New Perspectives on Working with Supervisees

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MetaWorks

...Introducing an old tool to address challenging relationships in supervision

Workshop Outline (Part II):
What is a Balint group?
- Overview
- Active participation in a Balint Group
- Debriefing session
Goals:

- Discuss the Impact of working as a Supervisor.
- Identify the Risks of Burnout
- Explore methods of Managing these Risks
- PPA CAC

Goals: (cont.)

- Identify Unique Characteristics of Balint Groups
- Distinguish Balint vs. Support or Consultation Groups
- Experience Dynamics and Process of a Balint Group
- Elicit benefits of “Balinting” a Case
- Encourage and Support Developing Balint Groups

Balint….Michael Balint

- Born in 1896 in Budapest
- After completing psychoanalytic training in Berlin and Budapest, emigrated to Scotland and moved to London where he worked at the Tavistock Clinic.
- He and his wife, Enid began the training/research seminars…now called Balint groups
- 1957 “The Doctor, His Patient and the Illness”
“…reflection on our observations can lead to better understanding… Understanding makes us better supervisors”

Unique Characteristics
- Structured leader and group member roles.
- Single case focused discussion.
- Emphasis on divergent thinking.
- Focus on Dr.–Pt. Relationship.

Unique Characteristics (cont.)
- No case notes or preparation.
- Focus on continuity relationship.
- Ideally, the group is on going.
- The group is closed.
- The leader has specialized training.
Competencies Taught by Balint Work

- Improves listening skills with both patients and colleagues
- Allows you to sit with uncertainty (and complexity) without feeling the need to tease it apart
- Encourages integrative thinking
- Reveals group dynamics
- Encourages empathy

Competencies Taught by Balint Work (cont.)

- Encourages reframing
- Encourages thinking outside the box
- Method for expressing frustration, pain and joy
- Encourages camaraderie with group members
- Encourages intimacy with group members

Competencies Taught by Balint Work (cont.)

- Improves observation powers
- Shows value of being and not doing
- Encourages reflection
- Encourages self-evaluation
- Improves satisfaction of all practicing supervisors
GROUP COMPOSITION

The Leader:
- Keep discussion focused on the supervisor - supervisee relationship
- Redirect discussion, as necessary
- Encourage speculation
- Act as a time keeper
- Ensure an atmosphere of safety

GROUND RULES

Confidentiality → Honesty
Respect ← Ownership
GROUP PROCESS

Who’s got a case?

I do.

Angela is a 79 yr old blind woman...
What’s a Supervision Balint Case?
- Supervisees we have ongoing relationships with
- Supervisees who raise inner conflict or strong feelings
- Supervisees that leave us feeling baffled or confused
- Supervisees we take home and think about

GROUP PROCESS

Are there any clarifying questions?

I imagine Angela to be...
GROUP PROCESS

If I were the psychologist, I would feel….

GROUP PROCESS

If I were this patient, I would….

Why BALINT for Psychology Supervisors?

- the characteristics of the supervisor supervisee relationship are universal
- as Psychologists, we are involved in many situations which evoke powerful emotions
- addresses numerous license / ethics issues related to professionalism
WHAT BALINT IS NOT

- Case discussion group
- Case consultation group
- Support group
- Group therapy

Why Use Balint Groups?

- to improve our self awareness
- to learn self-reflection
- to improve our ability to communicate

Why Use Balint Groups?

- to share our experiences as psychologists
- to nourish ourselves and enable others
  - to make discoveries
- to rediscover the meaning and purpose of being a psychologist
Resources:
Balint Groups – Group Processes
- American Balint Society
  http://americanbalintsociety.org
- Balint Leader Training and Certification
- International Balint Federation