

SACES Research & Practice Grant Final Report 2017-2018

Title of Funded Project: Supervisor Cultural Humility as a Predictor of Supervisee Nondisclosure and Multicultural Competence

Researchers: Ryan Cook and Connie T. Jones

Rationale of the funded project

As the United States continues to become more diverse, so is the field of counseling and the clients whom counselors serve (Inman et al., 2014). Counselors have an ethical obligation to demonstrate multicultural sensitivity, competence, and skills when working with individuals in a multicultural society. ([ACA] American Counseling Association, 2014; Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999). Clinical supervision aids in counselor growth of multicultural competence, as clinical supervision is necessary to promote overall counselor development and to ensure the welfare of clients (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Multicultural supervision emphasizes that supervisors and supervisees engage in dialogues about cultural identities and issues of diversity in order to foster counselor multicultural competence, self-awareness, and knowledge base (Gatmon et al., 2001; Inman et al., 2014).

Literature suggests that it is critical for supervisors to convey a willingness to engage in multicultural conversations and to maintain a nonjudgmental stance in order to support supervisee development (Gatmon et al., 2001; Hood et al., 2016). This construct, known as *cultural humility*, has largely been examined in the client-counselor relationship, and has found to be related to the clients' perceived therapeutic gains in counseling and the quality of the working alliance with their counselor (Hook, Davis, Owen, Worthington, & Utsey, 2013). Despite the promising findings in the client-counselor relationship, cultural humility of supervisors has yet to be examined in an empirical study (see Hook et al., 2016). Perhaps supervisors who demonstrate cultural humility are best able to facilitate supervisee multicultural competency development and to prepare them to work as ethical counselors (Hook et al., 2016).

In clinical supervision, one potential barrier to the development of multicultural competence is supervisee nondisclosure. Supervisors are reliant on supervisees to accurately disclose information in supervision (Bordin, 1983). However, there is substantial evidence that many supervisees withhold information from their supervisors (e.g., Hess et al., 2008; Mehr, Caskie, & Nutt, 2010; 2015; Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996). Moreover, supervisees' nondisclosure may be due in part to their supervisors' perceived lack of cultural competence and/or lack of conversations about diversity and cultural identities (Jernigan, Green, Helms, Perez-Gualdron, & Henze, 2010; Pisani, 2008). Pisani (2008) found that supervisees who experienced microaggressions or racism by their supervisors were less willing to disclose in the future. In a qualitative study, Jernigan et al. (2010), found that when a supervisee was dissatisfied with how his or her supervisor attended to issues of culture, the result for him or her to evade engaging in discussions of culture in the future, which can hinder outcomes of supervision such as multicultural competence (Haskins et al., 2013). Perhaps, cultural humility demonstrated by supervisors would invite more open discussion, thereby decreasing supervisee nondisclosure, and in turn fostering supervisee multicultural competency development. Therefore, the purpose of the current study is to examine the relationship between supervisor cultural humility and supervisee multicultural competency; and to examine if this relationship is

mediated by supervisee nondisclosure. Our results will address critical questions on how to best train counselors to serve clients from diverse backgrounds (ACA, 2014).

Methodology of the project funded

Participants and Procedure. Participants in the current study were counselors seeking licensure as professional counselors in ten states across the United States. We obtained lists from ten state licensing boards of counselors who are: (a) currently seeking licensure and (b) receiving supervision for licensure. To collect data from a nationally representative sample, we solicited lists from two states in each of the five ACES regions of counselors. We randomly selected 150 potential participants from nine of the 10 states and utilized the entire list from one state ($n = 136$), totaling 1,486 potential participants. We mailed paper-and-pencil survey packets to the participants and asked them to respond about the supervisor with whom they registered for state licensure. Participants placed the completed surveys in a prepaid, addressed envelope and mailed to us. Mailing the completed survey back to the researchers, indicated applied consent. We incentivized participation by encouraging participants to select one of six charitable organizations they would like the research team to make a \$100.00 donation. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention received the most votes. Survey packets were returned from 109 participants yielding a response rate of 7.3%. Two participant responses were removed due to incomplete data resulting in a final sample of 107.

Instruments. We utilized four instruments: (a) demographic questionnaire, (b) the Cultural Humility Scale (Hook et al., 2013), (c) the Multicultural Counseling Competency and Training Survey (Holcomb-McCoy & Myers, 1999), and (d) the Supervisee Nondisclosure Survey (Ellis & Colvin, 2016; Siembor, 2012). Aside from the demographic questionnaire, all instruments demonstrated acceptable internal reliability ($\alpha < .80$).

Analyses and Results

The average age of participants ranged from 24 to 67 ($M = 38.79$, $SD = 11.20$). The majority of participants identified as female (79.4%), while 21 participants identified as male (19.6%) and one participant identified as non-binary (.9%). Regarding race, 89 participants identified their race as White (83.2%), eight participants identified as Hispanic (7.5%), five participants identified as African-American/Black (4.7%), two participants identified as Asian (1.9%), two participants identified as multiracial, and one participant did not respond to the item (.9%).

We utilized two hierarchical linear regression analyses to examine supervisees' perception of their supervisors' cultural humility as a predictor of supervisee intentional nondisclosure and supervisee multicultural competency (Keith, 2006; Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). In the first model, the subscales of the cultural humility scale (positive and negative perception), served as the predictor variables of supervisee nondisclosure. Similarly, in the second model, the subscales of the cultural humility scale were also used as predictor variables of supervisee multicultural competence. The negative perception subscale was entered into the model first, followed by positive perception. In the first model, on positive perceptions ($\beta = .537$, $p < .001$), was retained in the final model $F(1, 104) = 24.77$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .323$. This finding suggest that supervisee disclosure was more common when supervisees perceived more positive cultural humility in their supervisors. In the second model, again, only positive perceptions ($\beta = -.341$, $p < .001$) was retained in the final model $F(1,104) = 5.613$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .097$. This finding

suggest supervisees more frequently report higher levels self-assessed multicultural competency when they perceive less positive traits of cultural humility in their supervisors.

Limitations

The results from this study must be considered in light of the limitations of the study. First, the response rate in the current study was only 7.3%. It is unclear why those who participated in the study chose to do so and why those who did not participate chose not to do so. Majority of the existing literature on intentional nondisclosure utilized samples of trainees (e.g., Ladany et al., 1996; Mehr et al., 2010). While the current study explored nondisclosure in sample of counselors in the field, the findings may not be generalizable across developmental levels. Finally, while we attempted to collect data from a nationally representative sample, it is possible that the varying supervision requirements (American Counseling Association, 2016) may have influenced our findings. Perhaps soliciting participation from supervisees in other states would have yield different findings.

Implications for future research

To our knowledge, this is the first study to examine supervisees' perceptions of cultural humility in a sample of counselors. The findings from the current study offer promising findings into the importance of supervisor cultural humility, namely positive perceptions, as means to mitigate nondisclosure. Future research should examine cultural humility as a predictor variable of other importance outcome variables (e.g., the working alliance, supervisee satisfaction) and across developmental levels (e.g., practicum, internship). Interestingly, for the participants in the current study, supervisees' perceived less positive cultural humility was a significant predictor of more supervisee multicultural competence. Perhaps supervisees with more developed multicultural competence are better able to assess their supervisors in terms their cultural humility (e.g., willingness to invite conversations of culture). Future research should explore this finding further.

Implications for Counselor Education and/or Supervision

The findings from the current study suggest that supervisors who hope to mitigate supervisee intentional nondisclosure should employ strategies to improve their supervisees' perceptions of their cultural humility. That is, supervisors who hope to encourage supervisee disclosure should invite multicultural conversations and maintain a nonjudgmental stance (Gatmon et al., 2001; Hood et al., 2016). Relatedly, given the absence of literature on cultural humility in the supervisory relationship, it is likely that counselor educators have yet to integrate trainings for their current and future supervisors on the importance of cultural humility. Finally, we found the finding that supervisees who perceived themselves as more multicultural competent also perceived less positive traits of their supervisors being cultural humble. These findings may suggest the need for assessing the level of multicultural competence of both the supervisor and supervisee early in the supervision dyad. This will help both parties understand each other's level of multicultural competence to meet the needs and lessen potential issues that may arise surrounding cultural competence and humility, such as intentional nondisclosure. For example, those with perceived higher levels of multicultural competence may desire more multicultural conversations in order develop a positive perception of the supervisor's cultural humility.

Plan to Disseminate Findings

The findings from the current study have been submitted to SACES as a content presentation. Furthermore, we plan to submit these findings for publication in a counseling journal. SACES will be acknowledged for the funding support in all dissemination of this research.

Final Budget

Each survey packet costed, \$1.68 to be mailed and returned. Accordingly, the funds for this research grant were used to subsidize the mailing cost associated with this project.

Research Report for posting on www.saces.org

Please accept this Word document report as our final research report, including all components required. We acknowledge that this final Report will be posted on SACES website.

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