



## Multi combined Adlerian supervision in Counseling

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### Abstract

For counselor professional and counselor education, supervision is an important process, in which more experienced professional helps and guides less experienced professional. To provide an effective and beneficial supervision, various therapy, development, or process based approaches and models have been developed. In addition, different eclectic models integrating more than one model have been developed. In this paper, as a supervision model, multi combined Adlerian supervision model is proposed. The model includes Adlerian supervision and its integration with discrimination model (DM; Bernard, 1979). DM is one of the most known counseling supervision model and Adlerian therapy is an important theory to understand human nature in both counseling and supervision settings. Since supervision is one of the important concepts in counseling, the current integrated model important is useful for counselors and counselor educators for their supervision practice. Theoretical tenets of the pieces of the integration first are explained by reviewing the literature. Then, the current model and its process are explained. Limitations and strengths are discussed with implications for counselor supervisors.

**Keywords:** Clinical supervision; discriminant model; Adlerian supervision; counselor education and development.

### 1. Introduction

Supervision is an essential component of counseling profession (Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982). Bernard and Goodyear (2014) defined supervision as a process in which a more experienced profession provides intervention to a less experienced colleague who is generally in the same professional area. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) also added that supervisory relationship has unique characteristics such as “evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s)” (p. 9).

To facilitate supervision, models and approaches have been elaborated. Bernard and Goodyear (2014) noted that supervision models provide structures and guidelines to supervisors, helps supervisors serve cohesive supervision, and address supervisees’ needs. Throughout the literature, three broad categories of counseling supervision models have been considered: (a) psychotherapy based models, (b) developmental models, and (c) process models (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Comparing to counseling theories, counseling supervision models are more integrative than counseling theories (Watkins, 1997) but these models, of course, may have similarities with counseling theories. For both counseling and supervision, in addition to certain theories or model, there have been integrated models that represent eclectic approach (Corey,

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Haynes, Moulton, & Muratori, 2014). In these models, two or more models are integrated in a logical way to broaden professionals' conceptual and practical views.

The purpose of this paper is to propose an integrative supervision model for counselors and counselor educators, in which discriminant model (DM; Bernard, 1979) and Adlerian supervision are integrated. As mentioned, supervision is one of the core components of counseling profession and counselor education. This study aims to propose this model for counselors and counselor educators to implement in their practice to enhance development of counselors or counselors-in-trainings. Basically, the proposed model is the integration of Adlerian supervision with DM (Bernard, 1979). While the DM provides clear supervisor roles and focus areas (Bernard, 1979), Adlerian supervision emphasizes egalitarian relationship, collaboration, and supporting supervisee's development (Milliren, Clemmer & Wingett, 2006). Therefore, the proposed model provide a comprehensive and sensitive eclectic approach to meet supervisees' needs. The following elements are discussed: (a) theoretical and empirical tenets of both models integrated into the current model, (b) the practical perspectives, (d) application of the current model including process, relationship, and evaluation, and (d) strengths and limitations. These concepts explain the theoretical and practical components of the current model and provide a guideline for counseling supervisors.

## 2. The Discrimination Model

The DM (Bernard, 1979) is described as one of the most known supervision models, which was developed to assist supervisors-in-training by providing clear roles and foci (Bernard, 1979; Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Borders & Brown, 2005; Luke & Bernard, 2006). The DM was called discrimination because main aspects of the model are the identification and action (Bernard, 1979). Bernard (1979) described the purpose of supervision as to "produce competent counselors" (p.61). The DM provides a tangible structure for supervisors, such as selecting the most effective way to serve supervisee. Therefore, the DM is a guide for supervisors, which is empirically investigated and supported for clinical use (Luke & Bernard, 2006). The DM is the most influential model in understating roles in supervision (Shechtman & Wirzberger 1999). Because DM provides tangible guide for counseling supervisors, it is useful to carry out theoretical knowledge into the practice.

Throughout the literature, there have been studies focused on especially roles and functions of the DM. In a study, Lazovsky and Shimoni (2007) investigated the ideal roles of counseling mentors based on mentors' and interns' perception. They found that teaching was the most salient role, and interns' and mentors' perceptions of contribution of the mentor-specific behaviors were different. In another study, Ellis and Dell (1986) investigated the dimensions that supervisors rely on their perception of supervisory roles, and tested the DM two dimensional model (foci and roles). Results partially supported the DM two-dimensional model. Ellis and Dell found that two of the dimensions presented in the study were related to DM's dimensions. However, teacher and counselor roles were not found to be distinct, and the function of personalization was not clear (Ellis & Dell, 1986).

Luke et al. (2011) replicated Ellis and Dell's (1986) study with school counselors. They found that school counselor supervisors seemed to use three dimensions: (a) dimension 1 (behavioral intervention vs. conceptualization), (b) dimension 2 (consultant vs. teacher-counselor), and (c) dimension 3 (personalization focus vs. teacher role). However, results also showed that school counselors weighted three dimensions different than mental health counselors, which were subjected in Ellis and Dell's study (Luke et al., 2011). As these studies has shown that DM provides concepts related to supervisor's roles but there might be differences based on situation.

As the purpose of the current model, two concepts in the DM are focused: supervisory foci and roles. By combining three foci and three roles, a matrix with nine approaches can be created, so the supervisor can choose the approach depending on supervisee's need (Luke, Ellis, & Bernard, 2011). Those foci and roles are explained in accordance with the purpose of the current model.

## 2. 1. Foci of Discrimination Model

Bernard (1979) listed three functions of discrimination model: a) process skills, b) conceptualization skills, and c) personalization skills. Process skills refer to skills and techniques unique to counseling fields different than other social contacts (Bernard, 1979). All counselors either experienced or inexperienced have process skills to some extent, and the complexity of skills may differ based on practitioners' experience and knowledge (Bernard, 1979; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Luke & Bernard, 2006). Some of process skills include the ability to start conversation, the competence in the use of reflective communication such as summarization, questions, interpretations, and using verbal and non-verbal languages (Bernard, 1979).

On the other hand, conceptualization skills refer the ability to understand client's expression and messages, choose appropriate strategies, and recognize improvement by the client (Bernard, 1979; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Luke & Bernard, 2006). Bernard (1979) stated that conceptualization can be done in the session or between sessions. Bernard also added that some practitioners may not be able to conceptualize the client's case in the session, but be able to make effective conclusion after the session. A well-trained counselor should be competent in both cases so supervisors should focus on improving counselor's ability of conceptualizing both during and between counseling sessions (Bernard, 1979).

Personalization skills, another foci of the DM, refer to personal issues of counselor which can be both overt and covert (Bernard, 1979). Generally, personalization skills are related to the counselor's level of comfort in the counseling relationship, taking responsibility of own skills, being able to receive feedback from supervisor, being comfortable with own feelings, and having fundamental respect for clients (Bernard, 1979; Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007; Luke & Bernard, 2006). In general, those three dimensions give supervisors an outline about what to focus and cover in supervision (Bernard, 1979). In other words, these foci are the goals in the supervision, which supervisor would help and guide supervisee to accomplish and develop through.

## 2. 2. Roles in Discrimination Model

Bernard (1979) defined three roles of the DM. First, teacher role focuses on conveying knowledge and expertise. In a teacher role, supervisors tend to teach how to use basic skills, conceptualize the case, or even how to counsel. Second, counselor role is more about helping and guiding supervisee while dealing with personal issues such as nervousness or self-doubt. Therefore, supervisor is more likely counseling and helping supervisee overcome personal issues. Third, consultant role focuses on the supervisee's exploring his or her nature (Bernard, 1979). Less experienced supervisors prefer teacher role more than counselor and consultant roles and more experienced supervisors tend to offer roles and foci in balance (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998).

However, roles and foci are not stable, rather they are changeable over time and situations. Roles and foci do not change only between the sessions; this also can occur within the session, which is called *situation specific* (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014). Based on the situation, supervisor may need to change the roles, but this should be done consciously and purposefully. More specifically, during the supervision session, supervisee's competence and needs should be evaluated and the roles should be selected respectively (Lazovsky & Shimoni, 2007). Overall, these roles provide a guideline to supervisors, so they can be more conscious and purposeful about their action.

## 3. Adlerian Therapy and Supervision

Adlerian therapy, also named as Individual Psychology, has been one of the most interested theory in psychology and psychotherapy. Adlerian supervision forms the crucial part of the current model. Adler believed that people are able to change their goals and life styles, so they can become happier and have more satisfied lives (Seligman & Reichenberg, 2010). In addition, individual psychology pays attention to social interest. Social interest, like other psychological traits, is a tool for individuals to aim superiority or perfectionism (Ansbacher & Ansabcher, 1956).

Regarding therapy, the motive of Adlerian psychotherapy includes following main characteristics: (a) understanding client's lifestyle, problems, and symptoms; (b) helping client gain insight to him/herself and own problems; and (c) enhancing social interest (Ansbacher & Ansabcher, 1956). Similarly, Ashby, Kottman and Rice (1998) noted that for Adlerian counselors, there are two main basics of therapy: to figure out client's life style and to help client get insight to his or her lifestyle. The concept of Individual Psychotherapy can be applied to supervision settings, so supervisors treat supervisees by helping him or her gain insight and grow.

### 3. 1. Adlerian Counseling Supervision

Adlerian supervision refers to using of Adlerian concepts in supervision settings for further progress of supervisee (Tobin & McCurdy, 2006). Although Adler's writings about Individual Psychology did not directly target supervision, recent conceptual studies applied Adlerian concepts to supervision and offered a comprehensive model (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006). In Adlerian supervision, supervisor helps supervisee in developing goals, and evaluating mistaken beliefs and attitudes that intervene effective counseling throughout supervisee's reconstructing counseling experience in understanding images and actions (Milliren et al., 2006).

Regarding the supervisory process, four stages are defined as parallel to Adlerian therapy (Bornsheuer-Boswel, Polonyi & Watts, 2013). These include: (a) establishing supportive relationship; (b) understating client and supervisee (c) interpretation client's and supervisee's behaviors and get insight; and (d) reorientation focusing on supervisee development (Newlon & Arciniega, 1983). Lemberger and Dollarhide (2006) mentioned that supervisee elicit his or her counseling style in supervision and supervisors may be able to show supervisee mistaken beliefs such as inaccurate case conceptualization, overgeneralization, or unattainable goals.

Adlerian supervision also emphasizes the importance of the egalitarian relationship between supervisor and supervisee. Milliren et al. (2006) stated that Adler would emphasize equal relationship between supervisor and supervisee, and the content would be decided through collaboration. Milliren et al. (2006) also added that the relationship would be a horizontal rather than vertical. Additionally, encouragement is being used throughout the all Adlerian supervisory process and supervisor actively attempt to explore supervisee's lifestyle and faulty thinking (McCurdy, 2006).

### 3. 2. Understanding supervisees' lifestyles and personality priorities.

As mentioned, understanding lifestyles is crucial in Adlerian psychotherapy and supervision. However, the concept of lifestyle is not simple; rather it is comprehensive and includes lots of components such as family constellation, birth order or environment (Ansbacher & Ansabcher, 1956; Ashby et al., 1998). As a way to understand individuals' lifestyle, personality priorities can be helpful. Kefir (1981) first presented personality priorities at a workshop. She proposed the idea of personality priorities as the avoidance ways of individuals to move away from traumatic events and get the sense of accomplishment (Kefir, 1981).

Kefir (1981) proposed and explained four personality priorities: (a) controlling, (b) pleasing, (c) avoiding, and (d) superiority. She stated that people with a controlling priority tended to avoid being ridiculed and they are also socially sensitive and overly concerned with correctness. The people with a pleasing priority avoid rejection, and they try to get others' approval. Individuals with avoiding/comfort personality priority use delay, unfinished business, or unmade decisions to be away from stress. Last, people with superiority priorities tend to avoid anonymity and unknown, and they value achievement, leadership, or any fashion which make them superior (Kefir, 1981). Regarding supervision, supervisees' personality priorities, which is a window to understand lifestyles, may affect their expectations, the ways of receiving feedback or performance in counseling and supervision. In addition, the concept of personality priorities can be related to personalization focus of the DM.

Research examined supervision have showed that Adlerian concepts are helpful for development of a comprehensive model (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006). For example, Johnson (1997) investigated effects of social interest of novice counselors-in-training on their level of conceptualization and empathic understanding. Johnson found that novice counselors were more anxious and self-focused, so they were less able to connect with clients than more experienced counselors. Also, Adlerian supervision has been used and tested with different techniques. In a study, McCurdy and Owen (2008) investigated the effects of Adlerian sandtray supervision and found that Adlerian sandtray supervision was equally effective as traditional supervisor methods in promoting working alliance. In addition to quantitative studies on Adlerian concepts and supervision, conceptual articles have been published on Adlerian supervision (e.g., Hackbarth & Dinkmeyer, 1991; McMohan & Fall, 2006; Milliren et al., 2006; Tobin & McCurdy, 2006) and on its integration to different supervision models and techniques (e.g., Integrated Developmental Model; Bornsheuer-Boswel et al., 2013; Solution Focused; McCurdy, 2006).

#### **4. The Current Model**

The current model is the integration of Adlerian supervision with the DM. The main structure of the model is Adlerian supervision and Adlerian supervision's four steps. In addition, the model incorporates DM's foci and roles (Bernard, 1979). The important components of the model are explained for ones supervising counselors-in-training but the model is not limited to counselor educators.

##### **4. 1. The supervision Process**

It is important for supervisors to be aware of the supervisee's knowledge and experience. Thus, at the beginning, the supervisee would consider the supervisees' capacities and abilities. However, supervisees' development is not necessarily stable and the supervisor may modify the process as needed.

After supervisee's knowledge and experience understood by the supervisor, Adlerian four-step supervision can be applied during a supervision session. These four steps provide a guideline for supervisors though transition between steps is not mechanical, rather it is a dynamic process. As going through the steps, the supervisor would have different roles interchangeably among Bernard's (1979) three roles (e.g., teacher, counselor, and consultant).

Bernard's (1979) foci (process, conceptualization, and personalization skills) provide supervisors a guideline of what to focus in the sessions. The supervisor and the supervisee aim to develop those three focus areas while going through the supervision steps. For example, a supervisor may understand about a supervisee's knowledge and experience of process, conceptualization, and personalization skill at the second step. Therefore, the third and fourth steps can be modified according as supervisee's needs.

##### **4. 2. The Relationship in Supervision**

The relationship of the model is comprised of Adlerian supervision's egalitarian understanding. Adlerian supervision pays attention to encouragements, egalitarian, supportive, and collaborative relationship (Bornsheuer-Boswel et al., 2013; McCurdy, 2006; Milliren et al., 2006). Thus, the supervisor considers bilateral relationship in order to build rapport with supervisee, so the supervisor is able to address any concerns or issue such as transference, parallel process, or dual relationships. For example, Tobin and McCurdy (2006) mentioned that Adlerian-focused supervision seems beneficial in addressing countertransference and supervisory progression.

In addition, Adlerian supervision pays attention to how supervisee acts in counseling and supervision (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006; McCurdy, 2006). If any issue arises about parallel process, the current model's supervisor would be able to understand how the supervisee acts in the counseling or the supervision session. However, dual relationship may arise between supervisor and supervisee, especially in university settings because both supervisor and supervisee may have

different roles such as teacher or student. Regarding any dual relationship issues, the supervisor would not hesitate to address the issues directly with supervisee.

A supervisor of the current model uses the DM's three roles. For example, during the first step of the process (establishing supportive relationship), supervisees may mostly act in counselor role whereas if the supervisor attempts to convey any knowledge or techniques, the role may shift to teacher. For the current model, those roles may change within or between the sessions.

### 4. 3. Evaluation

Adlerian supervision is naturally critical of skills and development but it minimizes the threatening nature of evaluation (Lemberger & Dollarhide, 2006). The aim of the supervision is to help supervisee develop counseling related skills. Thus, supervisor needs to consider how supervisees are progressing. On the other hand, the supervisor is responsible for the client and counseling profession in general. Therefore, the supervisor shapes the evaluation process based on counseling profession that indicates counselor-in-training supervisees should be evaluated by experienced supervisors. Regarding evaluations, the supervisor is also ethically responsible to evaluate the supervisee and endorse or not as evaluating supervisee's qualifications (American Counseling Association Code of Ethics; ACA, 2005).

## 5. Discussion

In this paper, an integrated supervision model is offered. The model is based on Adlerian supervision integrated with the DM (Bernard, 1979). The heart of the model is Adlerian psychology and its application to counseling supervision. In addition, the DM's foci and roles are integrated to define the focus of content and roles of supervisor. The model aims to provide supervision comprehensively by attending an egalitarian relationship between supervisor and supervisee.

### 5. 1. Challenges to Use the Current Model

There are possible challenges for the application of the current model. First, a supervisor of this model might be overwhelmed with the amount of concepts from different approaches. However, if a supervisor takes Adlerian baseline and combine other approaches as supplements, the process can be clearer. Second, the combination of Adlerian egalitarian relationship and DM's roles might cause conflict for supervisors. However, Adlerian supervision identifies the characteristics of the relationship whereas the DM provides guideline for different roles. Thus, a supervisor can act in one of three roles while showing the characteristics of Adlerian relationships.

### 5. 2. Limitations and Strengths

The current model aims to meet the needs of supervisee from different perspectives. Also, the model is a comprehensive with understanding supervisees either in counseling or supervision. One of the main characteristics of the model is emphasizing the egalitarian relationship, which gives supervisee a voice to express self in collaborative manner and promotes supervisees' autonomy. In addition, the model is flexible for different counseling orientation such as mental health, school, or family/marriage.

Regarding limitations, the model is theory oriented, so the application of the model might be challenging. Similarly, conceptualizing the supervisee (e.g., life style, social interests, goals, developmental level etc.) might be abstract for some supervisors and for some circumstances. Another limitation of the model is that it has not been supported empirically. Thus, further research investigating the effectiveness of the model is needed.

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