiveness of these interventions is warranted. This could involve studies of counselor development (e.g., Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982, Stoltenberg, 1981) resulting from postmodern interventions within

supervision. In addition, qualitative studies examining the differences between postmodern and non-postmodern approaches as perceived by supervisees also could provide valuable information. For example, might beginning supervisees find narrative supervision lacking in terms of directives/structure? Is the relationship/rapport within supervision affected by the choice of a postmodern versus a non-postmodern approach?

Additional attention is warranted in the area of evaluation within postmodern approaches. Although many postmodernist supervisors resist evaluation, addressing it is imperative in order to engage ethically in supervision. Specifically, case studies exploring how to supervise an impaired counselor would be one way to help non-postmodern supervisors understand how some of their concerns around ethical issues might be resolved. An exploration of when the postmodern approaches may and may not be appropriate would be a welcome addition to the literature.

In conclusion, this article investigated narrative, and solution-focused supervision. These two models represent broader clinical trends that have characterized the transition of counseling and clinical supervision into the postmodern era. This movement has resulted in a new body of theoretical development. However, little empirical evidence has been offered to date as to the utility of postmodern supervision. Although these approaches offer a greater appreciation for personal meaning-making and individual perspectives, it has yet to be determined whether or not these approaches will result in improved counselor supervision and training when compared to other methods. Rather than potentially resisting either the postmodern or modern/positivist perspective, supervisors can heed the words of compromise posed by Mills and Sprenkle (1995) who noted, "therapists have weathered [the] transition well, working hard to integrate valuable traditional perspectives within a new collaborative, constructionistic paradigm that is better

suited to the shifting value systems of the present world" (p. 375). Continuing to add postmodernism to the body of researched supervision knowledge and literature seems an appropriate next step rather than throwing out any previous results as false "truth."

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