

Supervision Tips for Beginning the Academic Year

Dennis J. Simon, Mark E. Swerdlik, & Tracy K. Cruise

ISPA Supervisor Credential Program

The ISPA Supervisor Credential Program is committed to providing continual professional development information to supervisors. In keeping with our periodic sharing of “Supervision Tips” that illustrate best practices, we would like to provide a reminder of key elements in establishing an effective supervisory relationship. Today’s Supervision Tip reviews practical and process suggestions for the developing stage of a supervisory relationship based on the Developmental, Ecological, and Problem-Solving (DEP) approach.

At the beginning of an academic year or even prior to the start of the year, it may be helpful for supervisors and supervisees to engage in a structured self-assessment in order to define areas of strength and growth for the upcoming supervisory relationship. Supervisors may find it helpful to complete the DEP Supervisor Self-reflection and Supervisor Feedback Form (DEP-SSFS) (see attached document) or to look back at previous supervisee evaluations to set supervision goals for themselves and their trainees. This may also align with supervisees completing a self-assessment (e.g., Interns complete a self-rating on the IL Internship Plan.) or explicitly describing practicum goals. Remembering to define goals in specific, measurable, and behavioral terms will aid in progress monitoring and summative evaluation and should be a shared process between supervisor and supervisee. Each supervisory relationship will identify unique goals needed for optimal outcomes. Scheduling set times to review each person’s progress will allow for greater focus on a goal or replacement of met goals. Just like snowflakes not two supervisory relationships are the same.

A subtle aspect of shared goal setting is building trust in the supervisory relationship. More direct methods can be employed to establish and maintain trust as well. For example, use of a supervision contract can incorporate supervision goals and clearly define roles of each person, expectations, and specific guidelines for communication and evaluation. A supervision contract template is attached for your use. A Supervision Planner (see attached) completed by the supervisee prior to supervision will increase efficiency of supervision and teach self-reflection early in the supervisee’s career. Supervisors can complete the Supervisor Progress Note to document key session points, ongoing progress, and specific suggestions/assignments. These supportive documents can be the basis for intentional, purposeful supervision, especially when used continually throughout the training.

In addition to direct products, the processes incorporated into the supervisory relationship, such as including the supervisee in orientations, staff meetings, and offering clear and frequent feedback can be equally important in facilitating trust. Simple gestures, including introducing the supervisee to personnel in the building, offering them access to the district app or emergency contact source, telling them where to park, providing a work space, or sharing a meal can be welcoming and meaningful to new supervisees with a strong desire to become acclimated to their role. If a supervisor demonstrates attention to small details, supervisees can be assured that supervisors will also provide time and focus to the more significant training components.

If you have begun the year without incorporating any of these tips, it is not too late. One can create a supervision contract to implement for the remainder of the year or discuss the role of each party during the protected supervision sessions. Most importantly, remember that

supervisees are nervous about their new role and how they will be evaluated. Structure and communication helps to lessen these concerns.

Announcements:

We are pleased to announce that Jeanette Quirk, Beth Casper, and Melissa Hanke are hosting a Free, online **ISPA Supervisor Credential Training in October** (Four, 3-hour training sessions plus two metasupervisions). Please encourage colleagues to register on the ISPA Website: www.ilispa.org.

We are moving forward with the next phase of the credentialing program, which includes program evaluation. Please look for your email invite in the upcoming weeks to participate in our **Focus Group study** re: the ISPA Supervisor Credential Program and your application of the DEP model.

Please make sure that your ISPA membership is maintained. This is important for our profession and the children, families, and faculty we serve; and it is a requirement for maintaining the Credential and your listing on the ISPA Website as an **ISPA Credentialed Supervisor**.