Strategies for School Counselors-in-Training to Maximize Their Supervision Experience

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All counseling graduate students participate in fieldwork experiences and engage in supervision to promote their professional development. School counseling trainees complete these experiences in the unique context of elementary and secondary school settings. As such, school counselors-in-training (SCITs) may seek to approach supervision with specific strategies tailored for the roles, responsibilities, and dispositions required of competent future school counselors. This article suggests practical strategies for SCITs, including engaging in reflection; navigating feelings of vulnerability in supervision; developing appropriate professional dispositions for school counseling practice; and practicing self-advocacy, broaching, and self-care. Counselor educators can share these strategies to help students identify their needs for their field experiences and prepare for their professional careers as school counselors.

Keywords: supervision, professional development, school counseling, school counselors-in-training, strategies

School counselors-in-training (SCITs) are trainees enrolled in graduate-level counselor education programs and receive supervision as an integral component of their training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). Although the supervision relationship is often characterized as hierarchical, trainees must actively participate in the supervision process to develop competency as counseling professionals (Stark, 2017). Despite this, trainees in counseling programs generally receive little guidance on understanding their roles in supervision or how to make the most of their supervision experience to contribute to their learning (Pearson, 2004; Stark, 2017). Although Pearson (2004) offered suggestions for mental health counseling students to optimize their supervision experiences, there is limited literature about how school counseling students can maximize their supervision experiences. The intention of this article is to share strategies for SCITs to take the initiative to approach supervisors with questions and ideas about their overall supervision experience, though these suggestions are not limited to SCITs and may also be useful for trainees across other counseling disciplines.

School counseling site supervision is distinguishable from supervision in other helping professions in that the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors extend beyond the individual and group counseling services that their community counseling partners provide (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019a, 2021; Quintana & Gooden-Alexis, 2020). For example, comprehensive school counseling programming encompasses direct counseling services with students and families in addition to broader systemic consultation, advocacy, and support for school communities (ASCA, 2019a). School counselors encounter unique challenges in schools regarding student and staff mental health, issues related to equity and access, and navigating the political landscapes of school systems (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Even with an understanding of these distinct themes in school counseling, there is a lack of significance placed on supervision in school counseling within research and in practice to adequately respond to contemporary school counseling issues (Bledsoe et al., 2019). Examining how SCITs can approach supervision and their roles as trainees can ensure their own learning and developmental needs are met, along with the needs of their school communities.

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Contexts of School Counseling Supervision

Supervision for SCITs is provided by experienced professional school counselors and characterized by an intentional balance of hierarchy, evaluation, and support during their practicum and internship fieldwork experiences (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Borders & Brown, 2005). School counselor supervision serves three primary purposes: (a) promoting competency in effective and ethical school counseling practice; (b) facilitating SCITs' personal and professional development; and (c) upholding accountability of services and programs for the greater profession and the schools, students, and families receiving services (ASCA, 2021; L. J. Bradley et al., 2010). School counseling site supervisors utilize their training and experiences to guide SCITs through their induction to the profession and development of initial skills and dispositions.

ASCA (2021) compels school counseling supervisors to address the complexities specific to educational settings as they support the professional development of SCITs, which sets school counseling supervision apart from supervision in other clinical counseling disciplines. School counselors facilitate instruction and classroom management, provide appraisal and advisement, and support the developmental and social–emotional needs of students through data-informed school counseling programs (ASCA, 2019a). Within school and community settings, they also navigate systems with an advocacy and social justice orientation and attend to cultural competence and anti-racist work. Although there are school counseling–specific supervision models that address some of the complexities inherent in the work of school counselors (e.g., Lambie & Sias, 2009; Luke & Bernard, 2006; S. Murphy & Kaffenberger, 2007; Wood & Rayle, 2006), there is currently a gap in the school counseling literature about effectively addressing the unique supervision needs of SCITs. Therefore, school counselor practitioners and counselor educators may refer to professional standards for supervision to inform how they supervise and support the developmental needs of SCITs, which may also help SCITs to understand what they might expect to encounter in graduate-level supervision.

Professional Standards for School Counseling Supervision

School counseling professional standards underscore the need for school counselor supervisors to seek supervision and training (ASCA, 2019b; Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2015; Quintana & Gooden-Alexis, 2020). Professional associations and accrediting organizations (e.g., ASCA, CACREP) promote adherence to and integration of school counselor standards and competencies related to leadership, advocacy, collaboration, systemic change, and ethical practice (ASCA, 2022; CACREP, 2015; Quintana & Gooden-Alexis, 2020). As such, school counseling supervision facilitates ethical and professional skill development through school counselor standards and competencies, such as the ASCA *School Counselor Professional Standards & Competencies* (ASCA, 2019c) and the ASCA *Ethical Standards for School Counselors* (ASCA, 2022).

School counseling supervisors can support SCITs' professional growth and development by aligning supervision activities with specific standards and competencies (Quintana & Gooden-Alexis, 2020). For example, a supervisor seeking to model the school counselor mindset and behavior standards focused on collaborative partnerships (i.e., M 5, B-SS 6; ASCA, 2019c) might provide opportunities for SCITs to develop relationships with stakeholders (e.g., families, administrators, community) while supporting student achievement. Similarly, an example of aligning supervision activities with ethical standards might involve guiding an SCIT through the process of utilizing an ethical decision-making model to resolve a potential dilemma (see Section F; ASCA, 2022).

Supervision in School Counseling

Supervision in school counseling ensures that new professionals enter the field prepared to understand and support the needs of students by effectively applying ethical standards and best practices of the profession. As such, gatekeeping is a crucial component of supervision. As gatekeepers, counselor educators or supervisors exercise their professional authority to take action that prevents a trainee who does not enact the required professional dispositions and ethical practices from entering the profession of counseling (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019). When a trainee is identified as unable to achieve counseling competencies or likely to harm others, ethical practice guides counselor educators to provide developmental or remedial services to work toward improvements before dismissal from a counseling program (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2014; Foster & McAdams, 2009).

Although supervised fieldwork experiences during graduate education and training are needed for accreditation (CACREP, 2015) and state certification, professional school counselors employed in the field may not be required to participate in any form of post-master's clinical supervision for initial school counseling certification or renewal of their certification, unlike professional clinical mental health counselors, who require post-master's supervision to attain licensure (Dollarhide & Saginak, 2017; Mecadon-Mann & Tuttle, 2023). Administrative supervision provided by a school administrator is more common for school counselors than clinical supervision, which promotes the competence of counselors by focusing on the development and refinement of counseling skills (Herlihy et al., 2002). In other words, though school counselors routinely encounter complex situations that involve supporting students with acute needs and responding to crises, they likely do not receive the clinical supervision needed to enhance their judgment, skills, and ethical decision-making (Bledsoe et al., 2019; Brott et al., 2021; Herlihy et al., 2002; McKibben et al., 2022; Sutton & Page, 1994). Given the reality that school counselors may not access or receive opportunities for postgraduate clinical supervision, it is important that SCITs experience robust supervision during their graduate training programs with the support of qualified site and university supervisors. This sets the stage for SCITs to effectively engage with the challenges of their future school counseling careers.

Expectations of Site and University Supervisors

For SCITs who are new to the experience of supervision in their fieldwork, it is helpful to understand what they may expect from their respective site and university supervisors. Borders et al. (2014) recommended that supervisors initiate supervision, set goals with trainees, provide feedback, facilitate the supervisory relationship, and attend to diversity, as well as engage in advocacy, ethical consideration, documentation, and evaluation. Supervisors select supervision interventions that attend to the developmental needs of trainees, and they also serve as gatekeepers for the profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Borders et al., 2014). Furthermore, supervisors facilitate an effective relationship with their trainees, characterized by empowerment, encouragement, and safety (Dressel et al., 2007; Ladany et al., 2013; M. J. Murphy & Wright, 2005). Supervisors provide a balance of support and challenge in their feedback and interactions with trainees (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019) and attend to multicultural issues by broaching with their trainees about their intersecting identities and experiences of power, privilege, and marginalization (Dressel et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2019; M. J. Murphy & Wright, 2005). Supervisors also validate trainees' experiences by acknowledging any emergent issues of vicarious trauma and encouraging self-care (K. Jordan, 2018).

Supervisors and trainees have mutual responsibilities to facilitate an effective supervision experience. Although supervisors may hold a more significant stake of power in the relationship, trainees' willingness to take an active role also matters. School counseling trainees are not passive bystanders in the learning process; instead, they can be thoughtful learners yearning to take full advantage of the

growth from their clinical experiences. To help illuminate the opportunities and expectations SCITs can seek during supervision, the subsequent strategies from school counseling supervision research serve as suggested approaches for SCITs to make the most of this fundamental and practical learning experience.

Strategies for School Counseling Trainees

School counseling trainees can take an active role to ensure that their supervision experiences are relevant to their personal and professional development. The following approaches do not constitute an all-encompassing list but provide a foundation and guidelines rooted in existing research to get the most out of the supervision experience, including engaging in reflection and vulnerability, practicing self-advocacy, broaching, and maintaining personal wellness.

Reflection in Supervision

Reflection is key to school counselor development, especially in supervision. Researchers have reported that continuous reflection helps novice counselors move toward higher levels of cognitive complexity and expertise (Borders & Brown, 2005; Skovholt & Rønnestad, 1992). A reflective trainee demonstrates openness to understanding; avoids being defensive; and engages in profound thought processes that lead to changes in their perceptions, practice, and complexity (Neufeldt et al., 1996). Through reflection, trainees consider troubling, confusing, or uncertain experiences or thoughts and then reframe them to problem-solve and guide future actions (Ward & House, 1998; Young et al., 2011). Further, by developing relationships with supervisors, trainees become open to receiving and integrating feedback to support their development (Borders & Brown, 2005). Reflection becomes an ongoing process and practice throughout trainees' academic and field experiences and postgraduation.

Trainees can engage in self-reflective practices in various ways over the course of their graduate training. First, trainees can use a journal to record thoughts, feelings, and events throughout their school counseling field experiences. Research has shown that written or video journaling can help trainees to reflect on the highs and lows of counseling training and foster self-awareness (Parikh et al., 2012; Storlie et al., 2018; Woodbridge & O'Beirne, 2017). For example, trainees can connect their practical experiences with knowledge from academic learning to note discrepancies and consistencies (e.g., learning about the ASCA National Model and the extent to which a school chooses to implement the model; navigating the bureaucracy of school systems that often dictate roles and responsibilities of school counselors). Trainees can also challenge their thoughts by exploring difficult experiences using reflective journaling. They can journal about the different perspectives of those involved in the situation (e.g., students, parents/guardians, teachers, administrators), process ethical dilemmas, and gauge and manage any emotional experiences attached to grappling with challenges. Trainees desiring structured prompts can consider writing about specific developmental, emotional, and interpersonal experiences to process events related to counselor and client interactions (Storlie et al., 2018).

Second, trainees can consult with their supervisors to seek guidance and constructive feedback about challenging experiences (Borders & Brown, 2005). Hamlet (2022) recommended using the S.K.A.T.E.S. form to reflect on issues related to trainees' Skills, Knowledge, Attitudes, Thoughts, Ethics, and Supervision needs. Using S.K.A.T.E.S., for example, a school counseling intern may reflect on how they incorporated motivational interviewing counseling skills to support a student struggling with their declining grades (North, 2017). They might seek supervision about a challenging crisis response at the school and process how they might have responded differently. Even after supervision sessions, trainees should engage in continued self-reflection and apply new learning to their clinical practice.

Third, trainees can utilize the Johari window as a tool to reflect upon the knowledge, awareness, and skills required for school counseling practice (Halpern, 2009). Trainees work with supervisors to consider questions or experiences to identify: (a) open areas (i.e., things known to everyone, such as critically discussing school- and district-wide policies that contribute to inequitable access to college preparatory courses); (b) hidden areas (i.e., things only known to the trainee to be shared in supervision, such as the trainee's hesitations about leading a group counseling session with middle school students independently for the first time); (c) blind spots (i.e., things that the supervisor is aware of that the trainee may not be, such as personal biases, prejudices, stereotypes, and discriminatory attitudes that may affect the trainee's conceptualizations and interactions with students and families); and (d) undiscovered potential (i.e., things that the supervisor and trainee can experience and learn together, such as engaging in professional learning together to align school counseling programming with a school-wide movement toward implementing restorative justice practices). This strategy also compels trainees to align their supervision goals with ethical codes (see A.4.b., F.8.c., and F.8.d in the ACA *Code of Ethics*) and standards for professional practice (ACA, 2014). Trainees can feel empowered to utilize the Johari window with supervisors and peers to guide conversations, generate questions, and develop insights to inform school counseling practice and explore ethical dilemmas.

Vulnerability in Supervision

Vulnerability is an essential yet challenging experience within the hierarchical nature of supervision. Being vulnerable involves feelings of uncertainty, reluctance, and exposure; hence, trainees require a sense of psychological safety and support to explore their needs and areas of weakness (Bradley et al., 2019; Giordano et al., 2018; J. V. Jordan, 2003). Although site supervisors hold the primary responsibility for facilitating supervision relationships characterized by safety and support (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019), trainees can feel empowered to advocate for supervision environments that encourage authenticity and vulnerability, which are conducive to growth and development.

First, trainees can discuss with their supervisors and peers to define feelings of vulnerability and create group norms to promote supported vulnerability (Bradley et al., 2019). With a shared understanding, trainees, supervisors, and peers create an environment for continued growth and risk-taking. For example, during the first group supervision meeting, trainees can suggest norms that will individually and collectively sustain a safe classroom community for sharing and learning. A lack of clear norms about how to communicate feedback may result in experiences of shame and affect trainees' confidence (J. V. Jordan, 2003; Ratts & Greenleaf, 2018). To mitigate this, trainees, supervisors, and peers can collaboratively discuss appropriate and preferred ways of giving and receiving feedback that is supportive, productive, and meaningful (Ladany et al., 2013). For example, trainees may prefer specific comments rather than general praise: "When the client expressed their frustration, you did well to remain calm and reflect content and feelings in that moment," instead of "You did a great job." This exchange among trainees, supervisors, and peers offers a constructive and engaging experience in which individuals can appropriately support and challenge one another.

Second, reviewing recordings offers a learning opportunity for trainees to reflect upon and critique their own skills and dispositions (Borders & Brown, 2005). When presenting recorded case presentations, trainees can practice vulnerability by selecting and presenting recordings that highlight challenging areas that may require constructive feedback (i.e., show their worst rather than their best). Trainees can identify portions of recordings that exemplify where they need the most help, such as a challenging experience during an individual counseling session with a student. Further, when presenting their recordings, trainees can also ask for suggestions to improve consultation work with

caregivers when discussing college and career planning issues or innovative instructional strategies for teaching a classroom lesson in response to challenging situations. Vulnerability also occurs when trainees seek support from supervisors and peers about blind spots and areas of strength and growth regarding skill development and self-awareness issues in the recorded session or role-play. For instance, a trainee may express concern about the increasing academic counseling referrals of ninth-grade students who are struggling with the transition to high school and ask for guidance about how to more effectively respond systemically and individually.

Self-Advocacy in Supervision

Self-advocacy is another empowering practice for trainees to identify their needs and seek support. Researchers have defined self-advocacy as understanding one's rights and responsibilities, communicating needs, and negotiating for support, which helps trainees proactively approach supervision (Astramovich & Harris, 2007; Pocock et al., 2002). Although supervision is characterized as hierarchical, it is also a relationship based on mutual participation, with inherent expectations for trainees (Stark, 2017). Within the evaluative nature of a supervision relationship, trainees may reasonably feel intimidated about practicing self-advocacy. However, trainees can feel empowered to self-advocate when building rapport with supervisors in an environment characterized by safety and support.

To prepare to self-advocate, trainees should continue engaging in self-reflection on their gaps in knowledge, awareness, and skills related to school counseling practice and then consider the types of resources and supports needed from their supervisor to bridge such gaps. In alignment with their learning goals, trainees can self-advocate by taking the initiative to request support for what they would like to achieve during the supervision experience (Storlie et al., 2019). For example, trainees may inquire about logistical concerns, such as seeking guidance about appropriate and creative ways to ensure that they earn sufficient direct and indirect hours, or evaluative concerns, like asking how to improve in specific school counseling skill areas after mid- and end-of-semester evaluations. Trainees can also seek support with conceptualization (e.g., applying a theoretical orientation when understanding the potential contributors to a student's feeling of anxiety), skill development (e.g., experience with advocating for students receiving special education services in an Individualized Educational Plan [IEP] meeting), and countertransference issues (e.g., emotional reactions that may arise when supporting a grieving student coping with a loss; Pearson, 2004). Trainees should prepare specific questions that communicate their needs and explicitly request resources, opportunities, or next steps for continued improvement and development.

Trainees may also self-advocate through positive communication, which is a critical skill for helping professionals and in maintaining relationships (Biganeh & Young, 2021). Positive communication may involve actively listening to their supervisor's insights, presenting statements that paraphrase their supervisor's key points, and asking open-ended questions to elicit mutual exploration of topics of interest. For instance, after observing a crisis response to a student expressing suicidal ideation, the trainee can debrief about their experiences with their supervisor by summarizing key observations and protocol followed, while also asking what steps could be added or reconsidered if the trainee were leading the crisis response. Additionally, practicing communication skills in the context of supervision may enhance trainees' competence and confidence when interacting with students and stakeholders, including caregivers, teachers, and administrators (Heaven et al., 2006). For example, trainees can request to observe and later role-play how they might facilitate a consultation meeting with a student and their parent to discuss the importance of consistent attendance and academic development.

Trainees can get the most out of their supervision experience by self-advocating and taking initiative to describe their unique learning styles and needs (Storlie et al., 2019). This provides an opportunity for trainees to proactively convey their goals and concerns about students and stakeholders at their sites (Baltrinic et al., 2021; Cook & Sackett, 2018). For example, if the trainee has become increasingly comfortable with co-leading a group counseling session, the trainee can communicate a desire to design and independently lead a group counseling session and then seek feedback about the curriculum plans or recordings of the session for continued improvement in group facilitation skills. Ultimately, engaging in self-advocacy skills during fieldwork helps trainees prepare for their careers as school counselors, in which self-advocacy is necessary when seeking professional development, resources for school counseling program development, and navigating school systems and politics to support their students and school counseling programs (Oehrtman & Dollarhide, 2021).

Broaching

Broaching is an ongoing behavior in which counselors invite conversations to explore race, ethnicity, and culture with clients, which can strengthen the counseling relationship and enhance cultural responsiveness and therapeutic benefits (Day-Vines et al., 2007, 2013). Likewise, in supervisory relationships, broaching helps supervisors and trainees to understand how cultural factors affect the supervisory relationship (Jones et al., 2019). Without broaching, both supervisors and trainees may miss meaningful contexts and realities, potentially rupturing the supervisory relationship (Jones et al., 2019). Broaching is also a key demonstration of commitment to culturally informed clinical supervision that promotes cultural humility and anti-racist counseling and supervision practice (Cartwright et al., 2021).

Although supervisors are charged with the responsibility of broaching based on the hierarchical nature of the supervisory relationship and its inherent power dynamics, they may not consistently incorporate broaching as part of their regular supervision behaviors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; King & Jones, 2019). Trainees who feel empowered to discuss issues of identity and power in supervision are more likely to initiate broaching conversations with their supervisors (King & Jones, 2019). As such, trainees should feel encouraged to engage in discussions with their supervisors to openly address cultural identities that may impact the supervisory relationship and their work with students and stakeholders in schools. King and Jones (2019) suggested that trainees can broach topics that they feel comfortable discussing within the context of their supervision relationship. It is necessary to note that the process and outcome of broaching in supervision are not only contingent upon the diverse sociocultural and sociopolitical contexts of individuals, but also on where the trainee and supervisor lie within the continuum of broaching styles and their own racial identity development as well as the power and hierarchy dynamics of the supervisory relationship (Bernard & Goodyear, 2019; Day-Vines et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2019). Just as for any novice counselor and individuals in the early stages of the broaching styles continuum, there may be hesitation, anxiousness, misunderstanding, or intimidation about engaging in broaching skills, especially considering the power dynamic of supervision. Trainees can self-assess their broaching style by using the Broaching Attitudes and Behavior Survey (Day-Vines et al., 2007, 2013), which might provide them with insight about their own level of comfort with broaching in supervision.

Trainees can seek continuing education and support from supervisors and peers about developing and strengthening their understanding of cultural diversity, race, oppression, and privilege related to school counseling. If a trainee feels nervous about broaching with their supervisor, the trainee can express their desire to practice broaching and seek feedback from their supervisor after broaching has taken place (e.g., "I would like to try broaching about a student's cultural identities, and I was wondering if you could share your thoughts with me."). Trainees can also directly express curiosities, observations, or questions about how any cultural differences and similarities between the supervisor

and trainee may impact and inform the supervisory relationship. For example, a trainee and supervisor can discuss prior supervisory relationships, such as in academic or employment experiences, and identify the shared or different intersectional cultural identities to understand how this new supervisory relationship can be a meaningful relationship and safe space for learning. This exercise demonstrates cultural humility in which trainees engage in respectful curiosity, a stance of openness, and cultural awareness that enhances the supervisory working alliance (Watkins et al., 2019).

Broaching can also help school counseling trainees move beyond the *nice counselor syndrome*—a phenomenon in which stakeholders may often view school counselors as harmonious and unengaged in conflict, which supersedes their position as social justice advocates and instead perpetuates the status quo and reinforces inequities (Bemak & Chung, 2008). Because broaching invites discussion about multicultural and social justice issues, trainees can initiate conversations about personal obstacles (e.g., apathy, anxiety, guilt, discomfort) and professional obstacles (e.g., professional paralysis, resistance, job security) during supervision (Bemak & Chung, 2008). For example, a trainee can seek guidance about how to present a proposal to administrators about an affinity group for LGBTQ+ students and allies in the school. They can discuss potential personal and professional obstacles, how to overcome such obstacles to promote the group, and how to advocate for inclusion of LGBTQ+ students. It is important for trainees to engage in advocacy during their fieldwork experiences because social justice is inherent to school counselor identity and comprehensive school counseling programs (Glosoff & Durham, 2010).

Personal Well-Being

Self-care and personal wellness are necessary not only for counseling practice but also for supervision experiences; these contribute to personal and professional development and ethical practice, promote positive outcomes with students/clients, and mitigate issues of burnout and turnover (Blount et al., 2016; Branco & Patton-Scott, 2020; Mullen et al., 2020). For trainees, it is typical yet challenging to balance an academic workload; the demands of fieldwork; and other personal, social, and emotional experiences. Trainees can utilize supervision to maintain accountability for self-assessing their wellness practices that support their continued effective and ethical counseling practice. Marley (2011) found that self-help strategies can reduce emotional distress and offer coping skills to manage difficulties, which can help trainees maintain their self-care and develop skills for continued wellness.

Blount et al. (2016) suggested developing a wellness identity in supervision. Trainees can develop a wellness identity by acknowledging the wellness practices they already engage in and continuing practices that help to maintain self-care. Moreover, Mullen et al. (2020) found that engaging in problem-solving pondering (e.g., planning or developing a strategy to complete a task or address a problem within fieldwork), as opposed to negative work-related rumination, supported well-being, higher job satisfaction, and work engagement for school counselors. For example, rather than ruminating about a disagreement with a teacher regarding recommending a student for the gifted program, the trainee can consider ways to turn future conversations into partnership opportunities with the teacher—while also consulting with the supervisor, administrator, and parent about considering additional data points to advocate for the student's enrollment in the gifted program.

Another way for trainees to support their well-being is to acknowledge their strengths (Wiley et al., 2021) related to their clinical knowledge, awareness, and skills in live and recorded sessions with students. This can be challenging yet empowering for trainees who are quick to self-criticize. For instance, before jumping to areas for improvement, trainees are encouraged to first ask, "What did I do well here?" and also request recommendations for additional wellness strategies to strengthen their school counseling practice. Additional resources, such as readings or role-plays, may help trainees

re-center themselves after difficult or challenging scenarios. For example, after making their first report to child protective services about a suspected physical abuse case, the trainee can process with their supervisor and discuss potential self-care strategies and resources to manage the difficult emotions arising from the challenging experience.

Moreover, researchers suggested utilizing self-compassion as a means of self-care for counseling graduate students (Nelson et al., 2018). Trainees can intentionally practice being kind to oneself; normalizing and humanizing the experience of challenges; and being aware of one's own feelings, thoughts, and reactions, which can enhance their well-being and reduce potential fatigue and burnout (Nelson et al., 2018; Pearson, 2004). For example, after hearing difficult feedback from their supervisor about improving a lesson plan, a trainee can try reframing weaknesses as areas for continued growth. Or, when reviewing a mid- or end-of-semester evaluation with their supervisor, a trainee can practice being present and open to feedback while also monitoring and taking the initiative to share feelings, insights, and questions. After a supervision session or evaluative experience, a trainee can also engage in journaling or compassionate letter writing (Nelson et al., 2018) to be mindfully aware of their emotions and normalize the challenging growth experiences of a developing counselor.

Overall, trainees deserve meaningful, supportive, and responsive supervision, yet they commonly (mis)perceive themselves as in positions of less power in supervision and their fieldwork sites. Trainees should feel empowered to consult with others at their sites and universities to address issues of concern and seek clarification from supervisors about the expectations of supervision; this supports an effective, collaborative supervision experience. Together with supervisors, trainees can review the strategies throughout supervision sessions. With guidance and support, trainees can attempt such strategies within the safety of the supervisory relationship.

Implications for Site Supervisors and Counselor Educators

There are several implications for site supervisors and counselor educators when considering strategies to empower trainees to maximize their supervision experience. Although trainees can take the initiative to implement such strategies independently, some suggestions may require additional collaborative support and guidance from site supervisors and counselor educators. For example, site supervisors and counselor educators could consider introducing the strategies posed in this article during supervision sessions or as assigned reading for discussion. Altogether, engaging in and facilitating these strategies contributes to the development of important dispositional characteristics required of professional school counselors.

Site supervisors and counselor educators have the responsibility to facilitate a supervision environment in which trainees feel empowered to utilize the suggested strategies. This requires them to intentionally balance safety and support with challenge and high expectations (Stoltenberg, 1981). When trainees lack a sense of safety, they may be less likely to self-disclose dilemmas or concerns and more likely to feel shame, which jeopardizes the overall supervision experience and relationship (J. V. Jordan, 2003; Murphy & Wright, 2005). When trainees experience inclusivity in their training programs and move past the discomfort of vulnerability, they can experience growth, strengthen the supervisory relationship, and address their learning goals (Bradley et al., 2019; Giordano et al., 2018). For example, although trainees can take the initiative to suggest norms for supervision, we encourage supervisors to invite or prompt discussions related to trainees' learning needs and expectations for the supervisory relationship.

Reflection and vulnerability also require rapport and trust for trainees to self-advocate. Further, when trainees can communicate with their supervisors about their needs, supervisors can respond by appropriately facilitating their request for support (Stoltenberg, 1981). During supervision, supervisors also model, teach, and monitor wellness strategies to support trainees' ethical and professional school counseling practice (Blount et al., 2016). For instance, site supervisors and counselor educators may need to introduce the Johari window framework as a structured reflective exercise, if trainees are not already aware of this tool (Halpern, 2009).

Finally, broaching within supervision may offer a proactive means of exploring dynamics, power, and cultural differences that can bolster the quality and longevity of the supervision experience. However, the onus is typically on supervisors to initiate broaching conversations after they have facilitated a supervision relationship characterized by trust, acceptance, and inclusion (Jones et al., 2019). Supervisors model how to broach topics of race and culture within the dynamics of the supervisory relationship so that trainees can feel empowered to incorporate broaching as an ongoing professional disposition during and beyond supervision. For example, trainees and supervisors are encouraged to explore, model, and role-play recommendations from Bemak and Chung (2008) to move beyond nice counselor syndrome in school counseling practice.

Limitations and Future Research

Although this article provided a variety of practical strategies for SCITs to navigate supervision, it is not intended to be comprehensive and is not without limitations. The suggested strategies have been informed by research to support the supervision process and overall trainee development but may not necessarily be empirically supported. In addition, the strategies may not apply across all supervision contexts, relationships, and circumstances; thus, we encourage trainees to use their best judgment to consider which strategies may be most feasible and useful within their given contexts. Although this article attempted to provide examples specific to the unique work environment and responsibilities that SCITs will encounter, several suggestions provided herein may also apply to counseling trainees working outside of school counseling contexts. Knowing that supervision is an evaluative and hierarchical process, there may be dynamics of power and privilege present that may intimidate or hinder trainees from autonomously attempting and engaging in such strategies. Thus, the power dynamics of supervision may present a barrier for some trainees to self-advocate.

Future research is needed about the characteristics and contributions of trainees that can enhance the supervisory relationship and competence of the supervisor. Researchers could consider a qualitative study to explore SCITs' experiences of autonomously implemented strategies during supervision as well as a quantitative intervention study to assess the effectiveness of specific strategies to enhance trainee and supervisor development, self-efficacy, and competence. Researchers could also consider strategies specific to site- and university-based supervision that offer evidence for trainees' growth and competence and later longitudinal impacts of such strategies on personal and professional development.

Conclusion

Considering that supervision is a time-limited experience, these suggested strategies for approaching supervision can inform SCITs (and trainees from other counseling disciplines) about ways to advocate for a quality supervision experience. When trainees are prepared for supervision, they may feel less

anxious and more empowered to approach and shape supervision to meet their developmental needs. When trainees are mindful of and actively engaged in reflection, vulnerability, self-advocacy, broaching, and wellness, they can feel empowered to seek support and resources to bridge gaps in their learning and development during the supervision experience. Site supervisors and counselor educators can also share these strategies with trainees and encourage trainees to implement them in fieldwork and university contexts.

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