Chapter 9

Live Play Therapy Supervision

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ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the author introduces live play therapy supervision as a complementary method to the traditional ways in which play therapy supervision is done, particularly in the context of play therapy training clinics. As conceived here, live play therapy supervision represents a valuable addition to the clinical supervision practices employed in the training of future play therapy practitioners. Specifically, this chapter proposes a working definition of live play therapy supervision, presents the advantages and disadvantages of using this model, explores some methods as well as techniques of live play therapy supervision, and describes the process of live play therapy supervision. Finally, the profile and role of the live play therapy supervisor is defined, the supervisory relationship is described, as well as the implications and future research possibilities in this area.

INTRODUCTION

The training of competent clinicians, and play therapists in particular, involves the convergence of specific learning conditions. Such conditions include the use of best practices in clinical education and supervision specifically designed for the training of play therapists, as well as the fulfillment of ethical mandates that safeguard a comprehensive system of learning and care. In addition, the use of methods that most clearly facilitate the training and supervision of play therapists becomes paramount given the uniqueness of this clinical specialty, and the level of vulnerability of the populations play therapists typically serve. As such, a case is made here about the relevance of using a supervision method which has the potential to facilitate and
significantly enhance the play therapy supervision process, while attending to the uniqueness of the play therapy experience, the live play therapy supervision method.

In its current state, there appears to be limited research related to the supervision of play therapists, with most of the literature around the topic being the result of very valuable, yet mainly anecdotic experiences, or conceptual elaborations (Donald, Culbreth & Carter, 2015). In addition, there is still a need for a more clearly defined theory, as well as methods or models of play therapy supervision; particularly one that integrates the traditional models of supervision with the uniqueness, creativity and expressiveness of play therapy (Hudspeth, 2015).

In this chapter, the author introduces live play therapy supervision as a complementary method to the traditional ways in which play therapy supervision is done such as self-report, live observation, video reviews, asynchronous supervision, etc. As conceived here, live play therapy supervision actually implies the use of direct assessment and intervention by the supervisor during a live observation of a play therapy session; therefore, live play therapy supervision represents a valuable addition to the clinical education and supervision practices employed in the training of future play therapy practitioners. This chapter also represents a contribution to the very limited body of knowledge that exist about live play therapy supervision.

Specifically, this chapter proposes a working definition of live play therapy supervision, presents the advantages and disadvantages of using this model, explores some methods as well as techniques of live play therapy supervision, and describes the process of live play therapy supervision. Finally, the profile and role of the live play therapy supervisor is explored, the supervision relationship is discussed, and the implications and future research possibilities in this area are presented.

**LIVE SUPERVISION**

Live supervision involves the direct observation of a counselor-in-training’s session, and the synchronous intervention and guidance of a seasoned clinical supervisor (Bernard and Goodyear, 2014; Machuca, Johnson & Moro, 2016). By its very definition, live supervision is an experiential supervision method that provides both supervisor and supervisee the opportunity to interact in real time. Live supervision is different from other methods of supervision in that it allows the supervisor to provide direct guidance and intervention to the supervisee during the course of a counseling session. This is a very common method of supervision in counselor education and supervision settings (Koltz & Feit, 2012; Moody & Vereen, 2014), as well as other clinical programs with on-campus training clinics.
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