

Module 4

# Group Supervision



# Acknowledgement & Disclaimer

The contents of this presentation were developed with support from the Innovative Rehabilitation Training Program funded under #H263C190007 by the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services (OSERS), Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA).

The information contained herein does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the U.S. Department of Education and no official endorsement should be inferred.

# Center for Innovative Training in Vocational Rehabilitation (CIT-VR)

Developing innovative methods to train VR personnel in their work at State Vocational Rehabilitation agencies to deliver services to improve employment outcomes for individuals with disabilities.

- VR 101 Training Cohort
- Communities of Practice
- Webinars
- Training Resources
- Training Needs Surveys
  
- Online Community: [trainvr.ning.com](http://trainvr.ning.com)

# Today's Presenter

## James T. Herbert

Professor of Rehabilitation and  
Human Services

The Pennsylvania State University

[jth4@psu.edu](mailto:jth4@psu.edu)



**PennState**

# Presenter Background in Clinical Supervision

- 35 years as Rehabilitation Counselor Educator
- Clinical supervision research for past 30 years
  - Nationwide survey of graduate training practices
  - Instrument validation on CS
  - Description of CS models
  - Analysis of graduate training practices
  - Effectiveness of CS training in SVR
- CS significant part of teaching assignments
- Conducted CS training across United States for 10 different State VR agencies
- Awarded Mary Switzer Distinguished Research Fellow on three occasions with one in recognition for his work involving the development of a training program to enhance CS practice within State VR



# Brief Review of Module 3

- Examined the state of the art of individual supervision as practiced in State VR.
- Provided a list of considerations prior to first face-to-face meeting.
- Reviewed the importance of writing up an individual supervision contract.
- Outlined a framework as to what areas could be addressed as part of individual supervision.
- Provided an outline to help supervisors determine whether the individual supervision session could be considered “good” or not.

# Learning Objectives for Module 4

- ✓ Operationalize a definition of group supervision
- ✓ Examine how group supervision is practiced in State VR
- ✓ Review stages of group development for CS
- ✓ Outline how to prepare for first group session
- ✓ Describe several approaches to group supervision
  - Traditional, solution-focused approach
  - Non-traditional, question method
  - Peer-group discussion method by Borders

# Operationalizing “Group Supervision”

## GS is NOT...

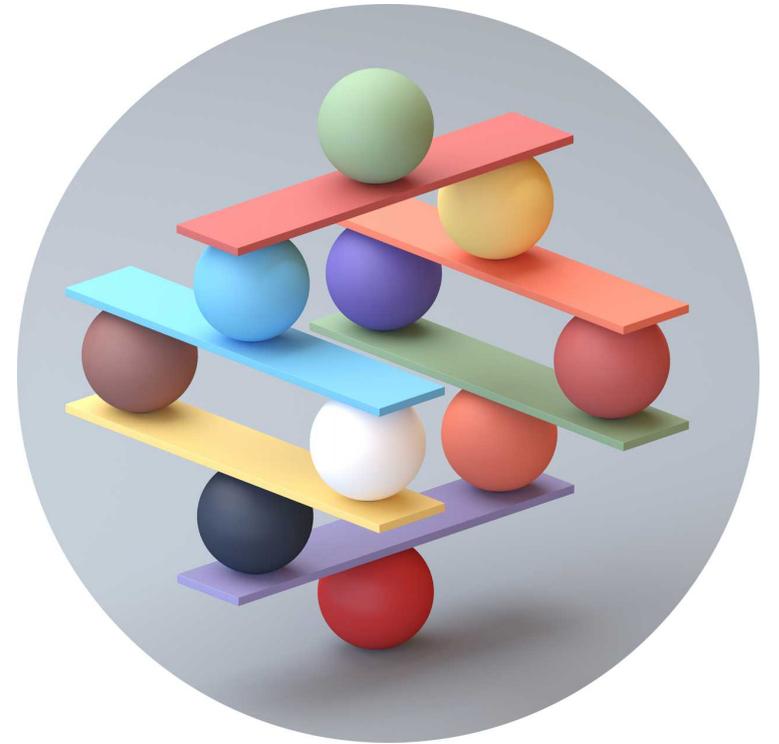
- Unit or team meetings
- Group therapy
- Social activity
- Reason to meet over lunch

## GS is...

- Planned meeting with specific purpose(s)
- Group of counselors (5-10) with one facilitator or shared leadership (peer-review) designed to:
  - Promote an understanding about themselves as counselors
  - Addressing client problems from counselor perspective
  - Understand factors that influence their decisions and counselor-client relationship that contribute to successful VR outcomes

# Group Supervision in State VR Practice

- Misunderstand what it is and what it is not
- Supervisors perceive little training but want to do it better
- Hardly used but, when used, occurs on monthly basis
- Relies heavily on a case review, solution-focused approach



# Reasons for Using Group Supervision

- Normalization
- Exposure to greater number of client issues
- Reduces risk of over dependence on supervisor
- Shared responsibility
- Vicarious learning
- Facilitates risk-taking
- Variety and diversity of feedback
- Quality of feedback
- Reduces supervisor dependence
- Allows monitoring
- Counselors do not function independently
- Saves time (compared to individual supervision)



# Reasons for Not Using Group Supervision

- Individual needs may not be met
- Confidentiality concerns
- Group issues may impede learning
  - Success often depends on group member relationships
- Success depends on mutual trust of multiple persons



(Bernard & Goodyear, 2019)

# Five Stages of Group Process

1 Forming



2 Storming



3 Norming and 4 Performing



5 Adjourning



(Tuckman, 1965)

# Stage I: Forming or Starting to Getting Comfortable

- Basic principles that must be identified from the start:
  - Respect worth and rights of others
  - Be supportive of one another
  - Mistakes encouraged.
- Administrative tasks must be addressed – where, how often, attendance, and methods used
- Establish ground rules
- Group is not performing at high level – priority on wanting to be nice and non-confrontational



# Reflection Questions



- Think back to when you were a member of a work group that met over a period of weeks or months.
- What rules or practices were followed to make the group successful (if applicable)?

# “Common Ground Rule Themes”

- Treat one another with respect
- Be responsible and prepared
- Success depends on mutual trust of multiple persons
- Similar expectations among group members



# Initial Session Considerations

## Meeting Place

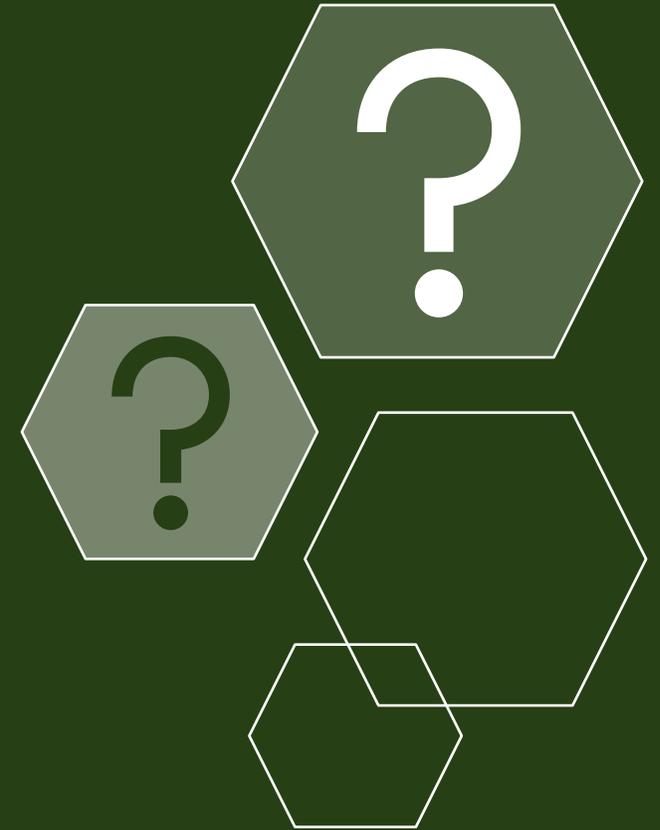
- Space can accommodate private conversation
- Technology needs and equipment
- Group size and related dynamics

## Points to Address in First Session

- “What are we doing and why are we doing this?”
- “Speak your truth as a supervisor”
- Past experiences, expectations and concerns of group members
- Establish ground rules and structure
  - What is needed to establish/maintain trust?
  - When, how long and what do we bring to session?

# Possible Questions to Explore Group Supervision Expectations

- What would you like to have happen here in this group?
- What do you hope to get out from being in the group?
- What would make this experience successful?
- Have any of you participated in group supervision before?
- Would you be willing to share what you learned from that experience that might be helpful here?



# Stage 2: Storming or “Now We’re Getting to Know One Another”

- Power and conflicts arise as a result of counselor beliefs and styles
- In certain instances, new alliances are formed and old ones reaffirmed
- Resistance to group supervision

## Group Supervisor Tasks:

- ✓ Be aware that it exists
- ✓ Revisit “ground rules”
- ✓ Observe and comment for group process
- ✓ Expect conflict and process



# Stages 3 & 4: Norming and Performing (“Working Together”)

- Group expectations known and implemented
- People start to value one another
- Conflicts still arise but are a bit easier to resolve
- Eventually, if earlier stages are resolved, group becomes a positive experience

## Group Supervisor Tasks:

- ✓ Continue to model behavior you want others to follow
- ✓ Monitor effects of feedback on each person
- ✓ Ongoing check in
  - “How is this working?” [and]
  - “What can we do to make this experience better?”



# Stage 5: Adjourning (“Parting is such sweet sorrow”)

- Since intact group not an issue unless a member leaves the group
- Applicable to practicum and internship students, however

## Group Supervisor Tasks:

- ✓ Bring closure via reminisce
- ✓ Unresolved concerns



# Group Supervision Formats

- Traditional solution-focused approach
- Variation of solution-focused approach: Counselor as observer
- Socratic approach: Question-focused
- Peer group using specific roles as part of re-enactment



# Solution Focused Method But Counselor Functions as Observer

## Step 1:

### What is the issue?

- Counselor explains issue and what is sought from group
- Group members given opportunity to ask questions and ask for clarification

## Step 2:

### How will it be worked with?

- Group begins to discuss issue and outline strategies to address problem
- Counselor who raised issue DOES NOT take part -- LISTENS
- Discussion ensues 15 minutes or so
- After discussion counselor is asked what he/she noticed, thought, or felt

## Step 3:

### What was learned? (Supervisor facilitates)

- What observed or learned from this discussion?
- What suggestions were helpful not as helpful? How impact next session?

# Providing Answers v. Asking Questions

## Typical Scenario:

- Counselor: “I have this issue with a client I am working with ....”
- Peers: “Well, have you tried or done this .....

## Approach may work but there are limitations

- Supervisor or team member has to come up with the “right answer”
- Often depends on one or a few counselors to resolve
- Often invites, “Yea, but....”



# Discussion Method Using Questions

## Step 1:

### What is the issue?

- Counselor explains issue and what is sought from group (5 minutes)

## Step 2:

### How will it be worked with? Supervisor facilitates discussion:

- Round-robin first time – everyone contributes one question
- Counselors ask questions until list is exhausted
- Discussion ensues 15 minutes or so

## Step 3:

### What was learned? Supervisor facilitates:

- What learned from this discussion?
- What questions were particularly helpful and something that perhaps may impact next client meeting?
- Given input from colleagues, what other questions does this raise for you?



# Reenactment Method Using Structured Peer Group

- Focus is to improve counseling skills and gain insight as applied to the client.
- Supervisor (facilitator) uses tape or reenactment to address counselor concern:
  1. Have counselor who knows the client the best reenact client role
  2. Indicate to person reenacting counselor to make a few “subtle mistakes”
    - Reduces performance anxiety
    - Keeps other participants engaged
    - Reveals other ‘subtle mistakes’



# Reenactment Method Using Structured Peer Group

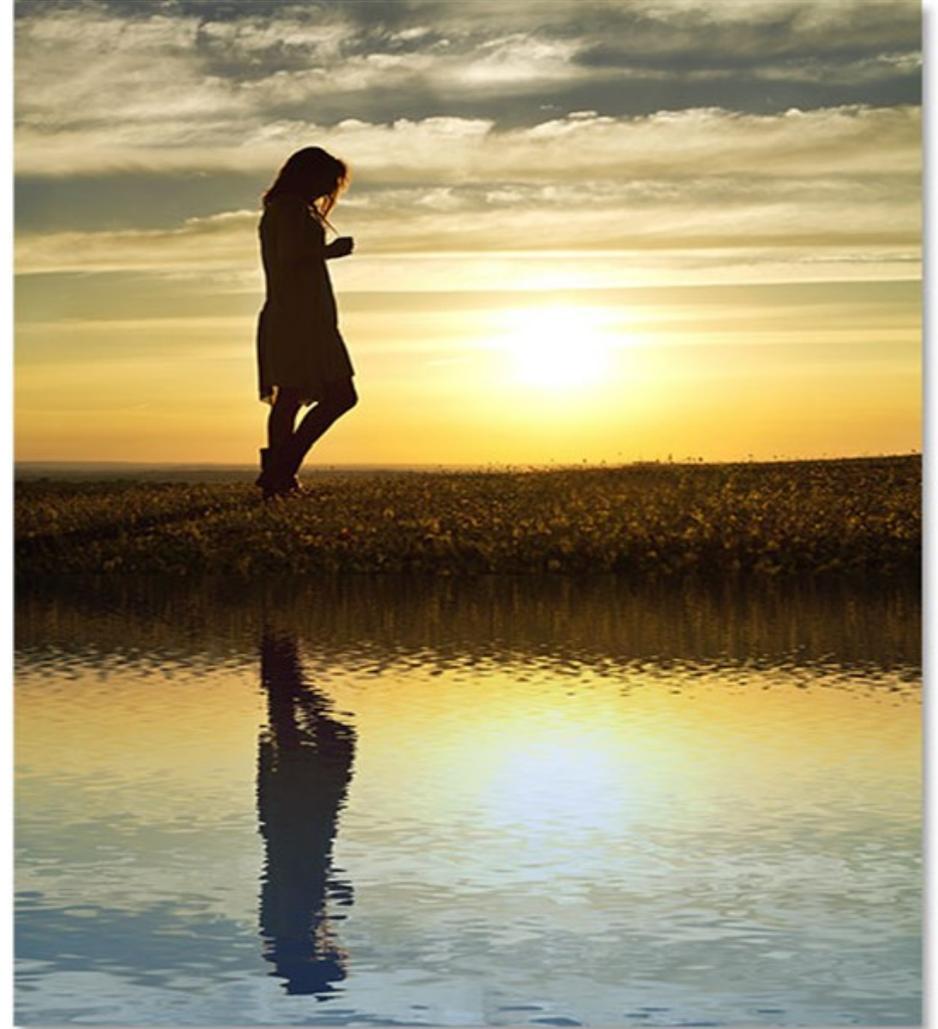
(continued)

3. Assign other counselors to reenact various roles, perspectives or tasks that may include:
  - Observing counselor or client non-verbal behavior
  - Assuming role of counselor, client, parent, partner or other significant person
  - Viewing session from particular theoretical perspective
  - Creating a metaphor for client, counselor or counseling
4. Counselor presents tape/reenactment of situation followed by peers giving feedback from assigned roles
5. Supervisor facilitates discussion as *moderator* and *process observer*

(Borders, 1991)

# End of Module 4: Reflection Questions

- What are some take-aways from this module?
- How does this information impact how you plan to provide group supervision with your counselors?



# Suggested Learning Activities



- Think back to your your experiences in group supervision. What did the facilitator do to make group successful or not successful?
- Prior to scheduling your first group supervision session, make a list of things that you need to prepare for and what questions you might anticipate from counselors.
- Read the attached pdf “A systematic Approach to Peer Group Supervision” by L.D. Borders and familiarize yourself with the six steps used in this approach. Think about how you would implement this method in a case review that might be used in group supervision.

# References

Bernard, J., & Goodyear, R. K. (2019). *Fundamentals of clinical supervision* (6<sup>th</sup> ed.). ISBN: 9780132835626. New York: Pearson.

Borders, L. D. (1991). A systemic approach to peer group supervision. *Journal of Counseling & Development, 69*(3), 248-252. <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6676.1991.tb01497.x>.

Herbert, J.T. (2018). Rehabilitation counselor supervision. In V. Tarvydas and M. Hartley (Eds.). (pp. 419-435). *The professional practice of rehabilitation counseling*. New York: Springer.

Herbert, J.T., & Trusty, J. (2006). Clinical supervision practices and satisfaction within the public vocational rehabilitation program. *Rehabilitation Counseling Bulletin, 49*, 66-80. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00343552060490020801>.

## References (continued)

Ray, D., & Altekruze, M. (2000). Effectiveness of group supervision versus combined group and individual supervision. *Counselor Education and Supervision*, 40(1), 19-30, <https://doi.org/10.1002/j.1556-6978.2000.tb01796.x>.

Tuckman, B,W. (1965). "Developmental sequence in small groups". *Psychological Bulletin*. 63 (6):384–399. <https://doi.org/10.1037%2Fh0022100>.



Thank You!



# Contact Us

Dr. Maureen McGuire-Kuletz

Principal Investigator

 [mkuletz@gwu.edu](mailto:mkuletz@gwu.edu)

John C. Walsh

Project Director

 [jcwalsh@gwu.edu](mailto:jcwalsh@gwu.edu)



---

THE GEORGE  
WASHINGTON  
UNIVERSITY

---

WASHINGTON, DC