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# Structured reflecting teams in group supervision: a qualitative study with school counseling interns

Kathleen Erin Hartney Kellum  
*University of Iowa*

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STRUCTURED REFLECTING TEAMS IN GROUP SUPERVISION: A  
QUALITATIVE STUDY WITH SCHOOL COUNSELING INTERNS

by

Kathleen Erin Hartney Kellum

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the  
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counseling, Rehabilitation, and Student Development  
(Counselor Education and Supervision)  
in the Graduate College of  
The University of Iowa

July 2009

Thesis Supervisors: Associate Professor Tarrell Awe Agahe Portman  
Assistant Professor Susannah M. Wood

## ABSTRACT

As school counseling interns graduate and transition to a professional school counseling work world, there are issues which may affect their personal and professional development, such as ongoing skill acquisition, keeping current in the field, and reflective awareness of professional counselor growth. Counselor educators continually seek approaches and methods of training school counseling interns with potential for transference to the world of practicing school counselors. However, translating ongoing supervision of school counselors to the real world setting can prove problematic. The problem is twofold; there is a lack of clinical supervision after graduation, and school administrators tend to provide only administrative supervision.

This exploratory study sought to explore the potential of one model of group supervision, which could potentially translate into the real work world of practicing school counselors. The purpose of the study was to explore the experiences of school counseling interns' with a reflecting team model of group supervision, Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS), during the final internship semester.

A qualitative methodology was used for this exploratory study due to the scant research in the areas of clinical group supervision and the SRTS model with the school counseling intern population. This study was designed to answer the following research question: What are the experiences of school counseling interns exposed to the reflecting team model of group supervision throughout their internship semester? Data consisting of structured open-ended interview guides (SOIG) were gathered three times throughout the semester. Data were also gathered one time through a separate SOIG at the end of the

semester from the academic supervisors to ensure consistency of the use of the SRTS model.

Study participants found hearing multiple perspectives on the same case to be the most important aspect of their time together. Several participants suggested an earlier start to the SRTS model might provide an opportunity to follow the cycle of new idea implementation and reporting back progress from those ideas. A number of participants looked forward to trying the model in the field through peer consultations to meet the needs for further clinical supervision.

Abstract Approved:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title and Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Thesis Supervisor

\_\_\_\_\_  
Title and Department

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

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Graduate College  
The University of Iowa  
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

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PH.D. THESIS

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This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Kathleen Erin Hartney Kellum

has been approved by the Examining Committee for the thesis requirement for the Doctor of Philosophy degree in Counseling, Rehabilitation, and Student Development (Counselor Education and Supervision) at the July 2009 graduation.

Thesis Committee:

---

Tarrell Awe Agahe Portman, Thesis Supervisor

---

Susannah M. Wood, Thesis Supervisor

---

Nicholas Colangelo

---

Jodi Saunders

---

Kathryn Gerken

---

Timothy Ansley

To my husband, Kelly, many thanks, hugs and kisses for your steadfast support, encouragement and prayers. To the rest of my family and friends, many thanks to you who were also an integral part of my support, encouragement and prayer system in this long journey. Last but not least, my gratitude to God who carried me through to the end.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Over 20 years ago, Barrett and Schmidt (1986) expressed a need for school counselors to receive post-degree clinical supervision as they encounter a growing complexity of issues in their counseling practices. Since that time, other counselor educators have expressed the same concern for school-based counselors and the importance of clinical supervision, but for a variety of reasons. These reasons include concerns for: (a) adhering to professional ethical standards, (b) becoming multiculturally competent in an ever-changing cultural community, (c) addressing the acute, growing problems students in school face, and (d) helping provisional school counselors who fill the positions during shortages of qualified school counselors (Butler, 2003; Crespi, 2003; Herlihy, Gray & McCollum, 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Portman, 2002).

The American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the national organization which represents the profession of school counseling, addressed the first concern of professional ethical standards. ASCA's (2004) ethical standards highlighted the need for professional competence stating that personal and professional growth continues throughout one's career (Standard E.1.c). In addition, ASCA also requires its members to contribute to the profession through the sharing of skills and ideas with colleagues as well as providing support and mentoring for novice school counselors (Standard F.2.b & c). The use of clinical supervision is an avenue in addressing these ethical standards.

The concern regarded multicultural competence as another potential issue (Butler, 2003). Butler suggested there is a mounting need for school counselors and school psychologists to become more multiculturally aware and sensitive in an increasingly

changing cultural community. The author also noted that continued clinical supervision is one avenue to assist in addressing multicultural competence.

Herlihy, Gray and McCollum (2002) noted the complicated and acute situations school counselors must deal with is sometimes in isolated settings. Herlihy et al. feared the combination of acute situations, isolated settings, and lack of clinical supervision may overwhelm school counselors and eventually undermine their confidence and abilities, thus, leading to potential ethical and legal problems at some point in time. Crespi (2003) also highlighted the importance of ongoing clinical supervision as a critical element for the professional development of mental health professionals within school systems. He provided a warning that “yesterday’s practice is rapidly becoming today’s malpractice (p. 59).”

In noting the final concern of school counselor shortages, Portman (2002) pointed to the increased challenges facing school counselors while focusing in on the issue of shortages of highly qualified school counselors. These shortages have opened the door for some states to offer conditional or provisional licensure to school counselors, who are in the midst of their training. These provisional school counseling interns may lack the supervised practica and internship experiences that are so necessary to the development of all counselors (CACREP, 2009).

Paisley and McMahon (2001) suggested ongoing clinical supervision is a critical component needed to assist practicing school counselors. However, state governments, which certify school counselors, do not require or mandate post-degree clinical supervision. Therefore, the only clinical supervision school counselors might ever receive occurs during their graduate training within the practica and internship experiences. The

Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2009), which sets the standards for all counselor education training programs, considers the practica and internship experiences to be crucial to the development of counseling interns.

Given the lack of post-degree clinical supervision in state certification requirements for school counselors and that the only window of opportunity for clinical supervision is during the school counseling interns' practica and internship experiences, there is a need to provide school counseling interns with a useful clinical supervision format as they transition from graduate training into the realities of the work setting. One potentially useful format, which could bridge the transition from academic training to the work world, is peer supervision. In a national study of school counselors (N = 267) on current supervision practices, Page, Pietrzak and Sutton (2001) noted peer supervision was the most frequently used form of clinical supervision. During graduate training, school counseling interns have the opportunity to receive peer supervision through the format of group supervision. Therefore, attention to finding effective models of group supervision during school counseling intern training is a needed avenue of study.

However, the scant research in group supervision gives little guidance to assist clinical supervisors in their practice (Holloway & Johnston, 1985; Prieto, 1996), and a limited number of group supervision models have been described in the literature (Agnew, Vaught, Getz & Fortune, 2000; Andersen, 1991; Borders, 1991; McAuliffe, 1992; Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris, Betz & Hart, 1991). Attention to studying these models with the exception of Andersen's reflecting team models has been very limited (Agnew et al., 2000; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Starling & Baker, 2000; Wilbur et al.,

1991). The reflecting team model has received more empirical attention but primarily with marriage and family therapists (Landis & Young, 1994; Naden, Callison, & Haynes, 2002; O'Connor, Davis, Meakes, Pickering & Schuman, 2004; Sells, Smith, Coe, Yoshioka, & Robbins, 1994; Smith, Sells, Clevenger, 1994; Smith, Sells, Pereira, Todahl, & Papagiannis, 1995; Smith, Winston, & Yoshioka, 1992; Young et al., 1997). However, the use of reflecting teams has not been studied with the school counseling intern population.

### Statement of the Problem

As school counseling interns graduate and make the transition to professional employment, a number of issues may affect their personal and professional development. Counselor educators seek to find approaches and methods of training school counseling interns which will transfer to the work world of the practicing school counselor. One suggested approach is ongoing clinical supervision which is one helpful critical component for practicing school counselors to meet the challenges of the future. Clinical supervision would be helpful to: (a) build and reinforce skills, (b) identify issues and develop problem-solving plans, (c) alleviate stress and burn-out, and (d) assist in the continuing development of a professional school counseling identity (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). However, there still remain problems in meeting the need for ongoing clinical supervision.

One problem is that once school counseling interns graduate, they receive little in the way of further clinical supervision (Barrett & Schmidt, 1986). Sutton and Page (1994) observed that mental health counselors will continue to receive clinical supervision in their mental health practices beyond their graduate training; however, the authors noted



school counselors tend to receive limited to no clinical supervision. The two surveys discussed below highlighted the concern raised by Sutton and Page and Barrett and Schmidt regarding the lack of limited clinical supervision of school counselors.

Results from a survey study conducted by Borders and Usher (1992) of National Certified Counselors (NCCs) support this fact. First, results from the Borders and Usher study (N = 357) documenting clinical supervision indicated counselors in schools reported significantly fewer hours of post-degree clinical supervision than did counselors in community health agencies and private practice. All of the responding counselors reported their goal for supervision was primarily for professional support followed by the need to improve their clinical skills. Later, Page et al. (2001) conducted a national survey on school counselors (N = 700) examining current supervision, desire for supervision, and supervision goals. The survey divided the types of supervision into three categories, administrative, clinical and peer supervision. The majority of respondents (73%) indicated receiving some form of administrative supervision, which was provided by a principal (50%), an assistant principal (10%), or a guidance director (13%). Page et al. (2001) defined administrative supervision as the planning, implementation, oversight and evaluation of staff and programs. By comparison, fewer respondents (24%) indicated they were receiving clinical supervision. The researchers defined clinical supervisions as a relationship in which the supervisor helps the counselor increase their assessment and counseling skills to more complex cases. Most of the respondents (67%) indicated they would like to receive clinical supervision in the future. The top three clinical supervision goals rated by respondents were: (a) taking action with client problems, (b) skill and technique development, and (c) improving diagnostic skills. It would appear the concerns

being expressed regarding clinical supervision for school counselors have some validity according to empirical studies. While school counselors desire ongoing clinical supervision, these studies indicate they are not receiving it.

Another problem is that any type of supervision school counseling interns do receive once they graduate may be different from that of some other mental health counselors, and it typically does not address the clinical skill development needed by all beginning counselors. Borders (1991) pointed out that school counselors must navigate and address mental health issues as they arise within their students' lives. Sutton and Page (1994) highlighted that while school counselors are trained to refer serious mental health cases to competent professionals, the school counselor will still be required to work with the student. The counselor's follow-up work could be addressing behavioral issues in the classroom, complementary services in conjunction with a mental health provider, or supportive services.

Page et al.'s (2001) survey (N = 700) reported that while over half of the professional school counselors (53%) received no clinical supervision. Those school counselors receiving clinical supervision came in the form of peer supervision (29%) followed by individual supervision (13%) and group supervision (11%). This contrasts with the Borders and Usher (1992) national survey (N = 357) of National Certified Counselors (NCCs), which indicated a smaller national sample of counselors working in various specialty areas and settings (20%) received no clinical supervision. For the majority of the sample (80%), they received the following types of clinical supervision: individual supervision (51%), group supervision (19%), and peer supervision (10%). These two studies highlighted a discrepancy which exists in the type and amount of

clinical supervision school counselors receive in comparison to counselors in other specialties and settings (Borders & Usher, 1992; Page et al., 2001).

Even though there are discrepancies noted between school counselor clinical supervision and other counselors (Borders & Usher, 1992; Page et al., 2001), another important element is the need for clinical supervision for the professional development of all counselors, which include school counselors. CACREP (2009) requires school counseling students to spend two years in their academic program with one year devoted to clinical fieldwork. However, Paisley and McMahon (2001) noted that while graduate school is the beginning of a counselor's professional development, becoming a master school counselor might take a lifetime. Skovholt, Ronnestad, and Jennings (1997) hypothesized it takes an individual 10 years to move from the novice level to the expert level in any area of counseling. These concerns point to the need for ongoing clinical supervision beyond graduate school.

One possible avenue of encouraging counselors-in-training to develop life-long professional attitudes and skills in the areas of self-assessment, continuing education, and evaluation is group supervision (Wagner & Smith, 1979). The authors were the first to suggest the need to assist counseling interns to become less dependent on their faculty supervision and more willing to utilize colleagues for assistance as they transitioned to the work world. Another set of authors (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998) stated, given the relatively brief amount of time supervisors have with their supervisees, reflective interventions are essential in moving supervisees along in their professional development. Griffin and Frieden (2000) argued for the usefulness of Socratic questioning particularly within the group supervision format as a way to help broaden supervisee's

conceptualization abilities. Despite the attractiveness of the use of groups in supervision for counseling interns, very few detailed models for organizing and leading these groups within supervision have been described (Holloway & Johnston, 1985; Prieto, 1996).

When I conducted a more recent search of the literature, I found a handful of models for group supervision, but I found very few studies attempting to study the complexities of group supervision.

The realities of school counseling work are that practicing school counselors report receiving more administrative supervision than clinical supervision, which differs from the type of supervision other practicing counselors report receiving in their work settings (Borders & Usher, 1992). In addition, the minimal amount of clinical supervision school counselors may receive once they graduate does not mesh with the importance of ongoing personal and professional development of practicing school counselors (CACREP, 2009; Page et al., 2001). Furthermore, peer and group supervision formats constitute the majority of practicing school counselors' clinical supervision, yet group supervision is still not completely understood (Holloway & Johnston, 1985; Page et al., 2001; Prieto, 1996). Therefore, counselor educators are left with the dilemma of finding approaches and methods for training school counseling interns, which will transfer to the work world of the practicing school counselor.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to explore school counseling interns' experiences using a hybrid model of group supervision, the Reflecting Team Supervision (RTS, Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest, Darden, & Keller, 1990) and the Structured Group Supervision (SGS, Wilbur et al., 1991). The SGS model provided a

more supervisee-focused structure for the session, while the RTS model provided more of the supervision goals and reflective structure to the supervision group sessions. Hence, this study tracked the experiences of school counseling interns exposed to the hybrid model, Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS), during their last internship semester before they graduate. This study is designed to answer the following research question: What are the experiences of school counseling interns exposed to the SRTS model of group supervision throughout their internship semester?

Because this is a qualitative study, the following questions comprise the standardized open-ended interview with flexibility for using open-ended probes throughout the interview. Open-ended probes consist of who, what, when, where, why, and how questions to elicit further information or to clarify previous responses. These questions are:

1. Describe any previous group supervision experiences previous to this current class.
2. What were those previous supervision experiences like for you?
3. As you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feeling about the group supervision process?
4. What has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?
5. What helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?
6. What hinders you from participating in the reflecting team process?
7. What hinders in the development of your case conceptualization skills during the reflecting team process?

8. What helps in the development of your case conceptualization skills during the reflecting team process?
9. In what ways have you changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process?
10. What incidents were the most memorable for you?
11. What would have made this process better for you and the group?

#### Significance of the Study

This study will begin to fill the gap in the literature pertaining to the use of reflecting teams, group supervision, and assisting school counseling interns in their continued development beyond graduate school. While there have been some studies in each of these areas, more work remains to enhance the counseling education field's understanding of group supervision, reflecting teams, and continuing school counselor development.

First, with regard to the use of reflecting teams, to date, there has been one quantitative study conducted on the use of reflecting teams with marriage and family therapists-in-training (Landis & Young, 2004). While a number of qualitative studies have examined the use of reflecting teams within the marriage and family counseling field (Naden et al., 2002; O'Connor et al., 2004; Sells et al., 1994; Smith et al., 1992; Smith et al., 1994; Smith et al., 1995; Young et al., 1997), no quantitative or qualitative studies have been conducted with school counselors or school counseling interns' use of the reflecting team model. Therefore, any research on work with reflecting teams will add to the existing knowledge in the school counseling literature.

Secondly, this study will add to the research currently existing within the group supervision literature in general as well as to the research on the use of reflecting teams with group supervision. In addition, this study may provide further support for school counseling interns in exposing them to viable avenues of clinical peer group supervision once they graduate from their training programs and enter the school setting.

### Definition of Terms

#### School Counseling Intern

A school counseling intern is defined as a student who is currently enrolled in either: (a) a CACREP entry level masters program in school counseling or (b) a non-CACREP program following CACREP standards. CACREP suggests that the practicum and internship requirements are considered to be the most critical experience elements in the program. For the purposes of this study, the school counseling interns were completing their clinical instruction, which includes a total of 600 clock hour supervised practicum and internship, to be completed within the program of study. (CACREP, 2009)

#### Group Supervision

For the purposes of this study, Bernard and Goodyear (2004) provided the precise definition of interest. They defined group supervision as a group of counselors-in-training, who meet on a regular basis: “(a) with a designated supervisor or supervisors, (b) to monitor the quality of their work, and (c) to further their understanding of themselves as clinicians, of the clients with whom they work, and of service delivery in general” (p. 235).

### Reflecting Team Model of Group Supervision

Andersen (1991) provided structure to the reflecting team model, which has components, steps, and processes. Initially the reflecting team group supervision model was used in a live format as counselors worked with families. However, counselor educators (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest et al., 1997) took these initial ideas based on live supervision and altered it to make it useable for counselors-in-training utilizing role-playing scenarios.

### Structured Reflecting Team Model of Group Supervision

The Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS) is a hybrid model of RTS (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest et al., 1990) and the Structured Group Supervision (SGS, Wilbur et al., 1991). The SGS model provided a more supervisee-focused structure for the session, while the RTS model provided more of the supervision goals and reflective structure to the supervision group sessions. For purposes of this study, case presentations using audio or videotapes as opposed to observing the live counseling process or the use of role playing scenarios will be used during group supervision sessions. A case presentation session presented by one intern using the SRTS model will last approximately 60 minutes. The focus for that block of time is on the presenting intern and their case. A copy of the SRTS Guideline found in Appendix A is presented below for further clarification of the stages, approximate time and tasks to be completed.



## SRTS Guidelines

Stage #1 (25 minutes) – Presenting counselor presents case and then the interviewer asks questions and makes probes with presenting counselor while team members silently generate their own questions and thoughts and write them down:

### Example questions:

- What concerns led you to want to discuss this case?
- What dilemmas do you face in your work with this client/family/group?
- What understanding or explanations do you have about these dilemmas?
- What would you like to focus upon?
- What do you need from the team in this case?
- How would you describe the dilemma from the client(s)' perspective?
- How would you like to use this meeting?
- Tell me more about...
- Give me the specifics about...

Stage #2 (10 minutes) – Team members offer questions and thoughts while the interviewer and presenting counselor remain silent and make notes of the discussion:

### Example questions and leads:

- How is it now compared to then?
- Who did what when?
- What helped the most?
- What were the circumstances?
- Who has been involved or not involved?
- When did it start?
- When did it become worse or better?
- How can it be explained?
- How can that be understood?
- I wonder why...
- I noticed that...
- If ... then maybe...
- I am wondering if...
- Maybe the client feels/thinks/acts... because...

Stage #3 (10 minutes) – Presenting counselor focuses on any questions or ideas he/she is interested in commenting on while interviewer and team remain silent and write down any further thoughts:

Example leads:

- The items that caught my attention were...
- I was particularly struck by...
- I would like to respond to the question brought up by... about...
- I thought ... was really interesting.
- I question whether... is relevant to this dilemma.
- I am not sure it would be helpful to...

Stage #4 (10-15 minutes) – Interviewer/counseling discussion resumes while the rest of the team listens and writes down any further thoughts or questions.

[Utilize the same type of suggested wording for this segment as Steps 2 & 3 above]

Stage #5 (5 minutes) – Optional: dependent upon time. Invite an open discussion among all members.

HELPFUL HINTS:

- Educate all involved about the process and roles of reflective teams.
- For those new to the process, a case study or role-playing might be helpful.
- Express ideas in terms of curiosity and not definitive conclusions.
- Write down questions or ideas when in the listening mode.
- Frame input in positive, helpful terms and not negative, critical ways.

Limitations

The limitations for this study include a lack of comparison groups, issues of transferability instead of generalizability, and an inability to assess differences of personalities between the supervisor and peers from group to group. Specifically, this qualitative study focused on a small sample of school counseling interns exposed to one model of group supervision, the reflecting team; therefore, there is no way to make comparisons to other models or a control group. Secondly, qualitative studies are typically concerned with issues related to transferability versus quantitative studies, which is concerned with generalizing to populations. Therefore, any results of this study can only refer to transferring to similar groups, which would be school counseling interns' experience of the reflecting team model of group supervision during the

internship semester. Finally, because school counseling interns will be from different programs with different supervisors and peers, it is difficult to assess the unique affect of those relationships upon the school counseling intern's experience.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

This chapter will describe the available literature on the supervision of school counselors, overview of clinical supervision, the Reflecting Team (RT) model, and assessment of group supervision models. The overview of clinical supervision examines research findings on the various formats, individual supervision, and group supervision. Embedded in the discussion of group supervision is an examination of the development of group supervision as well as a discussion of the five current group supervision models. In the third section, research studies on RT are presented along with a more thorough description of the RT stages and assumptions. The final section will examine four group supervision assessments.

#### Supervision of School Counselors

An important component in the group supervision of school counseling interns is a discussion of standards and requirements for pre- and post-graduate school counselors. School counseling is one specialty of counselor education programs, and the standards for counselor education training programs are outlined by CACREP (2009). Yet, it is important to note not all counselor education programs have CACREP accreditation. While some non-CACREP school counseling training programs require their counseling interns to follow the standards, some non-CACREP programs do not follow CACREP standards. In order to continue the maintenance of CACREP accreditation, school counseling programs must follow and document the requirements mandated in the CACREP standards. Therefore, school counseling programs which received CACREP

accreditation or follow CACREP standards must provide school counseling interns with supervised practicum and internship experiences.

However, once school counseling interns graduate and begin working as school counselors, there is no mandated requirement for further clinical supervision. The standards for professional behavior and development are outlined by two other organizations. First, licensure or certification to practice school counseling is controlled by individual states, and it is the state that mandates standards and requirements for all school counselors. Currently, states do not mandate further clinical supervision for licensed or certified school counselors. Second, the American School Counselor Association (ASCA), the national organization representing the profession of school counseling, seeks to promote the ethical practices associated with the profession and has established standards to guide school counselors. Even though school counselors are not required to join ASCA, Henderson (2003) stated one of the ethical responsibilities school counselors have in furthering their professional development and competence is to join appropriate associations.

While some type of supervision occurs during the academic training of all counselors before graduation, it is important to recognize that the supervision standards of post-degree counselors differ depending on their specialty. The American Association of State Counseling Boards (AASCB, 2006), an organization comprised of state counselor licensing boards, have articulated national guidelines for licensure of mental health or community counselors. AASCB suggested counselors need: (a) 3,000 to 4,000 hours of post-masters supervised experience, (b) 1,900 to 2,500 direct client contact hours, and (c) 100 hours of clinical supervision before they can be licensed to practice

counseling. However, once school counseling interns graduate, they are not required to receive any further type of clinical training to receive licensure as school counselors. School counselors also receive their licensure from the state; however, states typically do not mandate further clinical supervision for school counselors. Therefore, currently no organization mandates the clinical supervision of school counselors once they graduate, receive their licensure, and practice their profession. This lack of ongoing clinical supervision of school counselors poses a problem, especially when ASCA's (2004) ethical standards highlighted the need for professional competence, stating that personal and professional growth continues throughout one's career (Standard E.1.c). In addition, ASCA requires its members to contribute to the profession through the sharing of skills and ideas with colleagues as well as providing support and mentoring for novice school counselors (Standard F.2.b & c).

While ASCA provides ethical standards and guidance to school counselors, the function of a school counselor is to address a variety of academic, career, and social issues within the school system. Currently, there is an emphasis on accountability in the school systems as well as the counseling profession (Paisley & McMahon, 2001). School counselors must navigate and address mental health issues as they arise within their students' lives (Borders, 1991). Barrett and Schmidt (1986) found the lack of supervision for school counselors dealing with serious mental health issues indefensible. According to Sutton and Page (1994), while school counselors are trained to refer serious mental health cases to competent professionals, the school counselor will still be required to work with the student. This continued work could be addressing behavioral issues in the classroom, providing complementary services in conjunction with a mental health

provider, or offering other supportive services. Sutton and Page also noted school counselors tend to have no avenue of support to assist with these students. While mental health counselors receive clinical supervision in their mental health practices beyond their graduate training, school counselors, on the other hand, receive little to no clinical supervision once they complete their practicum and internship experiences in their masters programs and enter the realities of the work of school counseling (Barrett & Schmidt, 1986).

In most cases, school administrators are the sole providers of administrative supervision for school counselors, yet most administrators receive no training in the area of counseling. While school administrators can conduct administrative supervision of school counselors, administrators are not equipped to provide clinical supervision to their school counselors (Barrett & Schmidt, 1986). Bradley and Kottler (2001) provided working definitions distinguishing between administrative and clinical supervision. They suggested the distinctions center around the roles and tasks performed. The administrative supervisor's role is to assist the supervision in navigating the organization by focusing on accountability, records and reports, and performance evaluations. Conversely, clinical supervisor's role is to supervise the work of supervisees in relation to services to clients. The task of the supervisor then becomes a focus on such things as client welfare, the counseling relationship, the assessment, diagnosis and intervention process, and referrals. Sutton and Page (1994) emphasized that clinical supervision expands on basic skills and knowledge developed in a school counselor's education program. In addition, the authors argued that clinical supervision is the avenue to advanced skills and knowledge necessary for complex or acute cases encountered in the

reality of the school setting. Borders (1991) highlighted the intensive and cyclical nature of clinical supervision, which is characterized by a cycle of feedback, practice, and additional feedback.

More recently, others have expressed the same concerns regarding the lack of counseling training for administrators as well as additional concerns for school-based mental health workers and the ongoing need for some type of clinical supervision (Butler, 2003; Crespi, 2003; Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Portman, 2002). In an ever increasing and changing cultural community, school counselors and school psychologists need to become more sensitive to their students' culture (Butler, 2003). Butler noted that continued clinical supervision is one avenue to assist in addressing this issue. Crespi (2003) highlighted the importance of ongoing clinical supervision as a critical element to the professional development of mental health professionals. Yet, the author also stated this practice is overlooked in the public schools systems and suggested "yesterday's practice is rapidly becoming today's malpractice (Crespi, 2003, p. 59)." Herlihy et al. (2002) expressed concern over the complicated and acute situations school counselors must deal with in sometimes isolated settings. The concern is that the acute situations, isolated settings, and lack of clinical supervision may overwhelm school counselors and eventually undermine their confidence and abilities thus leading to potential ethical and legal problems. Portman (2002) noted the increased challenges facing school counselors in addition to shortages of highly qualified school counselors. These shortages have opened the door for some states to offer conditional or provisional licensures to school counselors who are in the midst of their training. These counselors-



in-training with provisional licenses may lack the supervised practica and internships experiences that are so necessary to the development of professional school counselors.

### Overview of Clinical Supervision

A pivotal topic relevant to this study is the overarching theme of supervising counselors in general. Bradley and Kottler (2001) stated, “supervision is a process in which an experienced person (supervisor) with appropriate training and experience mentors and teaches a subordinate (supervisee) (p. 4).” They also suggested supervision is a process which focuses on the personal and professional development of counselors. It is important to note the different kinds of supervision provided to counselors, specifically clinical versus administrative. In administrative supervision, the supervisor mentors the supervisee to function within the context of the organization. Administrative supervision typically focuses on such issues as accountability, documentation and record keeping, performance evaluations, and policy issues. On the other hand, clinical supervision focuses on areas that deal with service to the client, such as the counseling relationship, assessment, diagnosis, and interventions (Bradley & Kottler, 2001). Bernard and Goodyear (2004) added more detail to the definition of clinical supervision beyond the personal and professional development of a counselor in that it: (a) is evaluative, (b) extends over time, and (c) watches over the client’s welfare.

Clinical supervision may occur in various formats. Bernard and Goodyear (2004) discussed the various methods of supervision which include: (a) individual, (b) group, and (c) live. They defined individual supervision as taking place in a “one-on-one context” between supervisor and supervisee (pg. 209). Group supervision takes place between a supervisor and a “group of peers” (pg. 234). Live supervision is a combination

of observing the supervisee in session, communicating with the supervisee in session, and ultimately controlling the therapy session. Bernard and Goodyear stated that “individual supervision is still considered the cornerstone of professional development” (p.209), noting all counselors will at some point experience individual supervision sessions. However, they also acknowledged most counselors would experience some group supervision sessions and a few might receive live supervision.

### Research Findings Comparing Clinical Supervision Formats

This section examines the research on comparing the different clinical supervision formats mentioned above. A review of the literature uncovered three studies comparing various clinical supervision formats (Herbert, 2004; Newgent, Davis, & Farley, 2005; Ray & Altekruise, 2000). Findings indicate counseling students prefer individual supervision over group supervision; however, the studies did not yield more benefits or effectiveness. Because there were problems within each study, more research is warranted on comparing clinical supervision formats.

Herbert (2004) compared three studies analyzing the merits of individual, group, or combined formats of supervision. His analysis indicated both individual supervision and group supervision offer similar benefits. However, according to the findings, counseling interns have a clear preference for individual supervision immediately after the counseling session.

Ray and Altekruise (2000) investigated the effectiveness of large group supervision, small group supervision, and a combined group plus individual supervision with counselors-in-training during their practicum training. The participants (n = 64) were master’s level practicum students enrolled in two southern, mid-sized, public

universities; no other demographic details on the participants were provided. The students were randomly assigned to the three treatment groups, which met over 10 weeks. The variables of interest in this study were counselor effectiveness and counselor growth. The Counselor Rating Form-Short Version (CRF-S) was used to measure counselor effectiveness and was completed by the supervisor, the client, and objective raters. The Supervisee Levels Questionnaire-Revised (SLQ-R) measured counselor development and were completed by the counseling interns as pre- and posttest measures. There were no significant differences indicated by the CRF-S between any of the three treatment groups. The results from the SLQ-R showed no overall differences; however, there was a significant difference with large group supervision on the autonomy/dependency factor. Ratings from the counseling interns regarding preference between the three types of supervision indicated the counseling interns appreciated all forms of supervision. However, participants did indicate a stronger preference for individual supervision directly following the counseling session. Limitations of the Ray and Altekruze study included: lack of control group, ceiling effects of the CRF-S, moderate internal coefficients on SLQ-R subscales, and issues of generalizability beyond the population of the study.

Newgent, Davis, and Farley (2005) examined 15 doctoral counselor educator interns enrolled in a supervision class at a public, mid-sized, southern university. The study sought to gain a clearer picture regarding their perceptions of individual, triadic, and group supervision. The perceptions of interest in this study were: working alliance, supervisory leadership style, relationship dynamic, satisfaction with each model, effectiveness of each model, and the ability to meet the needs of each student. It is

important to note the doctoral-level interns are typically at different levels than masters-level counseling interns in: (a) developmental level, (b) experience, and (c) focus of academic work. Doctoral students are individuals preparing to work as counselor educators, supervisors, and advanced practitioners in academic and clinical settings and focus on areas of clinical practice, research, teaching, and supervision (CACREP, 2009). The participants in the Newgent et al. study included eight women and seven men with an average age of 41 years. Eleven participants reported their race as Caucasian and four as Non-Caucasian. Most of the participants had at least two years of successful counseling experience with ten participants indicating no prior supervision experience. The remaining five participants reported a variety of supervisory experience or training ranging from a three-day seminar to 12 years supervision experience. The first instrument used in this study was the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI). It is a self-report instrument used to measure student perceptions of the working alliance between supervisor and student. The factors of interest in this inventory are bond, goal, and task. The second instrument, Supervisory Styles Inventory (SSI), was used to measure the student's perception of the supervisor's leadership style. Areas assessed include communication, leadership, motivation, problem solving, and organization skills. The third instrument, Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory (SWAI), examined the student's perceptions of supervisory actions and how those actions impacted the relationship. The final instrument, Supervision of Supervision Evaluation (SSE), measured the student's satisfaction with, effectiveness of, and met needs of the type of supervision provided.

Findings from the Newgent et al. (2005) study indicated no differences between the three groups in terms of working alliance, supervisory leadership style, or satisfaction with supervision. Statistically significant differences were found in the areas of relationship dynamics, effectiveness of supervision, and met needs. In the area of relationship dynamics, there was no difference between individual supervision and triadic supervision, but there was a difference between the triadic supervision and group supervision experience. Results suggested students perceived more positive dynamics between the individual and triadic as opposed to the group experience. In the area of perceived effectiveness, there were statistically significant differences between all three groups. Results suggested students' favored individual supervision over both triadic and group supervision, but students also preferred triadic supervision over group supervision. In terms of meeting the students' training needs, there was a statistically significant difference between individual and triadic, but not between triadic and group, suggesting students felt the individual model better met their training needs than the other two formats. Limitations of the study were the small sample size, use of self-report instruments, and use of a new instrument, SSE, which has no reliability or validity established (Ray & Altekruze, 2000).

#### Individual Supervision Examined

CACREP (2009) stated the supervised practicum and internship is one of the most critical experiences in a counseling student's training; therefore, the standards mandate certain supervised requirements. CACREP outlined the recommended formats and guidelines for how supervision should be delivered. All counseling students are to receive "weekly interaction with an average of 1 1/2 hours per week of individual and/or triadic

supervision” (CACREP). First, clinical supervision is typically conducted face-to-face with supervisees while in their counseling training program. However, there are some accommodations for students practicing in remote geographical locations. Another organization providing standards for counselor educators and supervisors is the Association for Counselor Educators and Supervisors (ACES). ACES (1993) recommended clinical supervisors meet regularly in face-to-face sessions with their supervisees. In the case of remote location barriers, there is an allowance for at least half of supervision time to occur face-to-face.

While individual supervision consists of a session between a supervisor and one intern, there remain choices for the supervisor to make about the experiences most beneficial to the counseling intern. Bernard and Goodyear (2004) offered the typical ways in which counseling interns may work on issues of personal and professional development. The authors noted that supervision sessions can be structured or unstructured but suggested research supports the need for some type of structure. However, Bernard and Goodyear also pointed out there is little in the way of defining what structured or unstructured methods should look like in the session. They stated the clinical supervisor usually decides on whether to structure sessions or leave them unstructured, and interns can benefit from both modes of supervision.

Bradley and Kottler (2001) suggested areas of focus within the supervisory sessions: (a) facilitating the counseling intern’s personal and professional development, (b) promoting counseling competence, and (c) keeping counseling services and programs accountable. While adhering to the overarching purposes of individual supervision, Bernard and Goodyear (2004) further explored the methods most often used to fulfill the

purposes. They discussed the various methods used during supervision, including self-report, audiotape, process notes and case notes, videotape, and live observation. Each of these methods may be used as a way to assess the professional development and competency of a counseling intern as they discuss actual counseling sessions. Bernard and Goodyear also noted two other methods intended to facilitate or structure the sessions around the reporting, viewing or hearing of the counseling sessions. They noted that interpersonal process recall (IPR) and its extension, the reflective process, are two methods helpful in moving counseling interns toward (a) stimulating counselor self-awareness, and (b) understanding of themselves and their clients. Bernard and Goodyear observed it is the clinical supervisor who decides what method to use, how it will be used, and what to do with the information that emerges from the time with the counseling intern. They asserted it is important for clinical supervisors to examine the research, choose methods carefully, and be more intentional in planning supervision sessions with their supervisees.

#### Group Supervision Examined

Bernard and Goodyear (2004) stated group supervision occurs when a supervisor oversees the professional development of a group of supervisees. CACREP (2009) endorsed practices of group as well as individual supervision and indicated supervisors should supervise no more than 10 students within a group session, However, ACES (1993) remained silent on this issue other than to state there needs to be regular face-to-face sessions and supervisors should supervise a limited number of counselors.

While Bernard and Goodyear (2004) acknowledged the focus of group supervision is the same as individual supervision, a difference is that the counseling

interns receive help and feedback from the supervisor as well as from peers within the group. In addition, Bernard and Goodyear noted counseling interns may also be aided by their interactions with one another through the group process. However, they cautioned that supervisors must be attentive to the issue of group dynamics as well as supervisory issues within this particular format.

Group supervision has many unique benefits that are different than those found in individual supervision. The group format is more economical in that one person can supervise several trainees at the same time, and the group members can learn from each other. In addition, researchers have pointed out other advantages of group supervision which include peer feedback and support, exposure to a wider variety of diagnostic and treatment issues, and opportunities for personal insight into interpersonal behavior (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

Others have pointed out potential disadvantages in comparison to individual supervision (Holloway & Johnston, 1985; Prieto, 1996; Riva & Cornish, 1995). For example, due to time constraints members may not have a chance to present their cases every week or in sufficient detail, or personality conflicts may arise and disrupt the functioning of the group. Regardless of the potential disadvantages, the general consensus among clinicians and researchers is that group supervision has a great deal to offer (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). However, even given Holloway and Johnston's and Prieto's examination of the literature, much remains to be done in the research on group supervision. The next section outlines the development of group supervision and some of the studies conducted on this type of supervision.



### Development of Group Supervision

Fraleigh and Buchheimer (1969) initially addressed the use of peers within the context of group supervision as a method to facilitate the process of supervision. They identified the chief role of the peers within group supervision as providing support and safety for the counselors-in-training within the group. Fraleigh and Buchheimer also stated peers could provide reinforcement for the supervisor's group's interventions directed at improving the counselor-in-training's performance. They identified functions the group may bring to the supervision time: contributing alternative recommendations, viewing the session from a different theoretical perspective, and bringing a different observation to the counselor-client interactions. The ultimate value of the group supervision process is to help counselors-in-training develop their own personal style, theoretical orientation, and models of counseling as well as decreasing their dependency of counselors-in-training on their supervisor.

Spice and Spice (1976) proposed a more structured method of group supervision called the triadic method of supervision. They also contended this model had the capacity to improve the effectiveness of supervision across a variety of settings. Spice and Spice felt this method might be a more positive, growth-producing process for students or professionals in various settings. They outlined the method, which uses three roles and four processes. Counselors-in-training learn to function alternately in the three roles of supervisee, commentator, and facilitator. The four process areas target the refining of presentation skills, the improvement of feedback skills, the development of meaningful group dialogue, and the deepening of the here-and-now moment. The group supervisor is involved initially in the process, but in successive supervision sessions, the group can function smoothly without a supervisor.

A few years later, Wagner and Smith (1979) suggested group supervision was a useful modality to encourage students to develop life-long professional attitudes and skills in the areas of self-assessment, continuing education, and evaluation. Wagner and

Smith saw the need to assist counselors-in-training to become less dependent on their faculty supervision and more willing to utilize colleagues for assistance as they transitioned to the world of work. This vision emerged in response to the recognition that their training program did little to help students recognize and use peers as resources for personal and professional development, which led to a change in the clinical portions of the counseling curriculum. The structure of the model is outlined in the next paragraph.

Wagner and Smith (1979) placed counseling students on a weekly rotation system. Week one students presented a case (peer supervisee); while another student (peer supervisor) assisted the student with his or her concerns. Other members of the class and the counselor educator observed the process. At the completion of the supervision session, the whole class reconvened to process the session together. Feedback from students suggested supervision was seen as something that was done with them versus something that was done to them. Students were also more willing: to take risks, initiate responsibility and direction for their learning, to focus on interpersonal conflicts and to give more constructive confrontations. In addition, after graduation, students were more likely to use a colleague network for ongoing professional development (Wagner & Smith).

Holloway and Johnston (1985) conducted the first literature review on group supervision in counselor training between the years of 1960 and 1983. They focused specifically on supervised groups of counselors-in-training during their clinical coursework. While the authors found few reports on the topic, the majority of the articles were published in *Counselor Education and Supervision*. Finally, the authors noted that few disciplines outside of counseling psychology and counselor education had addressed the topic of group supervision in their professional journals during the time span considered by Holloway and Johnston.

Holloway and Johnston (1985) also noted the early articles (1960s and 1970s) focused on two approaches to the use of group supervision of counselors-in-training. The

first approach was termed the interpersonal process approach and the second was termed the contextual or case presentation approach. The first approach, the interpersonal process, was conducted with counselors-in-training in order to promote self-awareness and affective growth. Holloway and Johnston noted subsequent research on this process approach did not support the idea that these supervised groups led to effective counselor functioning. However, many of the studies conducted had methodological problems, which called initial conclusions into question. Due to lack of empirical evidence and ethical concerns surrounding the use of interpersonal process groups, this approach was no longer used by the middle 1970s, but subsequent group supervision still retained the idea of facilitator training in supervision. The second approach of the early group supervision era focused less on interpersonal awareness and affective growth and more on the professional context. The focus on professional context looked at issues such as the agency setting, client description, theoretical approach to the client, and difficulties within a particular session or an overall client case. A hallmark of this second approach was the use of case presentations. While this approach has persisted and seems to have an intuitive appeal, Holloway and Johnston stated that no empirical research had been conducted on this approach at the time of their literature review.

During the late 1970s and early 1980s, more attention was paid to the developmental stages of the counselors-in-training throughout their education. According to these theories, adjustments were made in content, method of instruction, and component emphasis according to the counselors-in-training developmental stage. Early articles proposed that group supervision might be a useful and potent strategy at the varying levels of counselors-in-training. Because the literature review was conducted at the beginning of the developmental model of supervision movement, there was no empirical evidence to back up the early hypothesis (Holloway & Johnston, 1985).

Hillerbrand (1989) outlined the possible application of cognitive psychology for the group supervision process. He suggested cognitive psychology might provide a

conceptual framework for the complex cognitive processes required in counseling. In particular, Hillerbrand noted the necessary components relevant to a counselor. He listed the following components counselors need in order to reach a conclusion or solution regarding certain issues. The cognitive components are the ability to: conceptualize client issues, integrate knowledge and skills, and recognize the interpersonal processes at work in counseling.

Enyedy et al. (2003) examined the elements that hinder the process of group supervision. Hierarchical cluster analysis of 49 participants indicated five clusters of hindering events. These events included: between-member problems, problems with supervisors, supervisee anxiety, logistical constraints, and poor group time management. Suggestions for group supervision practices were provided in order to address these negative events during group supervision.

#### Five Group Supervision Models

Borders (1991) introduced the first model, Systematic Peer Group Supervision (SPGS), which encourages skill development, conceptual growth, participation, instructive feedback, and self-monitoring. She recommended weekly or biweekly meetings of three to six counselor trainees and a supervisor for one and a half to three hours. The mission of the group time would be to work on both individual counselor-in-training goals as well as the requirements of the counselor training program. In this approach, the supervisor functioned as the moderator and process observer. The uniqueness of this approach was that others from the group were periodically asked to assume certain “roles” such as client, counselor, outsider, and any others that might be helpful to the particular case. In addition, Borders provided other guidelines for focused observations, utilizing theoretical perspectives, and utilizing metaphors. She suggested that counselors-in-training work together in dyads to provide consultation to one another.

Starling and Baker (2000) conducted a qualitative study of four school counseling interns during their internship semester analyzing the efficacy of the SPGS model.

Results of the study suggested four themes emerged from the use of the structured group supervision mode. The themes were: (a) decrease in confusion and anxiety throughout the semester, (b) clarification of individual goals, (c) increased confidence, and (d) perception that peer feedback was valuable and enhanced the process.

Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al. (1991) presented the second model, which is called the Structured Group Supervision (SGS) model. Their model was structured to encourage the active involvement and participation of all group members, rather than having the supervisees take turns receiving supervision from the supervisor. This model is structured in five phases with specific tasks in each phase.

In Phase 1, the supervisee provides a case summary and states what assistance is requested from the group. In Phase 2, the supervision group seeks further information or clarification by asking questions. In Phase 3, group members respond to the information provided in the two previous stages while the supervisee remains silent and takes notes. After Phase 3, Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al. (1991) suggested the group take a 10 to 15 minute break in order to allow the supervisee time to reflect on the feedback and prepare for Phase 4. It is important during this break that group members not converse with the presenting supervisee to allow time for supervisee processing. In Phase 4, the presenting supervisee gives responses to the group members. The responses consist of items that were beneficial or helpful and those that were not. During this time, group members remain silent. Phase 5 is optional and to be lead by the group supervisor. During this time, the supervisor may conduct a discussion surrounding the process, reaction to feedback, group dynamics, or summary of the time together (Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al., 1991).

Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Hart et al. (1994) conducted a quantitative study using the SGS. They conducted a 7-year quantitative study of 194 master's level counselors-in-training from three different universities. The intent of the study was to investigate personal and skill development throughout the students' clinical experience over two

semesters. Groups were randomly assigned either to the SGS format using the five phases or a control group using a traditional group supervision model. The outcome of this pilot study suggested that structured group supervision was more effective than the control group in the development of beginning counselors-in-training skills and personal growth.

McAuliffe (1992) proposed a third model for use within group supervision with experienced community college counselors. McAuliffe used a group guided by a clinical consultant who discussed case conceptualizations and developed treatment plans as well as focused on awareness of the group members' own interpersonal dynamics. In the process, group supervision provides both challenge and support, which are considered to be the fundamental conditions for development. The format used for case presentations is SOAP. The first step, Subjective (S), requires the counselor to describe reasons for presenting this case so members know to focus on specific issues. In the second step, Objective (O), the counselor gives background information on the client, including a summary of work done to date, and any test results and reports from other therapists, as they relate to the presenting problem. The third step, Assessment (A), provides the counselor with an opportunity to give a tentative diagnostic impression. The final step, Plan (P), contains a summary of the work done up to this point with a proposed treatment plan. After the case summary the group members ask questions, suggest further information to be gathered, and propose treatment possibilities.

A fourth model integrated several models of individual and group supervision. Agnew et al. (2000) borrowed elements from Bernard's Discrimination Model (1979), Borders' SPGS Model (1991), and Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al.'s Structured Group Supervision Model (1991). Agnew et al.'s model requires counselors-in-training to briefly describe the clients, state counseling goals and desired outcomes, describe the kind of help wanted and the desired supervision method. Group feedback included strengths of the comments regarding the case, suggestions for improvements, strategies, and directions for counseling.

A fifth and final model is Andersen's (1991) reflecting teams with a focus on its application to supervision, which will be described in more detail in the next section. However, the two empirical studies mentioned in this section (Starling & Baker, 2000; Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Hart et al., 1994) provided some initial evidence that structured group supervision models are effective in the development of counseling skills and personal growth. This section has described emerging group supervision models as well as emerging studies focusing on these models. Because this study seeks to focus more on the use of reflecting teams within group supervision, the next section will describe the history of reflecting teams as well as any pertinent studies surrounding their use in the broad field of counseling.

#### The Reflecting Team Model

Eubanks (2002) pointed out there are different "forms and styles that can constitute a reflecting team" (pg. 12). He suggested that the reflections or musings from a reflecting team are not a mirroring back of what they heard or saw, or just merely suggestions and advice from the team. Rather he defined it is a "discussion focusing on questions and curiosities that team members develop while listening (pg. 12). Eubanks stated the goal is to offer clients multiple opportunities and perspectives to "revise, rethink, or reinterpret his or her problem" (pg. 13).

Andersen (1991) described the reflecting team model in terms of components, steps, and processes. The first component is the unit in need of help, which can be composed of one or more persons. The unit could be an individual, couple, or family plus a therapist or co-therapists. The second component is the designated interviewer, which is one member from the team (supervisor, supervisees or other therapists) who guides the reflecting team through the first step. The last component is the rest of the reflecting team members, who are other therapists or therapists-in-training.

Each component or unit of the reflecting team will process the information in different ways and times throughout the steps of the reflecting team's session. In any given session, which runs from 60 to 90 minutes, the reflecting team's first step is to observe a therapy session with the client. At some point, the team takes a break and enters into the second step. The second step requires the team to listen while the interviewer asks questions of the first component or unit in need of help. The reflecting team members do not talk to one another during this time, but they may internally talk or write down observations or questions. For instance, they might wonder how this situation might be described differently, or they might want to ask for additional information. During the third step, the reflecting team members then talk to one another about their questions, wonderings, and ideas while the first two components (interviewer and unit in need of help) listen to them. During this time, the interviewer and consultees cannot talk to one another, but they may entertain their own internal dialogue and take notes. In the fourth step, the interviewer and consultees have a chance to converse about what they heard from the reflecting team. In the fifth step, all three components of the entire group can join in a conversation to talk about the case and/or the group process as they were discussing the case. Throughout each of the steps, it is important for the interviewer to only ask questions and avoid giving opinions or answers. In addition, it is important for the reflective team to only speculate about the issue of concern and not give definitive conclusions and answers to the problem. Curiosity becomes the driving force of the session, not conclusions (Andersen, 1991).

From the beginnings of the reflecting team model proposed by Andersen (1989), others have taken the approach and sought to employ the model in training different



students throughout the various counseling fields. The reflecting team method has been most heavily studied within marriage and family counseling programs (Landis & Young, 1994; O'Connor et al., 2004; Sells et al., 1994; Smith et al., 1992). However, other counseling specialties have operationalized its use in training their interns (Monk & Winslade, 2000; Riley, 2004).

Monk and Winslade (2000) explored the use of the reflecting teams as a tool for assisting community counseling students in developing skills and professional identity during their training. They presented guidelines for the process as well as delineated the advantages of using this model. Monk and Winslade observed the advantages of using reflecting teams were: (a) allowing student involvement early in their training; (b) promoting sharing of ideas; (c) helping stimulate ideas and creative solutions; and (d) providing opportunities for students to receive feedback. Riley (2004) proposed the idea of applying the reflecting team approach to the training of art therapists. She noted that in using this process with her art therapy students, particular care was needed to attend to the space for the use of art. In addition, Riley emphasized the importance of using positive input versus negative input throughout the process.

### Quantitative Studies

A review of the literature revealed one quantitative study (N = 14) on the reflecting team with marriage and family therapists-in-training (Landis & Young, 1994). The reflecting team approach was used with students enrolled in an introduction class, which used three different role-plays throughout the semester. Preliminary results indicated beginning students viewed themselves as more capable of performing basic skills than the traditional teaching method.

### Qualitative Studies

Further review of the literature yielded four qualitative studies involving the use of reflecting teams within the marriage and family therapy field (O'Connor et al., 2004; Sells et al., 1994; Smith et al., 1992; Smith et al., 1995). Bacigalupe (2003) noted that reflecting teams, genograms, and questions were the most powerful and enduring systemic practices within the field of marriage and family therapy. Based on his research, the use of reflecting teams has become one of the central features in training students to think reflexively as well as to learn to collaborate and consult in teams. He also noted that it is transformative for the client, therapist, and group.

O'Connor et al. (2004) noted a lack of research regarding therapists' experiences with the use of reflecting teams from a narrative approach. The researchers sought to discover how eight therapists experienced the use of reflecting teams based in narrative therapy. The therapists worked at a large outpatient clinic associated with a teaching hospital located in a large city in Canada. The therapists included five female and three males with experiences ranging from four months to four years. Feedback from the participating therapists indicated both positive and negative experiences. On the positive side, seven therapists (87.5%) noted reflecting teams allowed access to a wide range of input. Five therapists (62.5%) indicated a second area of helpfulness indicating reflecting teams offered excellent learning experiences for both experienced and inexperienced therapists. However, one challenge was expressed by six of the therapists (75%), who noted input from the reflecting team could be overwhelming. These findings differed from two other qualitative studies on reflecting teams (Sells et al. 1994; Smith et al.,

1992) which stated therapists reported only positive experiences using the reflecting team and indicated no overwhelming experiences.

Sells et al. (1994) and Smith et al. (1992) also operated from a narrative approach utilizing the reflecting team model. Sells et al. conducted an ethnographic study examining five therapists' and seven couples' experiences using reflecting teams. Therapists stated the approach was especially helpful when the couples were in stagnation, while the couples disagreed with that observation. The couples stated the reflecting team approach was helpful whether they were stuck or not. Smith et al.'s (1992) qualitative study found therapists' experiences of reflecting teams were generally positive. The participants in the study were three doctoral interns and one faculty supervisor located at a university-based marriage and family therapy clinic. The mid-size, public university was located in a large city in the southern portion of the United States. The study followed the participants for 3 months and questioned the participants at three intervals throughout the experience: Week 3, Week 7 and Week 8. Therapists' perceived reflecting teams positively because the reflecting teams: (1) created and encouraged dialogue among team members, (2) resolved client difficulties, and (3) offered multiple views on the clients' problems. The researchers noted two limitations in using the reflecting team approach in live clinical supervision with couples. First, therapists noted some discomfort when couples were inexperienced with this approach. Secondly, the process became too cumbersome when there were too many people in the interview room.

Smith et al. (1994) conducted a follow-up process study on four couples and their therapists over a four-month period examining their reactions and perceptions of the

reflecting team process. Interviews were conducted directly after a session using the reflecting team method. Participants were selected using a purposeful sampling strategy in order to refine theoretical assumptions developed in the Sells et al. (1994) study. While both clients and therapists felt reflecting teams were helpful, the study did point to one area which therapists need to attend to in using the reflecting team approach. The main issue which emerged from this study is the importance of “setting the stage” for clients to be open to hearing multiple perspectives from the reflecting team. Specifically, the study indicated “setting the stage” meant therapists need to pay attention to the therapeutic alliance and carefully time the use of reflecting team interventions. Failure to attend to these two issues resulted in anger by the client toward the therapist, and the client became unwilling to hear multiple perspectives. Clients suggested that they wanted to feel heard and understood by the primary therapists before hearing multiple perspectives from the reflecting team.

#### Focus on Reflecting Team Supervision

While Anderson (1991) developed the concept of the reflecting team in clinical practice, Prest et al. (1990) discussed the use of reflecting team supervision (RTS) as a way to enrich the group supervision process. The reflecting team practice was first used during live therapy sessions with the primary goal focusing on the treatment of the client and the secondary goal focusing on the supervision of the therapists. In RTS, the focus shifted from primarily client treatment to the development of the counseling supervisee, specifically with the goal towards developing counselor competencies and overcoming challenges while client treatment became the secondary goal. In RTS, the reflecting team’s primary function then became fostering the development of their fellow

counseling interns. Initially, RTS started with minimal guidelines and little structure; however, others (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000) gave further refinement and structure by implementing the Anderson's (1991) four-stage reflecting team process. The structure and purpose of the four-stage RTS using a role-play format is described below using a typical 60-minute group supervision session focusing on one case (Landis & Young, 1994). However, Monk and Winslade (2000) also suggested counseling interns could use videotaped recordings of their work with clients to share during the group session.

#### Stage One (25 Minutes)

Landis and Young (1994) as well as Monk and Winslade (2000) suggested using a play scenario between two members of the class in the first stage. The supervisor and other counselors in the group became the reflecting team and observe the session. During this stage, the reflecting team was to remain silent while generating a wide array of ideas regarding their perceptions and observations of the role-play session.

#### Stage Two (10 Minutes)

In this stage, the supervisor directs the discussion of the reflecting team. The supervision goal in this stage is to help counselors develop new ideas from other counselors, who may be at different skill levels as well as to highlight how their perspectives influence the client and the session. The reflecting team should offer spontaneous, positive options and ideas. Possible discussions could focus on: (a) interesting verbal and nonverbal interactions between counselor and client, (b) positive behaviors that occurred during the session, (c) personal impact of certain counseling session moments, (d) wonderings about possible influences, interactions, and strategies

for change. In this stage team members tended to help one another in providing alternative ideas and perspective by piggy-backing of each other (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000).

#### Stage Three (10 Minutes)

During this stage the counselor facilitated a discussion with the role-play client(s) while the reflecting team listens. The supervision goal in this stage was to help counselors see perspectives impacted the client and session. The client expresses the ideas that were most important or meaningful. In addition, the client may generate their own alternative based on the previous conversation (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000).

#### Stage Four (15 Minutes)

At this stage the entire group gathers together to process of debrief the experience. The supervision goal is to receive immediate feedback and further teaching moment from both the supervisor and counseling interns. First it is an opportunity for the counselor and client to: (a) share personal reactions to the roles and the experience, (b) express curiosity about the counselor's approach or specifics of the counseling session, and (c) reflect on any insights into blind spots and insecurities. For the reflecting team, it becomes an opportunity to: (a) reflect on their thoughts and feelings about the session and the experience, (b) focus on hypotheses and strategies, and (c) ask any further questions.

#### RTS Assumptions

Prest et al. (1990) noted the influence of constructivist theory on the use of reflecting teams in supervision. The authors note that constructivist thought is a departure from absolutist views of the world which says there is an absolute reality and it can be

known. They suggest that constructivist theory asserts we cannot know reality, and we are in the process of constructing reality in every interaction.

Prest et al. (1990) suggested this constructivist influence provided different levels of processing and allowed for a greater variety of possibilities and ideas for students. In, RTS the supervisee became “a fly on the wall” (p. 270) and was able to process at a different level. While students reported feeling less defensive and more open to feedback, both supervisors and therapists-in-training appreciated being introduced to the multiplicity of new ideas and perspectives in a less hierarchical approach.

Prest et al. (1990) highlighted the theoretical influence driving the differences between reflecting teams versus a group discussion of a session or case. Landis and Young (1994) noted the reflecting team is more than just a methodological, structural change in supervision. While Landis and Young acknowledged the structure is more collaborative, they suggested it is the philosophical stance of the team members’ that is important. Whether it is the theory, structure, or approach, the use of reflecting teams address the supervision group time in a different way from the use of a group discussion.

The typical differences discussed in the literature on RTS are team structure, team members’ attitude or posture, and the language used in the process (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest et al., 1990; Riley, 2004). The structure of RTS is less hierarchical in that while the supervisor still retains control of the time, the instructor also becomes part of the team and at times moves into a lateral position (Prest et al., 1990). Monk and Winslade (2000) identified a collaborative structure identifying the role of counselor educators as a co-participant, who assists in the students’ learning work rather than critiquing students. Also, the attitude or posture of the reflecting team is

different from other group discussions because members of the reflecting team are not expert commentators or neutral observers (Monk & Winslade, 2000), but are participant-witnesses (Riley, 2004). The reflecting team members listen closely to the client and counselor and offer personal responses and further questions as opposed to giving expert judgments or interpretations (Monk & Winslade, 2000). Finally, when the reflecting team's language is tied to the reflecting team's approach, it takes on a positive, wondering, and personal tone (Monk & Winslade, 2000; Riley, 2004). The reflecting team is encouraged to speak tentatively and speculatively in terms of wondering when exploring possible meanings or new ideas. The group members are also encouraged to share personal responses to moments in the session as well as moments within the reflecting team conversations (Monk & Winslade, 2000).

#### Assessing Group Supervision Models

Bernard and Goodyear (2004) highlighted a major difficulty in researching the process of group supervision, the lack of reliable and valid measures. They mentioned four tools with potential for measuring the group supervision process. The four assessment tools are: (a) multidimensional scaling (MDS), (b) the Group Supervisory Behavior Scale (GSBS), (c) Group Supervision Scale (GSS), and (d) Group Supervision Impact Scale (GSIS). Because this study is qualitative, and the instruments will be in questionnaire form, the resulting discussion will be limited to the purposes they might serve in studying groups from a qualitative perspective.

#### MDS Procedure

Bernard and Goodyear (2004) noted the MDS is a statistical procedure that is potentially useful in assessing how group members view each other in terms of similarity



to one another. They stated that it is not an evaluation of one another in terms of good or bad, but in terms of how members perceive themselves and peers in connection to each other. This scaling measure would be helpful in studying group relationships within an intact group. However, this study will be focusing on different individuals from different groups in different school counseling programs.

The GSBS and the GSS are two instruments developed to measure supervisory behaviors from the perspective of the supervisee. Because these two instruments only assess the supervisor's behavior, I have opted not to use them in the study. However, instrument development and the establishment of any validity and reliability are covered in the following paragraphs.

#### GSBS Development and Validation

White and Rudolph (2000) developed the GSBS, which assesses and evaluates supervisory behaviors within the context of group supervision. The researchers listed six areas or subscales the GSBS was designed to assess: (a) facilitating an open climate, (b) demonstrating professional understanding, (c) demonstrating clear communication, (d) encouraging self-evaluation, (e) demonstrating efficient and clear evaluations, and (f) overall quality of behavior. White and Rudolph gave minimal information regarding how the items were developed noting the GSBS was compiled of unanimous or nearly unanimous endorsed items found from other supervisory behavior sources. The researchers conducted an initial pilot investigation with 41 clinical psychology graduate student supervisees of an American Psychological Association accredited program in the Midwest. No further information about the respondents was provided. A Pearson correlation coefficient indicated the overall scale was statistically significant at .94 with

the six subscales falling between .64 and .92. GSBS scores were correlated with the overall rankings of the supervisors in an effort to measure criterion validity. Results indicated an overall moderate (.55) statistically significant correlation with correlations for the subscales ranging from .38 to .65.

### GSS Development and Validation

Arcuine (2002) developed the GSS, which is meant to assess a supervisee's perception of the group supervisor. Specifically, the GSS assesses three areas of supervisory ability in navigating issues of: (a) group safety, (b) development of counseling skills and case conceptualization, and (c) group time management. The purpose of Arcuine's (2002) dissertation was to develop and provide preliminary validation for the Group Supervision Scale (GSS). The first step was an exploratory factor analysis to determine dimensions involved in group supervisor evaluation. The second step assessed how the GSS related to other constructs associated with group supervision, especially in terms of convergent validity. In particular convergent validity examined supervisee's perception of group climate, supervisee's satisfaction with supervision, and emphasis supervisor places on the development of case conceptualizations and counseling skills.

Arcuine's (2002) development of the GSS consisted of two separate studies with Study 1 focusing on item development while Study 2 entailed administering the GSS to a national sample to develop norms and collect evidence of validity. In phase 1 of Study 1, four predoctoral internship counseling psychology students were used in a focus group to assist in the development of items for the GSS. A second focus group with four different predoctoral internship clinical and counseling psychology students reviewed and edited

the existing items. Both groups represented both gender and ethnically diverse students. In phase 2 of Study 1, four expert raters were recruited to review the final items developed from the two focus groups. Results indicated the expert raters were in agreement with the 24 items as they represented important aspects of group supervision. However, the researcher eliminated eight items that did not receive a higher than average rating of fit, which made the final GSS with 16 items.

In Study 2, Arcinue (2002) developed norms and validation evidence on the newly constructed GSS through a national sample. The final sample included 174 students enrolled in counseling psychology (72%) and clinical psychology (28%) programs at varying points in their programs with an average of five semesters completed. The response rate was 63% (N=227) representing 64 different university programs; however, the geographical locations of the respondents were not reported. The gender and ethnicity breaks down as follows: (a) 79% were women and 21% were men, and (b) 80% were White, 2% African-American, 7% Asian-American, 5% Latina/o, 1% Native American, and 5% biracial/multiracial. All of the participants had been involved in group supervision that had been meeting for an average of 15 weeks. Besides the demographic questionnaire, three other measures were used for validation purposes. The first was the Group Climate Questionnaire-Short Form (GCQ), which measures whether or not the group climate is positive and engaging ( $r = .80$ ). The second measurement instrument used in this validation process was the Supervision Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ) and asks supervisees to assess their satisfaction with various aspects of supervision ( $r = .97$ ). The final instrument used in this validation process was supervisor Working Alliance Inventory-Client Focus subscale (SWAI-CF), which examines the supervisee's

perception of how much emphasis supervisor places on promoting the understanding of the client ( $r = .90$ ).

Arcinue (2002) conducted a factor analysis the sampling adequacy indicates appropriateness of the data set yielding in three major factors in the GSS. The sampling analysis conducted on the national sample ( $N = 174$ ) reported .95, which suggests an adequate sample. Next, the proposed factor solution was subjected to a varimax orthogonal rotation which found three factors of interest. Items included in each factor were those that loaded higher than .60 on the factor loadings. Factor 1 accounted for 28% of the variance and included items reflecting attention to issues of group safety. Factor 2 accounted for approximately 26% of the known variance and reflected the emphasis supervisor placed on the development case conceptualization and counseling skills. Factor 3 accounted for 25% of the variance and reflects the supervisor's attention to group management.

Arcinue (2002) also reported reliability and validity issues pertinent to the GSS and other instruments on the 174 participants on the national sample. The Cronbach alpha coefficients for the GSS were .96 with subscales reporting .91 for Group Safety (Factor 1), .94 for Skill Development and Case Conceptualization, and .93 for Group Management. To test for the potential confounding influence of demographic variables on the construct of interest, a series of multivariate regression analysis were conducted. Results indicated demographic variables were not significantly related to the total scores on the GSS. A preliminary analysis estimating convergent validity was conducted and high validity correlations were found in the analysis. Specifically, the correlations

between the GSS and the other instruments were .72 with the GCQ, .86 with the SSQ, and .86 with the SWAI-CF.

Arcinue (2002) developed an instrument measuring supervisee perception of the performance of the group supervisor in the context of group supervision. Results of his study indicated initial evidence for reliability and validity for the GSS measure and accounted for 79% of the variance in the initial study. Factor 1, Group Safety, appeared to be related to creating a safe group environment and promoting personal growth. Factor 2, Skill and case conceptualization development appeared to address the emphasis the supervisor places on the development of counseling skills and case conceptualization. Finally, Factor 3, group management appeared to reflect the supervisor's ability to structure, direct, and manage the group's time. The researcher added to the field of group supervision by providing an instrument that may assist in further the understanding of the complex dynamics involved in group supervision.

Arcinue (2002) acknowledged the limitations of his preliminary study in the development of the GSS. Primarily, he stated there is a need to conduct further confirmatory factor analysis on new samples in order to verify the three factor solution proposed by the GSS. In addition, further studies with a variety of group supervision supervisees with larger sample sizes with different instruments to further assess for convergent validity would also be helpful. Finally, high correlations between the GSS and the other instruments may be problematic in a couple of areas. First, high correlations may cause statistical problems in a regression analysis. Second, high correlations might also suggest the construct of interest is not the supervisor but the constructs represented as group safety, case conceptualization and skill developments, and group management.

High correlations also may suggest the GSS is not unique in comparison to the other instruments used in this study. However, the use of focus groups and reviewers would suggest uniqueness regarding content validity of the GSS. Finally, a significant limitation of the study is the lack of strong, empirically based measures of group supervision to use in comparing any new instrument to establish concurrent and discriminant validity. Therefore, the questionnaires used in this study came from other counseling domains.

The final instrument, the GSIS, combined an assessment of both the supervisor and the group environment. Getzelman (2003) developed this instrument to assess the impact of the supervisor and peers on a supervisee as well as the overall group environment. She designed the 24-item instrument to specifically measure the positive and negative group supervision experiences. The GSIS subscales are: (a) supervisor impact, (b) peer supervisor impact, and (c) group environment impact.

#### GSIS Development and Validation

Getzelman's (2003) dissertation reported the development and validation of the GSIS in two phases. The pool of items for the GSIS was generated from two preliminary studies of helpful and hindering group supervision phenomena (Enyedy et al., 2003). The items from these studies were reviewed by Getzelman for inclusion and presented to five expert supervisor raters and five advanced supervisee raters for content validity. The supervisor raters were chosen based on their extensive experience (more than 10 years) in providing group supervision. The advanced supervisee raters were recruited from the clinical and counseling psychology graduate programs. They were selected based on the following criteria: (a) had completed their coursework and field placements, and (b) had

been exposed to at least two different supervision groups. Based on feedback from the raters, the final GSIS consisted of 27 items.

Getzleman (2003) gave the GSIS to a national sample of 222 supervisees from psychology graduate programs, who were currently or had recently been involved in group supervision. The demographic representation of the sample was fairly representative of students enrolled in graduate psychology programs. The participants were composed of 84% female and 16% male with ages ranging between 22 and 58. Ethnicities of the participants were: (a) Native American/Alaskan Native (.9%), Asian/Pacific Islander (5.8%), Black/African American (2.7%), Hispanic/Latino (3.6%), Multi-Ethnic/Racial (4.5%), White/Non-Hispanic (78.9%), International (1.3%), and other (2.2%).

Getzleman's (2003) factor analysis of the GSIS indicated a three-factor structure. The first factor, Group Supervisor Impact (GSI) consisted of 13 items and accounted for approximately 38.58% of the variance. The second factor, Group Environment Impact (GEI), consisted of seven items and accounted for 10.8% of the variance. The third factor, Peer Supervisee Impact (PSI), consisted of four items and accounted for 7.64% of the variance. A Cronbach's alpha was used to estimate the internal consistency of the GSIS. Alpha coefficients were .93 for the GSIS, .93 for the GSI, .85 for the PSI, and .85 for the GEI.

Getzleman (2003) also conducted a preliminary analysis of the GSIS and other measures for convergent validity. The other measures used in the study were Supervisee Satisfaction Questionnaire (SSQ), Supervisee Self-Efficacy Scale (SSE), Group Supervision Scale (GSS), Group Climate Questionnaire-Engagement Subscale (GCQ-

ES), and Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory-Rapport Subscale (SWAI-RS).

Analysis indicated significant positive relationships between the GSIS and SSQ ( $r=.68$ ), SSE ( $r=.63$ ), GSS ( $r=.83$ ), GCQ-ES ( $r=.70$ ), and SWAI-RS ( $r=.79$ ). Because the areas of interest in the GSIS more completely capture the group experience and are the most relevant to this study, the GSIS will be used as a questionnaire to gather more information about school counseling intern experiences.

### Summary

This chapter described the available literature on the supervision of school counselors, overview of clinical supervision, the Reflecting Team (RT) model, and assessment of group supervision models. In each section, there is included both conceptual as well as research literature. Both were included to present in an effort to provide a thorough discussion of all topics surrounding this study.

The first section of the literature review focused on supervision of school counselors. The section examined the professional mandates of the profession as well as concerns and research surrounding school counseling supervision. Included in the discussion was the concern that school counselors are not receiving the type of clinical supervision needed for a developing professional counselor.

The second section, overview of clinical supervision, examined both thoughts about the various formats in which clinical supervision might be conducted (individual, group, live, etc.). In addition, research findings on the various formats, individual supervision, and group supervision were included. Also embedded in the discussion of group supervision is an examination of the development of group supervision as well as a discussion of the five current group supervision models.



In the third section, the origins of the RT model along with research studies on the initial RT model were presented. This was followed by a description of the RTS model. The RTS model is an alternative approach toward the use of the RT model. A more thorough discussion of the RTS model's stages and assumptions concluded the third section.

The final section examined four group supervision assessments as possibilities for measuring the construct of group supervision in any research study. Each of the four group supervision assessments remains in the infancy of development. However, they all provide potential avenues for researching group supervision.

CHAPTER III  
METHODOLOGY

SRTS Overview

The purpose of this study was to explore school counseling interns' experiences using a reflecting team model of group supervision. Specifically, I was interested in tracking the experiences of school counseling interns during their last internship semester before they graduate. The school counseling interns were exposed to the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS) model.

The SRTS model is a hybrid of the RTS model (Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest et al., 1990) and the SGS model (Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al., 1991). The SGS model provided a more supervisee-focused structure for the session, while the RTS model provided more of the supervision goals and reflective structure to the session. A typical SRTS session lasts approximately 60 minutes and focuses on one school counseling intern, who presents one current case. A written case presentation and audio or video of the session is provided by the presenter. The guideline (Appendix A) outlined stages with suggestions for: (a) time given, (b) specific focus, (c) supervision goals, (d) and suggested reflective questions and probes. However, it is also important to note that throughout the process the supervisor still retains control over the group and may intervene as necessary. A table is given below laying out the process followed by a description of the stages.

Table 3.1 Comparison of the Stages of the SRTS, RTS and SGS Models

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>EST. TIME</b>	<b>MEMBERS INVOLVED</b>	<b>TASK</b>
<b>Stage #1:</b>			
SRTS	25 min.	Presenter... Interviewer... Presenter...	...presents case to class ...asks questions ...responds to questions
RTS	25 min.	Presenting counselor... Role-playing client...	...conducts a session ...plays client
SGS	20 min.	Presenting counselor...	...presents case to class
<b>Stage #2:</b>			
SRTS	10 min.	Team members...	...offer questions & wonderings
RTS	10 min.	Team members	...offer questions & wonderings
SGS	10 min.	Team members... Presenting counselor	...ask questions ...responds to questions
<b>Stage #3:</b>			
SRTS	10 min.	Presenting counselor...	...responds to any question or idea deemed relevant & interesting
RTS	10 min.	Presenting counselor & client...	...discuss questions or ideas relevant & interesting
SGS	10 min.	Team members...	...offer thoughts & ideas

Table 3.1 continued

<b>STAGE</b>	<b>EST. TIME</b>	<b>MEMBERS INVOLVED</b>	<b>TASK</b>
<b>Stage #4:</b>			
SRTS	10-15 min.	Presenting counselor & interviewer...	...engage in a discussion of the case
RTS	15 min.	Entire group...	...engage in a discussion of the case, process the experience, or debrief
SGS	10 min.	Presenting counselor...	... responds to input from the group
<b>Stage #5:</b>			
SRTS (optional)	5 min.	Entire group...	... offer further reflections of the case, summaries of the experience, or process group dynamics
RTS	Not addressed	Not addressed	Not Addressed
SGS	10 min.	Entire group...	... offer further reflections of the case, summaries of the experience, or process group dynamics

#### Stage One (25 Minutes)

The first stage of the SRTS model combines Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al.'s (1991) first two stages' focus with the RTS stage one's supervision reflective questions and probes. In the first two stages of the SGS model, the counseling intern requests assistance from the group and provides information about the presenting case through case conceptualizations and audio or video recording. The SGS model provides a

time of questioning and focusing to allow the group to obtain additional information or seek clarification about the case.

In the SRTS model, the supervisor initially takes the role of the interviewer. As the semester unfolds and the counseling interns become more comfortable with the process, other counseling interns may take on the interviewing role at the discretion of the supervisor. In the SRTS model, the interviewer uses reflective questions and probes to: (a) focus on the counseling intern's concerns about the case, (b) seek further information, or (c) clarify any issues. During this stage, the other counseling interns in the group become the reflecting team and observe the proceedings. The reflecting team remains silent while generating a wide array of ideas regarding their perceptions and observations of the case presentation.

#### Stage Two (10 Minutes)

Stage two of the SRTS model combines Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al.'s (1991) stage three focus while using the RTS model's supervision goals and reflective approach. The SGS stage three focus any thoughts, ideas or suggestions from the entire group who has been observing the role-play counseling session. The supervision goal in this stage is to develop case conceptualization and treatment skills by exposure to new ideas and perspective from other counseling interns with the potential for highlighting how the presenting counseling intern's perspectives might influence the client and the session. The reflecting team should offer spontaneous, positive options, ideas or wonderings. There are a number of possible areas for the reflecting team to focus on during this stage. One avenue of reflective focus can be on issues observed during the recorded session such as: (1) interesting verbal and nonverbal interactions between

counselor and client, (2) positive behaviors that occurred during the session, and (3) personal impact of certain counseling session moments. Another avenue of reflective focus can be on counseling interns' wonderings about possible influences on the client, interactions between the counseling intern and client, as well as possible strategies for change. During this stage, the presenting counseling intern and supervisor remain silent while making any notes of their reactions and reflections to the reflecting team discussion.

#### Stage Three (10 Minutes)

Stage three of the SRTS model combines Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al.'s (1991) SGS model stage four focus while using the RTS's supervision stage three goals and reflective approach. The SGS model's focus is to provide the supervisee with an opportunity to respond to and elaborate further on the reflecting team's input. The RTS model's supervision goal in this stage is to help the counseling intern examine multiple perspectives that may influence working with the client as well as possible options or directions in future session with the client. The counseling intern notes the ideas that were most important, helpful, or meaningful. In addition, the counseling intern may also voice any new insights, ideas, approaches, or perspectives based on the reflecting teams comments.

#### Stage Four (15 Minutes)

The final stage of the SRTS model combines Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al.'s SGS model (1991) focus while using the RTS's supervision goals and reflective approach. The SGS model suggested the supervisor lead stage five focusing on: further reflections of the case, summaries of the experience, and processing group dynamics. The

RTS supervision goal is to provide immediate feedback and facilitate teaching moments for the presenting counseling intern as well as the reflecting team members.

The supervisor leads the SRTS model's stage four and may open the discussion to the entire group in an optional fifth stage. The discussion may focus on any remaining supervisor concerns such as: (a) ethical or treatment issues not addressed by the group, or (b) important ideas not addressed in stage three by the presenting counseling intern.

Another area of focus could be the presenting counseling intern's: (a) personal reactions to the experience, (b) remaining concerns about the counseling session, and (c) reflections on any emerging insights into blind spots, insecurities, or areas of growth. Finally, for the reflecting team, stage four is an opportunity to: (a) ask any remaining questions, (b) wonder about future strategies, and (c) reflect on their thoughts and feelings about the session or the experience.

#### Data-Gathering Timeframe

Data consisting of interviews were gathered three times throughout the semester in order to capture specific elements of the SRTS, which might help or hinder the participants' personal and professional development. The information was gathered while the experience was still present and fresh; this persistent engagement throughout the semester enabled me to track the unfolding nature of group supervision. Data gathering occurred at three points throughout the semester with each point using a structured open-ended interview guide (SOIG). The questions for the SOIG were compiled from a similar qualitative study examining the reflecting team experience with marriage and family therapists (Smith et al., 1992). Data were also gathered once through a separate SOIG at

the end of the semester from academic supervisors to ensure SRTS format consistency across supervisors and sites.

### Assumptions and Rationale

This research study sought to add to or build upon a theory instead of testing a specific theory. Therefore, the method utilized was qualitative in nature versus quantitative. Patton (2002) articulated the difficulties in categorizing the variety of approaches to qualitative research, yet still offered an initial framework for identifying the overlap and differences. Patton sought to bring some semblance of order out of seeming chaos when he listed 16 categories of qualitative theoretical perspectives. Each perspective emerged from various academic disciplines with each seeking to answer a central question. For this study, three qualitative theoretical perspectives were considered to guide the research. First was the phenomenological theoretical perspective, which comes from the field of philosophy. The pivotal research question of interest is: “what are the meaning, structure, and essence of the lived experience of this phenomenon for this person or group of people” (Patton, 2002, p. 132)? The second possible theoretical perspective was that of heuristic inquiry, a form of phenomenology from the field of humanistic psychology. The pivotal research question of interest is: “what are my experience of this phenomenon and the essential experience of others who also experience this phenomenon intensely” (Patton, 2002, p. 132)? The third perspective was the grounded theory approach, which comes from the social sciences field. This perspective raises the pivotal question: “what theory emerges from systematic comparative analysis and is grounded in fieldwork so as to explain what has been and is observed” (Patton, 2002, p.132)?



Because this study sought to discover and build theory emerging from the data, grounded theory was selected as the most compatible theoretical orientation. I was not interested in exploring experience, meaning, structure or essence of a lived experience just for the sake of understanding. I was interested in contributing to the theory of group supervision and reflecting teams with a specific population. While grounded theory is part of the broad tradition of qualitative analysis, Charmaz (2000) stated grounded theory is also different from the other methods of qualitative study. She pointed out that grounded theory is useful for building theories, examining processes and identifying connections between events. Creswell (1998) stated grounded theorists are seeking to generate a theory explaining “actions, interactions, or process” (p. 241). Strauss and Corbin (1999) noted that “in this method, data collection, analysis, and eventual theory stand in close relationship to one another” (p. 12). Grounded theory was chosen for this research study because it: (a) seeks to build upon or add to theory, (b) utilizes a constant comparative method, (c) is emergent in nature, allowing for rich, descriptive data, and (d) is about process, development and change.

### Participants

Patton (2002) mentioned a major distinction between quantitative and qualitative method is the difference in selecting the sample for the study. Qualitative research focuses on selecting samples which will yield a depth of information, and this focus is called purposeful sampling. Once again, Patton suggested 16 sampling techniques available to qualitative researchers to choose from given the purposes of their study. Because I was interested in studying a particular group (school counseling interns), who

were experiencing a particular group supervision model (reflecting team) during their last (internship) semester before graduation, I chose the homogenous sampling approach.

Participants were recruited through contact with school counseling faculty who were already using the reflecting team model during the group supervision portion of their school counseling internship class. I contacted them through: (a) networking events, (b) personal contacts by myself or my advisor, Dr. Tarrell Portman, and (c) a general email to the Counselor Educators and Supervisors Network listserv (CESNET). All initial contacts asked faculty if: (a) they supervised the school counseling program's internship, (b) were part of a CACREP program or follow the CACREP guidelines, and (c) used a reflecting team model of group supervision or would be willing to try the SRTS model of supervision. I provided the guidelines for conducting a SRTS session (Appendix A) for further clarification of the process. Initially, eight professors were identified through the search in fall 2006 and agreed to participate and have their school counseling interns contacted. Once the spring 2007 semester began, I forwarded an email request on to their students for participation (Appendix B). Initially, 13 school counseling internship students responded to the email agreeing to participate in the study. They were entered into Iowa Courses Online (ICON), a course management system typically used for academic courses at the University of Iowa, where they would complete the three timeline SOIGs.

All SOIGs were reviewed by a three-person panel of qualitative experts to determine if they were appropriate questions for the purposes of the study. The panel members, Drs. Michael Patton, Catherine Marshall, and Juliet Corbin, have authored or co-authored textbooks on qualitative research and have been used as sources in the

methodological discussion of this dissertation. Patton (2002), professor of sociology at the Union Institute, previously served for 18 years on the faculty of the University of Minnesota. For five of those 18 years he was Director of the Minnesota Center for Social Research. He has written six books on social research and evaluation with two of those pertaining to qualitative methods. Marshall (2007), professor of Educational Leadership and Policy at the University of North Carolina, has written a textbook on designing qualitative research, teaches graduate classes on qualitative research methodology, and has served on the editorial board of the International Journal for Qualitative Research in Education since 1997. Corbin has co-authored a textbook on the use of grounded theory in qualitative research and served as an adjunct professor in nursing at San Jose State University and the University of Alberta. Currently, she is a senior scientist for the International Institute for Qualitative Research (IIQR) at the University of Alberta and is an editor for the Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung (FQS), a peer-reviewed multilingual online journal for qualitative research (FQS, 2007; IIQR, 2007; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). The panel's review indicated the SOIGs were appropriate for the purposes of this qualitative study using a grounded theory perspective. All indicated that asking more specific questions would run the risk of not allowing participants to speak from their point of view or block new ideas, themes or patterns from emerging during the interviews. Open-ended probes (who, what, where, when, how, and why) could be used if more specific information was needed or clarifications regarding initial responses would help the study.

### Academic Supervisors

At the beginning of the spring 2008 internship semester, I contacted the eight academic supervisors, who were selected through the purposeful sampling selection procedure described earlier. The academic supervisors were given the SRTS guidelines (Appendix A) and agreed to follow the format. Out of the eight initial academic group supervisors who agreed to participate, only four started and completed the study; they were the only ones who had participating interns involved in the study. At the end of the semester (Week 14), those four academic supervisors, who had study participants, were asked to respond by email to the following SOIG:

1. How closely did you follow the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision Guidelines?
2. If you deviated or altered the reflecting team process, what were your reasons for the change?
3. How would you describe this semester's group supervision experience in comparison to past groups?

### School Counseling Interns

Within the first 4 weeks of the spring 2008 internship semester, I asked the 13 counseling intern participants who initially agreed to participate in the study to fill out a demographic survey and respond to the first three SOIG questions.

Table 3.2 Detailed List of Counseling Intern Participants

<b>Participant Pseudo Name</b>	<b>Age</b>	<b>University</b>	<b>Group Supervisor's Pseudo Name</b>
Amy	26	Northeast U	Dr. Art
Natalie (withdrew)	28	Northeast U	Dr. Art
Deb	25	Northeast U	Dr. Blair
Erin	24	Northeast U	Dr. Blair
Lori	28	Northeast U	Dr. Blair
Barb	26	Northeast U	Dr. Culver
Greta	23	Northeast U	Dr. Culver
Jean	23	Northeast U	Dr. Culver
Kayla	23	Northeast U	Dr. Culver
Carl	28	Midwest U	Dr. Darden
Faye	24	Midwest U	Dr. Darden
Haley	27	Midwest U	Dr. Darden
Ilsa	32	Midwest U	Dr. Darden

As participants responded, I followed up with probes as needed, and this part of the process was completed by Week 6 of the internship semester. However, it should be noted that one participating intern dropped out after the first few weeks leaving 12 participating interns. Once the participants had responded at this stage, no new participants were allowed into the study. I began gathering the second round of data on Week 8 of the semester using SOIG questions 4 through 8. Participating counseling

interns had 3 weeks to respond to the questions, and then I conducted any follow-up probes as needed finishing up this round by the end Week 11 of the semester. Finally, I gathered the last set of data starting on Week 12 using SOIG questions 9 through 11 with any follow-up probes as needed completing this round by Week 14 of the semester. At the end of this final round, during Week 15, I asked participants to fill out the GSIS as a questionnaire for additional information. The GSIS contains specific categories of data emerging from one study on group supervision, and I did not want those categories to influence any initial responses of the participants. I also wanted to gather additional information to bridge the existing literature on hindering events in group supervision (Enyedy et al., 2003).

The SOIG for the school counseling interns are listed below:

1. Describe any group supervision experiences previous to this current class.
2. What were those previous supervision experiences like for you?
3. As you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feeling about the group supervision process?
4. What has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?
5. What helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?
6. What hinders you from participating in the reflecting team process?
7. What about the reflecting team process helps the development of your case conceptualization skills?
8. What about the reflecting team process hinders the development of your case conceptualization skills?

9. In what ways have you changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process?
10. What incidents were the most memorable for you?
11. What would have made this process better for you and the group?

### Data-Collection Techniques

The ICON platform allowed for ongoing group discussion for participants, which can be easily viewed by the researcher. It also allowed for the flexibility needed to interview one person, all participants, or shift the focus of the interviews as needed. In addition, the quiz component allowed participants to take the Demographic Survey (Appendix C) and the final questionnaire, the GSIS (Appendix D). Interviews were structured and open-ended in that certain information was requested from all participants. I used probes to follow up on responses that called for further development, fresh insights, or new information. Due to the nature of ICON, the process was a recursive process of collecting data, translating responses into new questions, and conducting ongoing analysis of the phenomena of reflecting teams.

### Standardized Open-Ended Interview Guide

According to Patton (2002), the standardized open-ended interview guide (SOIG) allows exploration of certain issues in a limited time frame. It also helps make interviewing different people more systematic and comprehensive by limiting and focusing upon certain issues. It is particularly useful in working with a group that needs to focus on key issues. Using standardized questions ensures all participants get asked the same question. For the purposes of this research study, the previous SOIG was developed with three different data gathering points. Because the school counseling interns

participating from two different schools started at different times, exact dates and weeks of data gathering were difficult to specify; therefore, I used a span of time give or take a week.

### Data Gathering #1

The first set of data was gathered within the first four weeks of the spring 2008 internship semester using the following questions: (a) describe any group supervision experiences previous to this current class, (b) what were those previous supervision experiences like for you?, and (c) as you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feeling about the upcoming group supervision process? Some potential probes that could be used at this point are: (a) tell me more, (b) what could have made the previous experience better? (c) how might your thoughts or feelings help or hinder the current group supervision process?, and (d) how might any previous experiences help or hinder the current group supervision process? This phase of data gathering was completed before entering the next data gathering phase.

### Data Gathering #2

The second set of data was gathered in the middle of the semester starting in Week 8 after the school counseling interns experienced some group supervision sessions. The SOIG's used at this point were: (a) what has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?, (b) what helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?, (c) what hinders your participation in the reflecting team process?, (d) what in the reflecting team process helps in the development of your case conceptualization skills?, (e) what in the reflecting team process hinders the development of your case conceptualization skills? Potential probes that might be used at



this point are: (a) how might the experience be improved at this point?, (b) how do you see yourself participating in the future?, (c) what areas of case conceptualization skills could the process help you with?, and (d) tell me more about...? This phase of data gathering was completed before entering the next data gathering phase.

### Data Gathering #3

The final set of data was gathered towards the end of the semester (Week 12) as the semester was concluding and school counseling interns could reflect back over the semester. The SOIG's for this segment were: (a) how have you changed over the semester as a result of the group supervision process, (b) what incidents were the most memorable for you?, and (b) what would have made this process better for you and the group? Potential probes for this portion could be: (a) what made it memorable?, (b) who was most influential, (c) tell me more about. In addition, the participants were asked to complete the GSIS questionnaire at the end of this data gathering stage.

### Recording Data

Because ICON was used for this study, all data was recorded and available without the need to transcribe materials. I kept *field notes* of my observation of the process as well as a *reflective journal* to reflect my biases, and they were also recorded in ICON. All materials (interviews, field notes, and reflective journal) were typed into the computer and easily accessible for analysis. Samples of these materials are included in Appendix E.

### Procedure

I emailed the potential participants an invitation letter, informed consent document, and reflecting team guidelines at the beginning of the spring 2008 semester

through the participating academic supervisors. I enrolled the initial 13 participants in ICON, and participants were directed to the ICON site at specific intervals to answer the SOIGs. One participant soon dropped out leaving a total of 12 participants. Data from the interviews were analyzed, coded, and categorized for themes each data collection point. As each round of interviews concluded, I analyzed the data for common themes. A sorting and resorting process was used to organize the responses into categories to limit redundancy. I also kept field work notes as well as a journal of my reflective comments in an effort to monitor my own assumptions, preconceptions, and judgments in order as one way to build trustworthiness.

### Establishing and Building Trustworthiness

Marshall and Rossman (1989) noted qualitative research has not gained the same acceptance in the academic field as has quantitative research. They highlighted the need for qualitative researchers to articulate the soundness of their qualitative studies. They stated the criterion for soundness in qualitative research lies in establishing and building trustworthiness, which can be evaluated by other researchers. Marshall and Rossman listed four criteria useful to establish the value or trustworthiness of a qualitative study: (a) credibility, (b) transferability, (c) dependability, and (d) confirmability.

### Credibility

Marshall and Rossman (1989) defined credibility as the ability to demonstrate accurate identification and descriptions emerging from the data. Patton (2002) suggested credibility is dependent upon the rigor of the methods used, the credibility of the researcher, and the positive stance regarding the value of qualitative research. In the next section of this chapter, I have addressed my credibility as a researcher as well as my

positive stance towards qualitative research. At this time, I am devoting most of the attention in this section to the methods used to ensure methodological rigor. Marshall and Rossman suggested the key to credibility is the ability to conduct in-depth analysis and describe the complexities and variations of the experience. In order to address those issues, Patton suggested the use of *triangulation*, which ensures that data collection does not use a single source, in a single moment, with a single explanation.

### Triangulation

Patton (2002) defined triangulation as the use of diverse ways to ensure bias does not influence the results of the study. First, *prolonged engagement* ensures there will be more than one time data is collected. I gathered data at three points throughout the spring 2008 semester as well as used the constant comparative method of analysis. Second, I used *multiple cases* at *multiple sites* providing multiple points of information throughout the semester. Third, *peer debriefing* was used to independently analyze the data and compare the findings. I enlisted the help of two other individuals to review the data and findings to keep a check on my bias. In addition, the doctoral committee also serves the function of analysts.

### Negative Case Analysis

Patton (2002) noted that negative case analysis is similar to the idea of looking for “exceptions to the rule” throughout the study. Yet, he also concluded there are no specific guidelines dictating how researchers might analyze these negative cases or exceptions to the rule. As I conducted the analysis throughout the semester, I used my field work notes to outline any exceptions I saw to the overall participant experiences which emerged from the data. Any exceptions were noted and further probes or questions were given to

search for possible explanations or differences in experiences which might explain these negative cases or exceptions to the rule. For instance, one participant might dislike the experience while the rest of the participants like the experience. The researcher's task then turns to examining the one different experience and the reasons behind that difference. I attempted to explore the reasons why the one participant disliked the experience. While she was somewhat vague, it seemed that she said other members did not like the experience either. Then at the end of the semester, she stated that it was a good experience as long as all members came ready and prepared to participate. Another hypothesis I wondered about in my field notes was the possibility she might be resistant or that she was just being contrary and different.

#### Transferability

Marshall and Rossman (1989) suggested transferability is the researcher's ability to demonstrate how one's current study can be applied to or transferred to other settings, places, and contexts. They suggested two strategies for demonstrating transferability: (a) referring back to the theoretical foundation of the study, and (b) using the technique of triangulation. I have previously outlined the use of grounded theory as the best approach in grounding the emerging data. I have also detailed the use of the various ways I intend to use triangulation to ensure credibility.

#### Dependability

Marshall and Rossman (1989) defined dependability as the qualitative researcher's ability to account for and document changes in design, focus, data collection, or analysis. They suggested the very nature of the qualitative research is that of change; the assumption is the social world is constantly changing. In an effort to document any

changes I might make, I recorded *field work observations*, which documented my thinking as I conducted this study.

### Confirmability

Marshall and Rossman (1989) defined confirmability as a concept closely aligned with objectivity. They argued that qualitative researchers must account for the subjectivity of qualitative research. They outlined some possible ways to control for bias: (a) using a “critical analyst” individual, (b) paying attention to exceptions, (c) looking at possible alternative explanations, (d) conducting an audit, and (e) keeping an objective record. I used one individual as my “devil’s advocate” throughout the study to analyze and question my findings. I previously noted I used negative cases, noted alternative explanations, and kept an objective record through my *field work notes*. I have also stated I used *peer debriefing*, which consisted of two individuals who conducted a final audit of my conclusions. Finally, I documented my subjective biases, reactions and thoughts through the use of a *reflective journal*.

### Researcher as Human Instrument

I am a 51-year-old, married, female, Caucasian doctoral candidate at the University of Iowa. It is important to be transparent and honest as a qualitative researcher about my stance regarding this subject. Therefore, I will discuss the experiences that have influenced my initial opinion and interest in researching the reflecting team model within group supervision of school counseling interns.

I became intrigued by the use of the reflecting team model when enrolled in my supervision practicum under the guidance and supervision of my advisor and supervision professor. I assisted with one group of school counseling interns during their final,

semester-long internship class. The reflecting team experience proved beneficial to the interns involved in the process, and it addressed some of the concerns articulated in the previous chapters regarding the professional development of school counselors.

Next, I presented this model to other counselor educators at a roundtable discussion group at the 2005 national conference for Association of Counselor Educators and Supervisors (ACES). Some of the roundtable participants expressed initial interest and enthusiasm about the model. Later, one faculty member, who attended the conference presentation, tried this approach with both her practicum and internship students. She then emailed me at the end of the semester reporting positive results with the process. Specifically, she stated the process “brought students to a deeper level of processing, and really got students to look at their own issues in terms of the case and counseling clients in general” (Lingertat, 2006).

I have also taught an undergraduate class on group process for the helping professions as well as supervised a pre-practicum and advanced practicum class for master’s level rehabilitation counselors in which another method of group supervision was used by the class. In combination with the other teaching and presentation experiences, these teaching moments increased my confidence working with groups and group supervision.

Finally, I have been through a clearness committee process on numerous occasions. I participated as the one who was in need of “clearness” regarding a decision as well as a group member assisting another seeking “clearness” on an issue. The clearness committee process incorporates similar elements to reflecting teams, and I have discovered this reflective process to be extremely helpful to those presenting a difficulty,

problem or concern. At the end of every meeting the person presenting the concern was able to articulate a solution but always had difficulty voicing how they came to that solution. Again, I was fascinated with how the process assisted individuals in finding their way through a dilemma to a solution.

As stated previously, in demonstrating qualitative research credibility, it is also important to detail the academic credentials, which qualify one to conduct the study. The following classes have both informed and qualified me to pursue this qualitative study: (a) beginning and advanced group counseling, (b) counselor supervision and consultation, (c) supervision practicum, and (d) qualitative research. In addition, my supervision practicum, ACES presentation, the clearness committee experiences, and teaching experiences also inform and qualify me to do this study.

In detailing these experiences, which ignited my interest and passion regarding the use of reflecting teams within group supervision, I am also clearly laying out my bias. My bias is that I find the reflecting team process to be extremely helpful to people in a number of settings. Specifically, I have found it to be the best method to assist counseling interns in processing issues at a deeper level. The reflecting team process also helps counseling interns rely less on their supervisor and more on themselves and their peers.

#### Data Analysis

Strauss and Corbin (1998) noted qualitative research data analysis from a grounded theory approach is both science and art; an interplay between researcher and the collected data. They stated grounded theory systematically gathers, analyzes and then “grounds” a developing theory from the emerging data. Strauss and Corbin also provided procedures, which help provide “some standardization and rigor to the process” (p. 13).

Yet, they cautioned the techniques used in grounded theory data analysis are only tools, and these tools should not be used in rigid and standardized ways. They outlined the techniques, which assist qualitative researchers using the grounded theory. Specifically, Strauss and Corbin directed grounded theorists to microscopically analyze what participants mean. Techniques such as using coding to classify data into concepts and then grouping concepts into categories are part of the grounded theory analysis. Another tool Strauss and Corbin noted is the use of constant comparison analysis, which raises further questions and assists in discovering categories as well as variations within the data. Simply put, they stated data analysis from the grounded theory perspectives uses a process of asking questions, analyzing the data through a coding process, and making comparisons. The use of persistent engagement means this analysis process occurs multiple times throughout the research study.

Due to the flexibility required of qualitative research, it was difficult to predict what direction the analysis took as I conducted the study. However, I used persistent engagement, coding, and the constant comparative method throughout this study. At each data gathering point, this analysis occurred with potential to raise new questions, categories, and further analysis.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to explore elements in the SRTS which might help or hinder school counseling interns' personal and professional development..

Specifically, I was interested in tracking the experiences of school counseling interns during their final internship semester. The school counseling interns were exposed to the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS) model. Data gathering occurred at three points throughout the 2008 spring semester using a structured open-ended interview guide (SOIG) to capture specific elements of the SRTS. Participants also completed the GSIS, which investigated possible hindering group supervision event. The academic supervisors were interviewed by email following an SOIG to investigate their experiences using the format as well as to explore any unusual group or supervisor-supervisee dynamics which might affect the study.

Participants were recruited through contact with school counseling faculty who were using or willing to use the reflecting team model during the group supervision portion of their school counseling internship class. Initial contacts were made through: (a) networking events, (b) personal contacts by me or my advisor, Dr. Tarrell Portman, and (c) a general email to the Counselor Educators and Supervisors Network listserv (CESNET). After making initial inquiries by completing the above process in Fall 2006, seven academic supervisors from five universities initially agreed to participate in the study by December 2006. They were provided the guideline for conducting a reflecting team session (Appendix A) for further clarification of the process, and each indicated they would be able to follow the format. They also agreed to forward an email request to

their interns for participation (Appendix B). As the Spring 2008 semester began, the initial seven academic supervisors forwarded the email request to school counseling interns in January 2008, and only 13 interns agreed to participate in the study. These 13 interns narrowed down the participating universities and academic supervisors to four different academic supervisors from two universities. Thus by February 2008, I lost three of the initial academic supervisors from three universities who had initially agreed to participate. Of those 13 school counseling interns who began the study, one dropped out after agreeing to participate during the first timeline leaving a total of 12 interns who completed the entire study.

With each case at each data gathering point, I used the qualitative technique of *coding* to classify the responses into concepts and then grouped the concepts into categories or themes as part of the grounded theory analysis. I also employed another qualitative technique, the *constant comparison analysis*, which is designed to raise further questions, assist in discovering categories and note variations within the responses. Finally, I used an analytical qualitative technique, *persistent engagement*, which means this analysis process occurred multiple times throughout the research study. Simply put, it was cycle of asking questions, analyzing the data through a coding process, and making comparisons throughout an extended period of time. In order to check for any bias I brought to the analysis, a *critical analyst* examined the emerging results through the lens of my *field work notes* and *reflective journal* which are written records of my ongoing wonderings and thoughts. The critical analyst I worked with has a master's degree in pastoral counseling and has worked for ten years in the field of small groups and group supervision. We have collaborated on presenting workshops and

providing training in conducting small groups for pastors. Throughout that time, she has always been invaluable in giving ideas and challenging my perspectives. Finally, I used *peer debriefing*, which consists of two individuals who conducted a final audit of the data and conclusions. The two individuals were doctoral counselor education students, who have studied qualitative research and are currently conducting their own qualitative research.

### Gathering Data over Time

The first data gathering point began around the fourth week of the school counseling interns' semester (mid-February), when participants were asked to complete a demographic survey and respond to the first three SOIG questions. Participants were asked to complete this timeline within the first eight weeks of the internship semester (mid-March). At this point, one of the 13 initial school counseling interns dropped out, leaving 12 school counseling intern participants. The demographic survey results indicated one male and 11 female had agreed to participate in the study. The total group of participants showed an age range of 23 to 32 with an average age of 28. The ethnic composition of all interns and groups were 100% Caucasian. School counseling interns were asked three initial questions and probes were used as needed for further information or clarification:

1. Describe any group supervision experiences previous to this current class.
2. What were those previous supervision experiences like for you?
3. As you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feeling about the group supervision process?

The second data gathering point started the eighth week of the school counselor's internship semester (mid-March), when participants were asked five SOIG questions. This part of the process was to be completed approximately 12 weeks into the internship semester (mid-April). At this point, I stressed it was more important to wait and respond after they were able to experience the group supervision process numerous times versus meeting my suggested deadline. Probes were used as needed for further information or clarification:

1. What has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?
2. What helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?
3. What hinders you from participating in the reflecting team process?
4. What about the reflecting team process helps the development of your case conceptualization skills?
5. What about the reflecting team process hinders the development of your case conceptualization skills?

The final data gathering point started around week 12 of the school counselor's internship semester (mid-April), when participants were asked to respond to three SOIG questions. This part of the process was to be completed by the end of the internship semester (mid-May). Probes were used as needed for further information or clarification:

1. In what ways have you changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process?
2. What incidents were the most memorable for you?
3. What would have made this process better for you and the group?

Finally, the academic supervisors, who agreed to participate in this study, were provided with the SRTS guidelines (Appendix A) and agreed to follow the format. At the end of the semester, the academic supervisors were asked to respond by email to the following SOIG:

1. How closely did you follow the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision Guidelines?
2. If you deviated or altered the reflecting team process, what were your reasons for the change?
3. How would you describe this semester's group supervision experience in comparison to past groups?

The four participating academic group supervisor's responses and the GSIS results give voice to and serve the purpose of triangulation for each group's experience over a semester. The four academic group supervisors had an average of four years conducting supervision groups, and all stated using the SRTS format for the last two years. The one supervisor from Midwest U, Dr. Darden, reported the smallest class out of the four participating groups. While she supervised two sections of school counseling internships, only one of those sections' interns agreed to participate in the study. Of the eight interns in that one section, four participated in the study. Northeast U had a total of three sections with 11 to 12 school counseling interns in each section. Each of the three sections had a different group supervisor, who participated in the study with varying numbers of intern participants. Dr. Art's section had one participant, Dr. Blair's section had three participants, and Dr. Culver's section had four participants.

Any study on group supervision needs attention to potential hindering events such as between-member problems, problems with supervisors, supervisee anxiety, logistical constraints, and poor group time management (Enyedy et al., 2003). Because the areas of interest in the GSIS captures these group hindering experiences and are the most relevant to this study, the GSIS was used as a questionnaire to gather more information about school counseling intern experiences. Due to the qualitative nature of the study, the instrument was used in questionnaire form with space for further comments.

#### Two Cross-Case Institutional Studies using Multiple within Cases

The themes of this study are presented by: (a) individual case themes, (b) within case themes by institution, and (c) then cross-case themes between the two institutions. I am using a metaphorical description of the themes using a lifesaving class. The purpose of using metaphors is to provide an organizational structure for the reader.

Miles and Huberman (1994) noted most qualitative studies focus on one “case” or site. However, the authors suggested cross-case analysis enhances the transferability (generalizability) and credibility (dependability) of the findings. Multiple cases across multiple sites provide a potential avenue in understanding what might be unique versus universal experiences. “Multiple cases...help us answer the reasonable question: do these findings make sense beyond this specific case?” (pg. 173).

Patton (2002) described rigor as one analytical strategy which enhances the credibility of a qualitative study findings. One tool used in a rigorous study is the use of triangulation. In this analysis, I used multiple: (a) sources (participants and sites), (b) academic supervisor perspective, and (c) the GSIS results to provide “thick,” meaningful, or credible descriptions. Finally, I used analyst triangulation with two colleagues, who

reviewed the data and my findings in an effort to strengthen the rigor of the analysis, which in turn strengthens the credibility of the study.

### The Midwest University Case Study

The first participating institution is a national research university located in the Midwest. It has an enrollment of approximately 30,000 students and will be named Midwest U for the purposes of the study. Once again, I remind the reader that all names used within this case study are pseudo names in an effort to ensure confidentiality of all participants.

Dr. Darden, from Midwest U, agreed to participate and subsequently four interns, Carl, Faye, Haley, and Ilsa, completed the study. The responses of the individuals were examined for themes over time and represent Midwest U's school counseling intern experiences with the SRTS model of group supervision. The supervisor's responses and GSIS results give voice to and serve the purpose of triangulation for the group's experience over a semester.

#### Carl

Carl is a 28-year-old, White, male school counseling intern. His response to the questions in the first timeline indicated he had no previous experience in group supervision. However, Carl did say that he enjoyed his group counseling class he took spring 2007 and commented on the importance of group dynamics. He stated, "I realize that the group dynamic can play a major factor in the functioning and success of a group." His only thought about beginning a new semester was, "My supervisor seems to be more focused on the structure of the supervision instead of focusing on what is being shared. It will be interesting to see if that changes over time."

His comments to the questions in the second timeline occurred at the point his supervision group had met nine times, and he said his experience to date had been very rewarding. He reported that while he could not talk about “everything going on in my internship site, I do get time to ask questions and receive different perspectives on what others might do in my situation.” In discussing what helped him participate most in the reflecting team process, he cited two items, receiving multiple perspectives and support from the group. He stated, "I think the most important part of participating in the reflecting team is that I get multiple perspectives to an issue I am struggling with...the group members are very supportive, caring and helpful." The only item he found to hinder his participation in the process was the issue of time. He reported there sometimes seemed more to talk about than there was time available to the group. His responses to what helped and hindered the development of case conceptualization skills were similar to his ability to participate in the group process. The helpful aspect was the process of presenting, gathering information, and receiving different perspectives. He once again responded that lack of time was an issue saying, "...I often find the discussion part of my issues getting cut short." He also restated there were more cases than could possibly be presented each week.

At the end of the semester Carl voiced ways he changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process.

I think I have become more aware of the idea that everyone has different ideas for the same situation. By sharing with my peers, it has been quite beneficial hearing all the different responses as well as what they have tried or found to work in a situation. I used to just try and run all the scenarios or solutions through my head, but I have found it to be much easier to talk with colleagues and it is much more insightful.



Carl's most memorable moments were the times he was able to share or present his case and have a group of people listen, care and support him during stressful times at his internship site. Overall, Carl said he thought the group process went well; however, he spoke about the issue of time once again. He said, "I feel some group members did not have a chance to share as much as others did. I feel the leader might have reminded some members about [not] dominating the group or encouraged others to share their point of view."

#### Faye

Faye, a 24-year-old, White female school counseling intern, said she had experienced group supervision the previous semester. She described her previous weekly two-hour experience as one of sharing examples, scenarios and stories that happened at internship sites. She said, "We collaborated and shared ideas of what we would have done in that situation and connected experiences that were going on at our sites. It was a way for us to debrief, reflect, gain opinions and advice and to normalize our experiences." The previous group size ranged from 6 to 14 people depending upon the week. While she stated the experiences were helpful in many ways, she preferred small groups of four to six people. Faye spoke to the difficulties of meeting in the larger groups by saying it was "harder to voice opinions, stay focused and the time got lengthy." In addressing her thoughts and feelings about the current internship semester, Faye said she thought the group supervision process would be about the same as last semester. However, she was anticipating a growth in skills and expertise from last semester. She said, "Our reflecting skills and ability to brainstorm strategies, techniques and

interventions will be more prevalent and thoughtful because of our growth throughout the [last] internship experience.”

Faye responded to the second timeline questions reporting she had experienced the reflecting team group supervision four times in the current semester. She reported her internship site was allowing her to take on her own clients requiring her to think more in terms of case conceptualizations, which was a difference from the previous semester. The two areas helping her participate in the group process is comfort with her group and the “thinking” time provided to come up with questions while the “counselor” is presenting a case. Faye said the only hindering event was the pressure she sometimes felt to participate when she was “blanking out.” She said there were sometimes she did not have any good ideas to contribute to the process. In terms of developing her case conceptualization abilities, she said nothing hindered the process. She stated the process “is absolutely supportive” of her development.

I like that I am able to bounce off another member’s ideas. Something they say can trigger a new thinking pattern and bring about a new idea. This allows for [a] connectedness in case conceptualization and...interventions associated with the client we are talking about. I hope to use this team process in my professional efforts with colleagues when I am employed as a school counselor.

By the end of the semester at the third timeline, Faye said, “I understand my ‘role’ as a school counselor better as a result of the process. Group supervision has also allowed me to expand my knowledge of different case conceptualizations and think about strategies and interventions to use with the clients.” Faye said the most memorable moments were the extreme cases, which enhanced her awareness of client issues. She reported those extreme moments forced her and the group to “think outside the box” for strategies and interventions. An improvement Faye suggested was to start the process

earlier in the semester. She said, “It would have been nice to see what did and didn’t work. Perhaps, starting the team reflection process earlier in the semester would give more time to go back and share.”

### Haley

Haley, a 27-year-old, White, female school counseling intern, also reported one other previous experience with group supervision. That experience occurred in her student teaching semester when a group of 20 students met once a week for one semester. She stated, “We just mainly talked about our experiences, asked questions, and got others’ take on it with the supervisor giving the majority of feedback and input.” She said she did not get as much out of the group experience as she did in her times of individual supervision with her professor.

Commenting on the current semester’s group supervision process, Haley said she liked the collective environment, which met the need for counselors to have a place to share with other counselors.

It is a new world for me to not be able to talk about my work with family and friends. I have found I need that space to be able to talk about my work. In the future, I know I will always keep in touch with some of my classmates and with other counselors in my future school district in order to be able to talk about our work, bounce ideas of one another and get suggestions about what to do next.

At the point Haley responded to the questions from the second timeline, she reported having experienced the SRTS twice this semester. Haley said her supervisor had exposed the group to several models of group supervision, and she stated she liked the structured one more.

It kind of prevents the "woe me" syndrome of some people in my group supervision. I had hoped that by this stage in our program people would be more solution focused and help each other brainstorm. However, I think our developmental levels are asynchronous and many people still seem to want to tell

about all the horrible stories they hear, without much focus on what they are doing that works, what they would recommend to others, or ask for feedback and suggestions. I find that the structured group supervision models we have used have forced people to think more along these lines.

In terms of what helped and hindered Haley's participation in the process, Haley said the structure "helps guide how I listen and what feedback I give." The one hindering event she reported was sometimes the presenter gave too much irrelevant information, which took too much time. When responding to how the process helped or hindered her case conceptualization development, she only reported one helpful issue. Haley responded, "I like hearing what other classmates are facing in their internships. I like hearing what approaches they are taking and on what theories they are basing their work."

By the end of the semester at the third timeline, Haley expressed how the experience had changed her. She said, "The most important thing I will take away from the group supervision process is how vital it is for me to have counselors in the future with whom I can discuss cases." Haley said that while she liked individual supervision more than group supervision, the group supervision time did infuse some structure into the experience. However, her most memorable moments were of the supportive, caring and flexible nature of her supervisor. Haley's suggestion for improvement reflected more on the other group supervision models and her preference for more structure during the semester. She said,

I would have liked more interaction as people were talking, rather than just listening to one person share and then moving to the next person for them to share. I think this would have also gotten people to think more critically about their cases if the expectation was that people would interact with you, rather than just updating everyone on your cases.

## Ilsa

Initially, Ilsa was responsive to the SOIG questions, but by the third timeline, her answers became much shorter. When I asked her about that, she stated it was more of a time issue versus not wanting to participate in the study. Ilsa, who is a 32-year-old White, female school counseling intern, described only one previous group supervision. She reported the experience as one in which a group of 15 students met over a semester four or five times with different leaders. She said the group had some structure; it was mainly asking or answering questions and looking for themes. Ilsa said the experience was “not very beneficial” primarily because of the group size and time constraints. However, she did say she liked hearing from the experienced group leaders “about how they worked with clients.” Her comments about the upcoming semester suggested she was becoming more at ease in participating in the group, and she was becoming more concerned about having “trouble narrowing down what I will talk about!”

As the semester progressed, Ilsa continued to report an ease with the group process adding that she “enjoyed talking in small groups about our experiences and views.” She said, “I tend to share more things in a small group rather than a large one” comparing her previous experiences with the current one. When asked what helped her participate in the group process, she said the smaller size of the group and her growing “comfort with the supervisor and peers in her group.” She reported that nothing seemed to hinder her ability to participate in the group. When asked about what the reflecting team process helped or hindered the development of her case conceptualization, she responded that getting all of the comments from others during the “listening” time was the most helpful. She said, “It is really interesting hearing how others see the same case

in different ways, and I have the time to think about it as they are talking.” She was unable to identify anything that hindered the development of her case conceptualization skills.

By the end of the semester, Ilsa said while she was looking forward to graduation, she would miss the group. She reported an increase in confidence in looking toward her work as a school counselor. Ilsa said, “I think I am better able to see that there are different ways to view one particular case; it has helped me think through cases better.” In responding to what was most memorable, she indicated it was having “a group to help her sort through the difficulties.” The only item she said would improve the process was to “possibly start the process sooner.” She said she would have wished for more time to “get into our cases” a little more.

#### GSIS Results

As a whole, the GSIS results for the group indicated satisfaction with the supervisor, impact of peers, and overall group environment. The only slight differences were two participants indicated some presentation anxiety and two participants indicated some members dominated the group. In the comment section, one participant in Dr. Darden’s group noted some interns seemed to be “having a lot of difficulties adjusting to their internships” and were “not used to crisis situations.” While the participant said the supervisor did a good job in helping those who were having adjustment difficulties, the participant wished for more challenging feedback for those who were not having difficulty adjusting to the internship experience. Another commented, “The group was great. No two nights were the same. Occasionally a member would dominate but for the most part everyone worked together.”

### Supervisor Perspective

At the end of the semester Dr. Darden, supervisor for Midwest U, gave her perspective on the semester's experience. She reported supervising the smallest class out of the four participating groups. In addition, Dr. Darden reported the least adherence to the guidelines as well as starting the use of the SRTS model later in the semester. She reported using two other formats earlier in the semester before she introduced the SRTS model. Dr. Darden said by the time she introduced the altered SRTS format, the group had been together for a while so she felt Step 1, the interviewing portion, was too stilted at this point. She also wanted "the students to have the opportunity to fully conceptualize without being prompted" in order to develop their conceptualization skills. Dr. Darden noted this group was "VERY different from the cohorts my first 2 years." She thought this particular cohort group had more variations in their development bringing with them a broader range of skills, attitudes and needs. In addition, because of the severity of the winter weather, interns began their work in the schools at a later date than in the past semesters. While all of the participating group supervisors liked the SRTS format, Dr. Darden disliked the first step of the interview section especially once a group has been together for a while.

### Midwest U Themes

At the beginning of the semester, all but one Midwest U participant reported one previous group supervision experience. The three who had previous experiences said they were in large groups of 14, 15 and 20 with either no structure or with some structure. While they had some positive comments about their previous group supervision experiences, more than one spoke to the issues of time, group size, and type of

supervision preferences. Specifically, they indicated the groups were too big with not enough time to share, and they preferred individual supervision over group supervision. However, one participant noted she did appreciate the feedback she received during her group supervision time. As the participants contemplated the upcoming group supervision experience, the participant responses were mixed in tone. Some indicated they were looking forward to it, while others reported developmental issues such as anxiety over cases and the group process.

By the middle of the semester at the second timeline, the themes emerging were developmental issues, group supervision format, learning and tone of the group supervision experience. In terms of developmental issues, expressed concern and anxiety over Midwest U participants reported developmental, time and group size issues. Dr. Darden's class participants discussed issues of lack of time and too much information as being the major hindrances to their group supervision process. Dr. Darden's participants said they felt limited so others would have a chance to talk as well as stating sometimes too much time was taken giving irrelevant information. However, they did report that learning was also a key theme. They felt they learned from the group by hearing differing perspectives on the same problem as well as vicariously by hearing what others were experiencing at their internship sites.

At the end of the semester, Midwest U participants reported feeling better prepared, grew from the exposure to multiple or different perspectives, and appreciated the supervisor's support. In terms of better preparation, two noted the importance of using peers, one expressed more overall confidence, and one said she could process cases at a deeper, more complex level. The majority of participants reported growth from



hearing multiple perspectives, and one individual said the supervisor support was helpful in her growth. Dr. Darden's participants were split between the themes of support and learning as the most memorable incidents. In terms of improvement for the group supervision process, two participants wished the SRTS process were started earlier in the semester. One suggested it might have helped the group think more critically about their cases while the other was interested in hearing how the approach worked with specific cases. The remaining miscellaneous two issues reflected an interest in hearing about various group supervision models, and a suggestion that the supervisor might have given more guidance to the group process.

#### The Northeast University Case Study

The second case is a private university located in the northeast with an average enrollment of 5,000 students and will be named Northeast U. Three supervisors from Northeast U agreed to participate in the study. A total of eight school counseling interns from three class sections, with 11 school counseling interns in each section, completed the study. Dr. Art's section had one participant, Amy; Dr. Baird's section had three participants, Deb, Erin, Lori; and Dr. Culver's section had four participants, Barb, Greta, Jean and Kayla. The voices of the individuals and supervisors are reported to an effort to examine themes representing Northeast U's school counseling intern experiences with the SRTS model of group supervision.

#### Amy

Amy identified herself as a 26-year-old, White, female school counseling intern who was in a class of 11 interns. She was the sole participant from Dr. Art's section who was engaged in the study. Amy reported she had one previous experience with group

supervision in her previous semester's clinical rotation with a group of 11 counseling interns using the reflecting team model. However, Amy reported she had a new supervisor for the current semester that was also using the same reflecting team format like the previous semester. Amy described her previous group supervision experience in negative terms expressing a dislike for the reflecting team model. She said:

I was not able to ask the questions I really wanted and I didn't get the feedback I wanted. I wish we could just talk and not have to say things the exact way we were made to. It took away from truly learning because we were so worried about how we were saying things.

As Amy contemplated the new semester, she reported a fairly positive outlook for her final clinical semester. She stated while she enjoyed getting feedback from others, she did hope the format would be "less formal and we can just talk more freely."

As the semester progressed, Amy continued to experience frustration with the reflecting team format after having experienced the process a few times. She reported she spent more energy worrying about what to say instead of saying "what was on my mind." She questioned how helpful the process was to her group if everyone else struggled with the same frustration as she did with the format. She said, "It would help if the format was less formalized and we could say what we wanted." In discussing how the reflecting process helped or hindered her ability to develop her case conceptualization skills, she responded that "just talking about it helps." She reported that the reflecting team process "doesn't really help because most of my classmates don't really want to do it and want to just get out of class." When probed for further details, Amy said she was not sure why other students did not want to participate, but she knew she did not like the "formalized" format.

By the end of the semester, Amy reported more positive thoughts regarding the group supervision experience. She indicated the group supervision time helped her “get out of my own way” and “get out of my own head.” Amy said she valued the ability to look at problems from a “different angle.” She also reported she would not mind meeting more often for group supervision “only if the time was used in the best possible, most productive way.” Amy said she got the most out of the time when her peers “took it seriously and used the time wisely.” In examining what incidents were most memorable, Amy focused on the times she really “needed the supervision” versus times when “she was scheduled to present.” She said, “I got a lot more out of it when it was spontaneous. It’s difficult to be spontaneous though, unfortunately because everyone needs time, and a schedule is one way to make sure that everyone has time to share.” When asked what would have made the process better, Amy identified the size of the group as an issue. She said, “Smaller groups of no more than 5-7 people in a class would be better.”

#### Deb

Deb, a 25-year-old, White female, was the first of three participants in Dr. Blair’s class. She reported multiple group supervision experiences: (a) unstructured supervision in group counseling class, (b) a case presentation model with her site supervisor, and (c) a similar reflecting team approach to the SRTS in her practicum class. In comparing her three experiences, Deb said while she “liked” and “enjoyed” both her unstructured and reflecting team group experiences, she “did not like” and “got nothing out of” her case presentation group supervision experience. In her first experience with an unstructured, large group approach, she felt she was “more open to criticism.” In comparing that experience to a later reflecting team model, she said in the later experience she was more

“...defensive when the group talked about me. Now it feels like I know more and am less [apt] to appreciate someone critiquing how I operate.” She elaborating on her defensive reaction stating she became defensive during the section after she had presented when others talked and she had to just listen. She said, “I wanted to interject and back up things that I had said that I felt were being attacked.” In discussing her third group supervision experience, the case presentation model, Deb felt an issue affecting the experience was that her site supervisor seemed “too busy” and “preoccupied,” and Deb felt “uncertain what to say or do.” In addition, Deb stated she would have preferred individual supervision versus group supervision with that site supervisor. When asked about her thoughts and feelings about a new semester, Deb had a mixture of thoughts and feelings about the upcoming experience. She commented, “I am excited about having my tactics observed and assessed for the final time before I step out into the world.” She stated she really liked her supervisor which helped her feel open to the experience. However, she noted it is still “weird how at the beginning the teacher and presenter talk to each other” focusing on facts and information while the group time focuses on process-related questions.

In response to the questions from second timeline, Deb noted, “It [SRTS format] gives you a chance to think of all the information that was given and take a few minutes to respond based on what other people in the group bring up.” She said,

The most helpful thing is having the presenter list what they question or are having a hard time figuring out. It also helps to hear the presenter discuss what problems they are having in regard to the next step to take in counseling their client.

An issue hindering her from participation was when some presenters tended to “go on” too long leaving the others to “getting bored and then I feel bad asking too many

questions.” In discussing events affecting case conceptualization development, Deb reported information overload:

I come up with so many things to ask and talk about during a presentation that sometimes it is hard to remember everything. I jot down little notes periodically so that I have a general idea of what I wanted to ask. The only thing I could recommend is for the facilitator to allow fact related questions during the case presentation....it is hard to not ask clarifying questions during the case presentation.

However, Deb also noted the positive aspects:

For the most part it only helps me to develop my ability to conceptualize cases. During the reflecting team process you get not only the presenters point of view but also all of your peers in the class.

In response to the questions in the third timeline, Deb said, “I have learned to take more time to think about multiple perspectives without automatically verbally responding to them.”

In particular Deb noted that “paying much more attention to the dynamics between myself and a client and the theory(s) I may be using” was a major area of change. Finally, Deb commented on the importance of the reflecting team process for the future:

It was like consulting and collaborating with a group of other guidance counselors and the counseling director in a guidance department while working at a school. I have not had a lot of experience of that thus far and at first I was defensive. I learned quickly there wasn't a “right or wrong” and that I could use, question, or dismiss any information provided to me. I honestly wish the class was longer so that we would have had more opportunity to work on the concerns about our cases. I feel that this was the most important class I took my whole masters career in regard to analyzing my experiences with clients.

Erin

Erin, a 24-year-old, White, female was the second participant in Dr. Blair's class.

She reported multiple group supervision experiences stating she was exposed to a more

unstructured model at her work place. She said it was a time where “we meet once a week to go over issues, voice concerns and hold each other accountable with a facilitator that keeps us on track.” Erin also reported using a reflecting team format similar to the SRTS in a previous practicum with 10 other school counseling interns. Erin stated, “We used a similar group supervision process to the one that you are laying out for us. The process is very thought-provoking, and in the end very helpful because I think of things in a more un-biased and different way.” Her overall tone about her previous experiences was very positive. In particular Erin said the previous reflecting team experience “helped me look at things in a different way, question things I may not have noticed alone, and gave me the courage to voice my own opinions at the internship site.” She said she hoped wherever she works the group supervision process would be a part of that work environment.

At the time Erin responded to the second timeline questions, she reported experiencing the SRTS format seven times. In commenting on the experience, Erin said:

I feel that it is a great way to share your thoughts, feelings, and beliefs about certain scenarios and to get feedback on that. I really enjoy when people point out what they see as the problem versus what I brought to them as the problem.

Erin noted that the previous semester was “slightly different” but she enjoyed “...following this specific format. It allows me to talk about my case, answer any clarifying questions, and continue on with process related questions.” Erin said it was helpful hearing what her classmates and professor have to say about problems “...because many times they see something that I have not. It really helps for clarification and insight into any problems I am facing.” In responding to what helped her participate in the reflecting team process, Erin said that there were two items which she felt were

essential to her. The first was that she was comfortable in my group setting and "...many people in my class are people that I started the program with three years ago. Feeling comfortable with them helps me [to] be more honest and relaxed when talking about my cases or providing feedback to others. The second item Erin noted was the importance of overall class preparation for case presentations and participation in the group process. In discussing any hindering events, Erin said it was sometimes difficult to get all the facts of a specific site and case.

In regard to case conceptualization development, Erin said the main helping aspect was "hearing things from someone else's perspective makes it easier to case conceptualize. Hearing what others have to say really does help." She was unable to think of anything which hindered her ability to develop case conceptualization skills.

In response to the questions from the third timeline, Erin said her areas of change due to the supervision group process was in the area of professional confidence as well as her ability to collaborate better. Erin noted:

Over the course of the semester I have become more of an advocate for student and school-wide change. I feel much more confident after having the support and encouragement from my group supervision members. People in the group have gotten to be close with one another and can trust the whole group for honest and constructive advice. I enjoyed working in a group as a whole and also feel that I am a better collaborator because of it.

Her most memorable incidents reflected the end of the semester and the relationships built over time through the group. She recalled the difficult cases presented throughout the semester, and the importance of the group. "The times we shared about cases, graduation, job placements, future jobs were what I will remember most." The only way Erin said she would like to see the process improved was to relax the structure a

little more. “I felt at times we had to stick to this strict outline...and many times people wanted to jump in.”

### Lori

Lori, a 28-year-old, White, female, was the final participant in Dr. Blair’s class. She reported only one previous experience, a case presentation model. However, she indicated it was the supervisor who gave the majority of feedback and suggestions with little input from the rest of the group members. Lori said she turned in a paper with a taped counseling session and discussed it with the class. “I did not get a lot of feedback from my fellow classmates as much as I did from my teacher.” She said the feedback from her professor was helpful, and she did learn “from actually hearing other people’s experiences.” Her comments about approaching the new semester reflected anxiety over expectations and ability to have enough clients for case presentations. She said, “I feel pressured. I am kinda worried, like what if I do not have a client to talk about.”

When Lori responded to the second timeline questions, she stated she had participated in the reflecting team about eight times and presented a case once. She said, “While I do get some ideas and feedback from my professor, I think I get a lot more from my peers.” She indicated the feedback from her peers helped her to participate in the group process. “They bring up good questions, thoughts, and ideas.” Lori stated there was nothing hindering her from participating in the process. “If I feel like I have something to contribute, I will.” In regard to events which helped the development of her case conceptualization skills, Lori identified feedback as the most helpful. “Just everyone’s feedback – it’s all out there on the table – everyone is talking about it.” Lori identified a



hindering factor to case conceptualization development, which was the teams' lack of understanding of specific situations. She stated:

They do not know the person, they do not [know] the school where I am interning and how things are run there. Something that they would do in my situation at their school, I might be able to do so easily at mine.

As Lori discussed her experiences over the semester at the third timeline, she stated, "I feel like I go to more people now to bounce things off of – not just trying to figure everything by myself. I have learned that talking things over with others is essential and very helpful." The memorable experiences she cited were learning something new with every case and knowing that she was now prepared to take on the role of school counselor. As she considered what might make the process better, she thought the "class was very helpful, relaxing and non-threatening...so I would have to say NOTHING."

#### Barb

Barb identified herself as a 26-year-old, White, female and was one of four participants from Dr. Culver's section. In the first timeline, Barb reported no previous group supervision experiences. As she contemplated the upcoming semester, she stated, "I am very open to the process of group supervision. I believe going to supervision and hearing feedback from classmates is very helpful."

In response to the second timeline questions, Barb said the class had followed the SRTS format for five weeks. She comment about the experience to date, "We hear from our professor and then from classmates. Their questions force us to ask ourselves questions we had not yet thought of." In regard to what helped or hindered her participation in the process, Barb said what helped her most was reinforcement of

learning. “The knowledge I gained from other classes and then other students bringing those into the forefront helped reinforce my learning.” Barb said the only thing which hindered her from participating was lack of experience. She commented, “There is still a lot that I do not know and that I have not experienced. I am hoping that with time I will experience more...” When asked about helping or hindering events in case conceptualization development, Barb said it was easier for her to remember details if the class could follow one case at several junctions of the semester. She said, “When I have a simple story to follow... it helps me conceptualize the case. It is easier for me to recall past comments made about the case.” Barb said what hindered her was that there was not enough time to share all that they would have like to talk about during the group process. She responded, “It can be a time consuming process. If the team process is too drawn out too much is discussed and cases become too congested.”

By the end of the semester, when questioned about how she had changed as a result of the group supervision process, Barbara said:

When we worked as a group, we followed the same steps and process each time. We would brainstorm, make charts, etc. I am able to do this now without the help of all my classmates. Just by going through the process on paper, I am able to come up with more ideas than I had prior to that.

When she reflected on the most memorable incidents of the semester, she reported:

I remember one of my classmates was working with a student who had many of the classic signs of aspergers. It was exciting to ask the reflecting questions. She went back to the school to test out our theory. Unfortunately the semester ended before the group could find out if our theory was correct.

Barb said that a way to improve the process might be starting it sooner if possible.

### Greta

Greta, a 23-year-old, White, female was the second of four participants from Dr. Culver's class. At the first timeline, Greta reported only one previous group supervision experience. Greta's comments reflected a case presentation model; however, she said it was the supervisor who gave the majority of feedback. Greta reported she had to present a case and at the end of the presentation, "the supervisor would comment on any observations and then give suggestions." Greta said her previous experience was beneficial, which helped her in "looking forward to using this process in this class." She indicated that receiving a variety of perspectives is always helpful.

By the time Greta responded to the second timeline SOIG, she reported the group had used the SRTS format six times, and she had not presented a case yet. She said, "I do feel like I am learning a lot and that my fellow classmates are gaining a lot from the process. No one is critical, but rather everyone is sharing their perspective." While Greta was overall positive about the experiences she highlighted initial difficulties. She reported, "In the beginning it was difficult to watch the first couple steps take place and not voice my opinion. It was hard to sit and listen to everyone's responses without responding right away." In regard to the participation questions, Greta responded:

What is most helpful to me is hearing a variety of perspectives. Even though I may not be the one bringing up my own issue, I have learned a great deal on how to tackle other issues and have been able to see just how helpful it can be to get a variety of people exploring one concern. We often overlook the numerous strategies that could be utilized and fail to see any way but our own. So far, everyone has been able to take something from the supervision process that will help them with their clients. I am only hindered by the time constrictions of my class. We have a lot of people to get through in a short time and sometimes I do not get a chance to express my reactions to someone's case.

As Greta reflected on helping and hindering events in her case conceptualization development, she reported:

The group process gives everyone a chance to speak on what stood out to them. Therefore, each person gets a wide variety of suggestions that can help them view their problem from a whole new perspective that they may not have considered prior to supervision. It helped me see the many ways we can go about our daily challenges. I can think of nothing that hinders me. You can choose to utilize as many or as few of the suggestions as you want. I have yet to see someone not find at least one thing helpful in their case challenges. I enjoy hearing others responses on each case and have learned some strategies that I would not have ever come up with on my own.

As Greta looked back over her semester in the third timeline she reported increased confidence and learning from multiple perspectives. “I never realized how many perspectives are overlooked in trying to do things [on] your own. I have also gained confidence in my work as a counselor. I now have a larger toolkit I can utilize in my work.” Greta reported on her most memorable incidents:

The times that were most memorable to me were when people reported back to the group that things had worked for them...what group members had suggested previously. It is nice to see our suggestions put into practice and know that people are benefiting from them.

In responding to what might make the process better, Greta stated she was one of the last to present her case leaving her little time to implement what she learned from the group. She said, “I wish I had one more class session to report back.... I was left with little time to report back to the group.”

#### Jean

Jean, a 23-year-old, White, female, was the third participant in Dr. Culver’s class. In the first timeline, she had no previous group supervision experiences. As she commented on the new semester, Jean said she thinks it will be “extremely helpful” and was looking forward to hearing “how different people handle different situations.”

In responding to the second set of SOIGs, Jean reported the class had been using the SRTS format for five weeks. She said the experience had been very helpful so far, and it was a “good technique to use so all areas can be explored.” In discussing what helped or hindered her ability to participate, Jean said it helped that the professor started it off. She stated that nothing prevented her from participating in the group process. Jean stated that hearing multiple viewpoints was the most helpful in developing her case conceptualization skills. “It was good to hear different points of views from various people. I think the more information we can get at this stage the better we will be off for the present and for the future.” The one item Jean said hindered her case conceptualization development was too many ideas. “With so many ideas out on the table, it sometimes feels overwhelming.”

In reviewing her semester’s experience at the third timeline, Jean said she thought she was now able to process cases much better. In commenting on most memorable incidents, she said, “I think using the technique as a whole. It brought some order to how we process our cases.” The change Jean suggested was a desire to start the process sooner. “If the process was introduced sooner in the semester, it could have been more helpful. We could have refined the process more and been able to follow each other’s cases for a little longer.”

#### Kayla

Kayla was the last participant from Dr. Culver’s class section. She reported she was a 23-year-old, White, female with no previous group supervision experiences. Kayla indicated she was looking forward to the semester and was “thankful” to have the opportunity to received feedback from a group.

When Kayla responded to the second timeline SOIG, she said the class had experienced the SRTS format for five weeks and had experienced 10 case presentations. She said she had enjoyed the experience so far and the format had “helped me sort out at least a few difficult situations.” Kayla identified what helped her participate in the process by saying, “I generally have a sense of clarity after leaving this particular class. I feel I helped my fellow students and they, in turn, helped me.” In responding to hindrances to participation Kayla reported:

The one negative about participating in this situation is that sometimes I second guess myself. I mean that I second guess my decisions of thoughts about how I have handled a situation, and it seems like I leave the class thinking I was doing OK with the situation; I just needed different perspectives to know how I might do it differently in the future as well.

In examining what helped or hindered her case conceptualization development, Kayla stated, “I am able to see my cases from 13 different perspectives (myself, 11 other students, and my professor). I can think of nothing that hinders me; I found the team process is helpful in conceptualizing.”

As Kayla reflected back over her semester in the third timeline she said, “I have learned that 12 heads are better than 1 and I take everyone’s opinion very seriously. When I first started I found myself jumping to conclusions with my clients.” In commenting about her most memorable event, Kayla spoke about being hesitant in trying an option mentioned by two group members. She said, “I thought it would make the situation worse. However, I took their advice and it ended up working out well.” Her only suggestion for improvement had more to do with the age of the groups’ clients versus the group process itself. “In my particular section everyone was working with children. I would have benefited from hearing experiences in working with adolescents.”

## GSIS Results

Overall, the GSIS results from the three groups noted positive experiences or satisfaction with the three components: (a) supervisor impact, (b) peer impact, and (c) whole group environment. The one participant from Dr. Art's class rated the overall experience with the three areas of group supervision positively. There were some areas which deviated from the positive tone. First, under the supervisor section, there was some question whether the supervisor used time and group dynamics effectively. In the peer impact section, the participant stated, "The group supervision process did not allow for candid feedback...too structured, which lessened the effectiveness." Finally, in the group environment section, the participant indicated that occasionally some members dominated the group time. Each of the three participants reported high degrees of satisfaction with a slight exception by two in the area of group competition. One participant in Dr. Blair's class said the only time she saw a hint of competitiveness is when "we were basically all applying to the same jobs." Dr. Culver's class GSIS results revealed high satisfaction levels with all four participants in all areas. The only slight deviations by two participants was marked suggesting there may have been some dominance by group members.

## Supervisors' Perspectives

The final piece of information from the NU site is derived from the supervisors' perspective of the SRTS experience. Dr. Art stated she had followed the guidelines "moderately to exactly;" Dr. Blair said she followed the guidelines "pretty closely;" and Dr. Culver responded that she followed the guidelines "very closely with little deviation."

The Northeast U academic supervisors, who reported less deviation from the SRTS format, provided their rationale for minor changes or deviations. Dr. Art said she only eliminated a few of the more factual questions in Step 2 because were not appropriate to the process-oriented nature of the SRTS. Dr. Blair noted that on few occasions “it was because a case seemed to be in crisis or the student needed more direction in terms of reporting abuse.” She said there were just times when the student needed a direct answer from the supervisor, and she deviated at those points. Finally, Dr. Culver said she really had no need to deviate from the process. Even in times when students needed more direction or more support, the group process provided what they seemed to need at the moment.

The academic supervisors from Northeast U also reported less variation among groups from past to present. Dr. Art said there has been little difference over the past two years between groups using the SRTS format; however, she has seen a “BIG difference” between groups before using the SRTS format and those using another format. She indicated she had used case presentations, but there had not been much structure to the experience. Dr. Blair noted that this group seemed to be a little more supportive than past groups. Finally, the Dr. Culver noted little difference, but she did comment that “this semester’s group just seemed to mesh well with each other and all were on the same page.”

All of the NU participating group supervisors liked the SRTS format reporting positive experiences with the format. They indicated using the unstructured case presentation process in the past, but two years ago the department switched over to using the SRTS format. Each group supervisor expressed a preference for the SRTS format



over other formats citing different reasons. Dr. Art said it gave more depth to insight and understanding of cases presented to the group. In addition, she thought it moved the group away from content and more into process. Dr. Blair said the group was able to provide multiple points of view, and the presenter was able to gain more depth of insight into the case. Dr. Culver liked the direction and consistency the structured approach provides to the time. Specifically, she liked the “SRTS format better because it puts the responsibility on students to think through their cases, generate more ideas, and uncover issues that may be affecting the client/counselor relationship.” She felt she has seen more growth and more depth to interns work using the SRTS than previous group formats.

#### Northeast U Themes

In regard to the first timeline, the NU groups reported both more and varied group supervision experiences. Overall, participants from NU, with the exception of Dr. Art’s one participant had a majority of positive reactions to previous experiences. While there seemed little difference between groups that had more experience with group supervision than those that had received no group supervision in the past, Dr. Culver’s participants seemed to be the most unified in focusing on what they could learn and receiving feedback; they appeared to be at the same developmental level. In responding to thoughts about the upcoming semester Dr. Art’s class participant was the most negative with Drs. Blair and Culver class participants being the most positive. However, it should be noted that Dr. Art’s class has only one participant, who expressed negative comments about the previous reflecting team format.

As NU participants responded to the questions in the second timeline, Drs. Blair’s and Culver’s participants focused more on what they were learning and receiving from

others in the group. Once again, Dr. Art's class with one participant is difficult to examine; however, the one participant remained fairly negative about the current SRTS experience. In discussing the major hindrances to participation in the SRTS process, Dr. Blair's class participants spoke more in terms of information overload indicating there were "so many things to ask and talk about." Drs. Art's and Culver's group participants spoke more in terms of developmental issues and worry about how they were saying things, lack of experience and second guessing their input. One participant in the Dr. Culver's group cited time constrictions as an issue as well. In examining responses which helped them participate in the SRTS process, all except Dr. Art's class participant reported hearing multiple perspectives being the most helpful. Amy, the only participant from Dr. Art's class, stated that just being able to talk about the case helped her answer her own questions. One of the four participants from Dr. Culver's class named the presentation of the case as also helpful. In addition to hearing multiple perspectives one Dr. Blair's three class participants, Erin, also named the expertise and guidance of her supervisor as also beneficial. In examining the responses as to what in the SRTS process hindered their case conceptualization skills, the majority of NU participants reiterated primarily positive experiences. However, at least one participant from each group, with the exception of Dr. Art's, cited limited time and amount of information or lack of understanding about a specific situation as the primary issue affecting the development of their case conceptualization skills. Dr. Art's one participant, Amy, suggested her dislike of the SRTS model and the group environment hindered her ability to present her cases and the development of case conceptualization skills. Because she was the sole

participant responding in the group, it is difficult to explore beyond one person's experience.

In examining the timeline three responses, there appeared to be no differences between any of the four groups. All participants were very positive about the group supervision experiences. The vast majority of participants in each group listed the major growth area as the importance of hearing differing perspectives on the same case. Even the one participant in Dr. Art's class, who expressed frustration with the process throughout the study, said the process was helpful, and she would have not have minded having group supervision two nights a week if everyone were willing to prepare and participate in the time together. In regard to the responses to most memorable events, the input was mixed with two groups expressing some unity in their responses. Dr. Culver's class participants were almost solely focused on the importance of the recursive learning in their group. Dr. Blair's class participants were the most mixed with each participant noting different themes. Dr. Art's class, with the one participant, acknowledged the importance of the structure to give everyone an opportunity for sharing and input. In examining what was the most important aspect of their experience, all groups felt a focus on client issues and analyzing their cases was the most important aspect of their experience. Drs. Blair's and Culver's class participants wished the process on started sooner in the semester so they could have refined the process, implemented ideas and reported back to their group. Finally, the one participant in Dr. Art's class wanted more of an opportunity to focus on clients and suggested a smaller group and less paperwork.

### Cross-Case Themes

The academic group supervisors provided insight into the experiences between the two sites. They commented on consistency of using the SRTS format, preference on using the type of group supervision model, and comparisons of the current group to past groups. The biggest difference was between Dr. Darden, the MU supervisor, and the three supervisors from NU in use of the format and difference in groups by semesters. The most consistent in the use of and preference for SRTS model were the supervisors from NU. They, as a department, have found the model to be helpful and have chosen to adhere to the guidelines as closely as possible. Dr. Art said she followed the format “moderately to exactly...the only change was I did not include all of the questions given as examples because I felt some were not appropriate for the process.” Dr. Blair said she followed the approach “pretty closely” and only “deviated from the structured reflecting team approach ...because a case seemed to be in crisis or the student needed more direction in terms of reporting abuse.” On the other hand, Dr. Darden introduced two other group supervision models at the beginning of the semester leaving less time for the participants to experience the SRTS model. She also eliminated one step of the SRTS model because she felt it did not fit the group, and she felt her group was the most different from those in the past. She also had a varying philosophy in that she wanted her supervisees to experience different models plus she wanted to leave room for self-discovery. She gave an explanation for her variations by saying,

Because of the nature of our class, the reflective teaming was used only about a third of the time, and two other ways were also used. Also, we got started late with the process because so many of my students had weather delays for school in January, so they didn't have students they knew enough about to bring to supervision till weeks four and five of the semester. It was a really fluke year. By the time the students have spent 27 or 28 weeks together over the course of an

internship year, I feel the interview process is stilted. Also, I want the students to have the opportunity to fully conceptualize without being prompted. As they develop in their conceptualization skills, I move more to less structure.

### Major Cross-Case Themes

This section examined the responses from all participants at the two sites in an effort to find universal themes. As stated previously, a lifeguard class metaphor is used to help the reader understand these themes. A number of major themes came to the forefront: (a) emotional reaction to the experience, (b) personal and professional development, (c) influence on learning, and (d) time desired for the process. Other minor or less consistent themes school counseling interns voiced were: (a) group support, (b) usefulness for the future, (c) amount of information and time, (d) preference for type of supervision, and (e) structure of group supervision.

In a lifeguard training class, individuals work together as a team to learn and hone the skills and knowledge needed for their future work to prevent and respond to aquatic emergencies. When I trained as a lifeguard, I found my classmates to be an integral part in my development as a competent lifeguard. The experiences in that setting are somewhat reflected in the experiences of this study's participants in their final internship semester.

### Taking the Plunge

In terms of the first major theme, emotional reaction to the experience, all participants voiced the fact that the experience was very positive and helpful. At the beginning of the semester, the majority of participants from all groups reported feeling positive about the current semester's reflecting team supervision group. However, a few expressed neutral or negative thoughts and feelings. There was a similar reaction

reflected in my lifeguard group's training experience. At the beginning of our lifeguard training, the lifeguard instructor told us to "jump in and see what we could do." Initially, there were a few who were less than thrilled with this approach, others were neutral, while others were positive and enthusiastic. As lifeguard training progressed, most could see the instructor's reason for his approach.

In Dr. Darden's group, Ilsa, Hannah and Faye had positive expectations while Carl's response was mainly neutral. Hannah said, "I like the group supervision because it creates a collective environment." Faye and Ilsa both reported they felt more comfortable because they knew what to expect from the previous semester. Amy from Dr. Art's group said, "Overall I'm looking forward to it." Deb and Erin from Dr. Blair's group reported "excitement" and "very much liking" the group process." All participants in Dr. Culvers group reported being "very open," "looking forward to it," "extremely helpful," "really enjoying it."

By the middle of the semester, the tone and feedback of the reflecting team experience were consistently positive. Dr. Darden's group suggested the process was "very rewarding," "enjoyable," and "helpful." Dr. Blair's group participants reported finding the process "interesting and thought provoking," "informative and helpful," "get a lot from my peers." The participants from Dr. Culver's group said the experience had been "very positive," "enjoyable," "really enjoyable," and "very helpful." By the end of the semester, the overall tone of the experience from all participants remained positive. Even the one participant, Amy, who expressed frustration at the beginning of the semester found the experience to be a good one. Her only qualification was it helped when the rest of the class came prepared and took it seriously. Much like my lifeguard

training class, the varied stances of individuals at the beginning of the semester slowly morphed into a more unified positive reaction to the experience. We began to see the importance of our team. We as a group began to see the value of working together in building our knowledge and skill base.

#### Moving from the Shallows into the Deep

Participants also noted a second major theme, issues of development throughout the semester. At the beginning, some expressed anxiety and concern over what would be expected or ability to secure enough clients for the case presentations. One participant expressed concern over the differences of developmental levels in Dr. Darden's group. However, by the end of the semester, a number of participants were suggesting the experience helped them become more confident and better prepared for their role as professional school counselors.

In lifeguard training, the class had to make the move out of the shallow waters into deeper waters. Lifeguard trainees were exposed to tougher, more complex tasks. Tasks such as rescuing a heavy, "drowning" person, swimming the length of the lake together, and treading water together for a long period of time were required of lifeguard trainees. At the end of these tasks, students expressed more confidence in their knowledge and skills. They also acknowledged the assistance of their class members in helping that happen.

In this study, Faye from Dr. Darden's group said, "I think my professional development has changed because of this group process...as far as working with colleagues ... and other professional meetings that I will encounter as a school counselor in the field." Deb from Dr. Blair's group reported, "I have learned to more openly accept

suggestions and constructive criticism from my peers.” Erin from Dr. Blair’s group stated, “Over the course of the semester I have become more of an advocate for the students and school-wide change. I feel much more confident...and feel I am a better collaborator.” Greta from Dr. Culver’s group said, “I have gained confidence in my work as a counselor. I now have a larger toolkit that I can utilize in my work with students.”

### Sinking or Swimming Together

The third major and most consistent theme was one of peer-led learning. It was a theme that reoccurred throughout the semester. Participants came back to the fact that hearing multiple or different perspectives and group feedback were pivotal to their learning. During lifeguard training, lifeguard trainees performed their tasks together and assisted each other in completing the tasks. Much like the mantra we learned in lifeguard training, “we will either sink or swim together,” participants in this present study recognized that there was a mutual learning that occurred through their interactions with one another. In their journey from shallow waters into deep waters, the study’s participants had to rely on each other to either “sink or swim.”

In the first timeline, all participants in Dr. Culver’s group reported learning experiences as a major theme. Barb said, “I hear different perspectives that perhaps I had not thought of, and I hear what others are experiencing...these are valuable in the learning process.” Greta commented, “It is always helpful to get a variety of perspective and to get helpful suggestions.” Jean reported, “I really enjoy hearing how different people handle different situations and the advice that they gave to me was really helpful.” Kayla stated, “My classmates have been very helpful; I heard different ideas and perspectives that I did not think of previously.” Amy from Dr. Art’s group said she



“enjoys getting others feedback.” Erin from Dr. Blair’s group reported, “I really enjoy when people point out what they see as the problem versus what I brought to them as the problem.”

By the second timeline, every participant commented that “learning” and “hearing multiple perspectives” was the helpful component in using the reflecting team process. A few brief comments are listed from Dr Darden’s group participants. Carl said the “team sheds new light on issues.” Hannah reported, “I like hearing the approaches they are taking and on what theories they are basing their work.” Faye stated, “Something they say can trigger a new thinking pattern and bring about a new idea.” Amy from Dr. Art’s group said, “Just talking about it helps...things begin to make more sense...sometimes I answer my own questions.” Participants from Dr. Blair’s group gave similar viewpoints. Deb said, “You get not only the presenters’ point of view but also all of your peers in the class.” Erin commented, “I think hearing things from someone else’s perspective makes it easier to conceptualize the case.” Finally, Dr. Culver’s group reiterated much of what they said initially in the first timeline. Greta said, “Each person gets a wide variety of suggestion that can help them view their problems from a whole new perspective.” Jean stated, “It was good to hear different points of views from various people.” Kayla reported, “I am able to see my cases from 13 different perspectives.”

By the end of the semester, the majority of participants indicated learning as a predominate change throughout the semester. From Dr. Darden’s group, Carl and Faye reported expanded knowledge and multiple perspectives. Carl said, “I think I have become more aware of the idea that everyone has different ideas for the same situation. By sharing with my peers, it has been quite beneficial hearing all the different responses.”

Faye reported, “Group supervision has also allowed me to expand my knowledge of different case conceptualizations and think about strategies and interventions to use with the clients.” Amy from Dr. Art’s group noted, “I have been able to look at problems/issues/concerns from a different angle.” Deb and Erin from Dr. Blair’s group reported learning as a change. Deb said, “I have learned to take more time to think about suggestions. I now pay more attention to the dynamics between myself and a client and the theory(s) I may be using.” Erin stated, “I can trust the whole group for honest and constructive support and advice.” All of Dr. Culver’s participants commented on hearing different perspectives as a learning curve. Barb said, “Just by going through the process...I am able to come up with more ideas than I had prior to that.” Greta reported, “I have become more open to getting feedback on how to handle challenging situations. I never realized how many perspectives can be overlooked if you try to do things on your own.” Jean stated, “I was able to see beyond my thoughts, and reactions. It helped me see things differently.” Kayla, noted, “I have learned that 12 heads are better than 1. When I first started I found myself jumping to conclusions with my clients.”

I am not Ready for This!

The final major and most unexpected theme emerging at the end of the semester was the timing of the experience. Many participants said they wished the reflecting team process would have started earlier in the semester. Some suggested it would help even more if there was time to implement what they learned and were able to report back to the group. When lifeguard training came to an end, many lifeguard trainees were not sure they were prepared for actually taking on the job of a lifeguard. Some wished for more time and were not quite ready to take that “leap out into the unknown.”

Faye from Dr. Darden's group said it would have been "nice to see if the counselor used the strategies the team came up with and what did and didn't work. Perhaps, if the team reflection process would have started earlier in the semester, we would have had time." Amy from Dr. Art's class said she would have liked to meet more often throughout the semester. Deb from Dr. Blair's class commented that she "wished the class was longer so that we would have had more opportunity to voice our concerns about cases we were working on." Greta and Jean from Dr. Culver's class also would have liked more time to use the process. Greta said, "I wish I had one more class session to report back; we were left with little time to implement some of the suggestions with my client as well as no time to report back to the group whether or not they were successful." Jean stated it would have helped to start the process sooner. "We could have refined the process more and been able to follow each other's cases for a little longer."

#### Minor Cross-Case Themes

A second set of themes emerging from the data had less overall participant agreement, yet were mentioned across groups. Because there were enough participants saying the same thing, it is worth voicing for the study. These minor themes were: (a) group support, (b) usefulness for the future, (c) amount of information and time, (d) preference for type of supervision, and (e) structure of group supervision.

#### Throwing Out the Lifesaver

Throughout the study a number of participants noted that feeling safe with their group and having the group's support assisted them throughout the semester. In lifeguard training, we all knew where the lifesaver ring and buoys were located and how to use them. If someone in our lifeguard training group was in distress, we found safety and

comfort in a group we had come to know and trust. In Dr. Darden's group, Faye commented that asking for support "is nice during group supervision." Both Carl and Faye indicated that Dr. Darden's group felt "safe" and "comforting." They both noted that having been with the same people for two years helped them.

#### Holding on to the Lifesaver

A number of participants said they could see how the SRTS model would be helpful and useful for their future work as professional school counselors. They discovered the process provided both support and assistance and were hopeful this process would provide a means to help them in the future. At the end of lifeguard training, a number of students could see how the class itself and class members helped them in their training. A number of them noted how important it would be to remain connected with their peers in their future work as lifeguards.

Both Hannah and Faye from Dr. Darden's group noted how vital peer support would be for the future. Hannah said, "The most important thing I will take away from the group supervision process is how vital it is for me to have counselors in the future with whom I can discuss cases." Faye noted the group times were "simulations of what to expect when I meet with colleagues in my profession world." Erin from Dr. Blair's group said she "received great networking support in my group. I am more aware of differences in job descriptions, job placements, and other peoples' experiences." Deb from Dr. Blair's class commented that the group was like "consulting and collaborating with a group of other guidance counselors...while working at a school." Greta from Dr. Culver's group stated she had "learned the importance of group supervision and helping one another for the future."

### Drowning in Information

A third minor theme noted by a few participants across groups was the problem of too little time and too much information. Specifically, this emerged when asked what hindered participation in the reflecting team process at the second timeline. Some participants suggested there was not enough time to give enough pertinent information on their case presentations, while others said there was too much information in a short amount of time. A common frustration voiced in lifeguard training is that we felt like we were drowning in too much information and not enough time.

Carl and Hannah from Dr. Darden's group said "felt too limited or try to limit my time when sharing," and "taking too much time to share a lot of irrelevant information." Deb and Erin in Dr. Blair's group indicated some "individuals presented too long," and "not getting enough important information." Greta in Dr. Culver's group reported she was "only hindered by the time constrictions of my class."

### Too Many in a Small Pond

A fourth minor theme mentioned throughout the experience was a preference for a small group size as opposed to a large group. This was mainly voiced by those who had been previously exposed to larger group supervision experiences of 14 to 20 versus a smaller group of 8 to 10 individuals. These participants said it was easier to participate given the size of the group. During lifeguard training, there were times a number of students wished for more individualized attention from the instructor as well as help from their classmates. Their complaint was reflected in the largeness of the group class, which precluded individual attention.

Ilsa from Dr. Darden's group said, "I have enjoyed talking in small groups...I tend to share more things in a small group rather than a large one. Amy from Dr. Art's group said that it would have been more helpful to have "smaller groups, no more than 5-7 to a class." A few also maintained the stance that they preferred individual supervision versus group supervision. Hannah from Dr. Darden's group stated, "With my professor in individual and with a doctoral student who I also have individual sessions with, I feel like those are much more productive." Deb from Dr. Blair's group stated, "There are certain times when I really want 1:1 supervision." However, this stance seemed to diminish throughout the semester with one participant suggesting she would always prefer individual supervision even though she found this particular group supervision experience helpful.

You Want Me to do What?!

A final minor theme spoke to the issue of the group supervision structure. Throughout the semester there were a few participants who felt the experience was too structured while others appreciated the structure and felt it was needed for their group. During the first few class lessons in lifeguard training, there were a few students who chafed at the structure and method of the instructor. They expressed the desire for less structured approach; they wanted to swim they wanted to swim.

In the beginning Carl from Dr. Darden's group and Amy from Dr. Art's group were concerned about the focus on the structure of the group versus the focus on "just sharing." Amy expressed the most frustration by stating, "I hope it is less formal, and we can just talk freely." By the second timeline, Hannah from Dr. Darden's class found the "structured group supervision models we have used forced people to think and prevents

the ‘woe me’ syndrome.” She said it helped “...guide how I listen and what feedback I give.” Amy from Dr. Art’s group continued to struggle with the structure. She commented, “I just want to say what I want, but I have to say it in a certain format. I worry about if we are saying it ‘right’ or not.” Greta in Dr. Culver’s group noted, “In the beginning it was difficult to watch the first couple steps take place and not voice my opinion.” By the third timeline, Erin from Dr. Blair’s group said, “The process may have been better if it was more of an open forum. I felt that at times we had to stick to this strict outline.” Amy said, “I got a lot more out of it when we were spontaneous.”

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION

The purpose of this study was to explore elements in the SRTS which might help or hinder the school counseling interns' personal and professional development. Participants were exposed to a hybrid reflecting team model of group supervision, the Reflecting Team Supervision (RTS, Landis & Young, 1994; Monk & Winslade, 2000; Prest et al., 1990) and the Structured Group Supervision (SGS, Wilbur, Roberts-Wilbur, Morris et al., 1991). Specifically, I was interested in tracking the experiences of school counseling interns exposed to the hybrid model, Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS), during their last internship semester before their graduation.

A qualitative study was developed for this study for two reasons: (a) this is a new group supervision format, which has not been studied in the past, and (b) there is scant research conducted on topics related to the study, such as the use of reflecting teams, group supervision, and assisting school counseling interns in their continued development beyond graduate school. The unique contribution of this study is the introduction and exploration of the use of a hybrid reflecting team model for group supervision. The study also contributes to the existing research within the group supervision literature in general, the use of reflecting teams with group supervision. In addition, emerging information from this research may provide further support for school counseling interns in exposing them to viable avenues of clinical peer group supervision once they graduate from their training programs and enter the school setting.

A SOIG was developed for both the school counseling interns as well as their academic group supervisors with flexibility for using open-ended probes throughout the



interview. Open-ended probes consisted of who, what, when, where, why, and how questions to elicit further information or to clarify previous responses. The following research questions were considered for the school counseling interns to be answered at specific timelines. The first data gathering point started the fourth week of the school counseling interns' semester, when participants were asked to complete a demographic survey and respond to the first three SOIG questions

1. Describe any group supervision experiences previous to this current class.
2. What were those previous supervision experiences like for you?
3. As you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feeling about the group supervision process?

The second data gathering point started the eighth week of the school counselor's internship semester, when participants were asked five SOIG questions; this part of the process was to be completed 12 weeks into the internship semester.

1. What has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?
2. What helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?
3. What hinders you from participating in the reflecting team process?
4. What hinders in the development of your case conceptualization skills during the reflecting team process?
5. What helps in the development of your case conceptualization skills during the reflecting team process?

The final data gathering point started around week 12 of the school counselor's internship semester, when participants were asked to respond to three SOIG questions

plus a questionnaire; this part of the process was to be completed by the end of the internship semester.

1. In what ways have you changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process?
2. What incidents were the most memorable for you?
3. What would have made this process better for you and the group?

At the end of the semester, four academic group supervisors were asked to respond by email to the following questions from the SOIG:

1. How closely did you follow the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision Guidelines?
2. If you deviated or altered the reflecting team process, what the reasons for your change?
3. How would you describe this semester's group supervision experience in comparison to past groups?
4. How do you like/dislike this format in comparison to other formats you have used in the past?

The responses from all participants were analyzed and coded in an effort to uncover consistent themes from this study. Triangulation of analysis and results was conducted in an effort to control for researcher bias. Triangulation occurred when the themes were further analyzed by two other individuals trained in qualitative research. Based on my analysis as well as the analysis, the following findings are described in the next section.

### Findings and Implications

Findings and implications are broken down into five sections due to the complexity that group supervision offers to researchers. The first issue is the development of both individuals and groups over a period of time as well as any past experiences brought into a new experience. The second issue is the introduction and practice of a new model of group supervision to a new class of school counseling interns. The second section reports the findings of the overall experience while the third section reports on responses regarding the structure itself. Finally, in the last two sections attention is given to the issue of group dynamics and leadership of the various groups from the perspective of the school counseling interns and the academic group supervisors.

#### School Counseling Interns and a New Semester

Twelve school counseling interns from two universities with four academic supervisors were involved in the study. The set of questions for the first timeline were designed to explore school counseling intern past experiences with group counseling as well as their current thoughts and feelings about engaging in a new semester. As this study's participants entered a new semester, they brought with them varied levels of experiences and concerns. Most participants mentioned looking forward to being with a cohort group for support, hearing differing perspectives and ideas from others and receiving feedback. Participants also mentioned time constraints, group size, and type of supervision as potential concerns. The three participants who had been exposed to a variation of reflecting teams were mostly positive with one reporting negative thoughts

about the experience. In following those three throughout the semester, I was curious to see how the semester would unfold in terms of experiences by the end of class.

Comments from this group of school counseling interns beginning their final semester with their last clinical rotation remind me they bring with them a mixture of experiences, thoughts and feelings. In approaching the group supervision time together, it is important for group supervisors to be aware of both the potential value and concerns school counseling interns bring to the group time together. Nine participants in this study (75%) reported feeling positive about the upcoming semester. These comments from this study's participants echoed previous literature regarding the potential benefits group supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), which are support, learning and feedback from peers. However, participants from this study did not address two other potential benefits listed by Bernard and Goodyear, which are exposure to a wider variety of diagnostic and treatment issues and opportunities for personal insight into interpersonal behavior.

Nine participants (75%), while feeling positive about the upcoming experience, also echoed concerns the previous literature noted regarding the potential challenges of group supervision. Three participants commented on a preference for individual supervision over group supervision, which echoes findings from previous studies (Herbert, 2004; Newgent et al., 2005; Ray & Altekruise, 2000). While these previous studies found no connection between individual supervision and counseling effectiveness or counselor-in-training growth as compared to group supervision, counseling students preferred individual supervision over any other type of supervision such as large group, small group, or hybrid formats. A second concern expressed by three participants was the issue of time limitations imposed on them by group supervision. Others (Holloway &

Johnston, 1985; Prieto, 1996; Riva & Cornish, 1995) have also noted the potential disadvantage of time constraints in comparing the value of group to individual supervision. These previous studies suggested counselors-in-training have expressed concern that they may not have a chance to present their cases every week or in sufficient detail. Once again, these previous studies only noted it was an issue of preference and not an issue of counseling effectiveness or counselor-in-training growth. A final concern expressed by three participants was anxiety over performance and other class details, which is one of the events which can hinder the process of group supervision identified in a previous study of counselors-in-training (Enyedy et al., 2003).

The first timeline questions were designed to address thoughts and concerns school counselor interns were dealing with as they began the semester. In many ways their experiences mirror findings from other studies and existent literature about potential benefits and challenges of group supervision in general. It would be helpful for group supervisors to refresh themselves in these areas and address potential benefits and challenges in the early stages of the internship semester. Moving away from the beginning of the semester in the first timeline, the last two timelines focused more on the school counseling intern experiences with the SRTS model in group supervision.

#### The SRTS Experience

The second timeline was designed to explore the experiences of school counseling interns with the SRTS model of group supervision as they were introduced to the model and practiced it throughout the semester. The final timeline focused on school counseling interns experience looking back over the whole semester using the SRTS model. Both of

these two timelines addressed the heart of the study, which was to explore school counseling intern experiences with the SRTS group supervision model.

Ten participants (83%) reported positive experiences with the use of the SRTS format regardless of previous experiences, group supervisor, gender or any previously voiced concerns. The three emerging themes noted in both timelines were positive group benefits, developmental issues, and residual concerns. The major and overarching theme out of the three themes was the positive benefits received by participants through their groups. The minor two issues, which were less pronounced yet important, were the developmental issues and residual concerns themes.

The positive benefits listed by participants did mirror those listed in previous literature (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). The authors listed benefits included peer feedback and support, exposure to diagnostic and treatment issues, and opportunities for personal insight into interpersonal behavior. Study participants included all of those benefits; however, the primary benefit noted by all participants was the importance of hearing differing perspectives on the same case. While hearing multiple perspectives was a predominate benefit in the second timeline, it became the primary benefit noted by all participants in the final timeline responses. Even the one participant, Amy from Dr. Art's class, who expressed frustration with the process throughout the study, said the process helped her "get out of my own way" and "get out of my own head." She would have been open to group supervision more often if everyone were willing to prepare and participate in the time together. The second most common benefit participants listed was peer support followed by vicarious learning through others cases, and learning about themselves.

The second theme which emerged in the last two timeline responses was developmental issues with both positive and negative points. On the positive side, participants reported feeling that they had grown professionally through the group process using the SRTS model. During the second timeline, one participant indicated how helpful the group was during her present stage of development. On the negative side, three other participants worried about: (a) saying things the correct way or not having anything to offer, and (b) lacking knowledge, experience and confidence. One participant wondered if the varying developmental levels in the group might not be affecting the group's ability to process cases more deeply. By the end of the semester participants reported gaining more confidence in their role and ability to conceptualize cases. In particular, one participant realized she was "paying much more attention to the dynamics between self and a client and the theory(s) I may be using." Others noted the usefulness of the model for future consulting and collaboration as they move into school counseling jobs in the community.

The final theme throughout the semester revolved around some of the residual concerns expressed at the beginning of the semester. Issues such as preference for type of supervision, time constraints, previous negative experience, and group size remained issues, but they became less pronounced as the semester came to a close. During the second timeline, the issue of time constraints emerged again. Three participants suggested the amount of class time limited their ability to share information or give input into the process. A new concern emerged over time, when two participants mentioned the amount of information that was given in a short time span was a hindrance to the process. One previous qualitative study on the use of the reflecting team process also found this to

be a potential concern (O'Connor et al., 2004), while participants from two other qualitative studies (Sells et al. 1994; Smith et al., 1992) did not find this concern. By the end of the semester in the final timeline only two participants continued to address their original preferences from the beginning of the semester; one preferred individual supervision while the other preferred to present her cases in a more spontaneous way.

### The SRTS Structure

Throughout the last two timelines of the study, there were a few comments directly related to the SRTS structure. Initially, three participants gave positive responses with one stating a negative response. One participant stated the structure forced group members out of the “woe me” syndrome and into looking at “doing what works.” Another had some difficulty getting used to the process at first but eventually found it a helpful way to learn. Another liked the how the structure gave her a chance to think about the information, process it and then respond to others’ input. The two participants, who were the least receptive to the experience, stated structuring the time for the experience was needed and productive for the group process. In addition, one further said she worries about how she was saying things versus just saying what she wants to say.

A few participants spoke directly to the different steps embedded in the SRTS guidelines. While, two participants said the structure felt a little strange at first, one other participant suggested the interaction with the supervisor in Step 1 gave a sense of focus to the session. Two participants liked the different steps, but they suggested either limiting the time of sections more or limiting the amount of ideas. They both wondered if this might help the group deal with the time and information concerns.



In the future, as supervisor implement the SRTS model, it might be helpful to address some of the concerns raised by participants in this study. Specifically, it might be helpful to take some time to address the possible issues of structure and time at the beginning of the semester. It would also be helpful for the group supervisor to either place time limits on sections or limit the amount of information given in each section. In addition, it might be helpful to address the concern expressed over “not saying things the right way” in the beginning. It is also possible the sections and timing of each might require individual evaluation and change.

The bulk of the study explored school counseling interns’ experiences with the use of the SRTS model during their internship semester. However, it is also important to attend to the importance of group dynamics and group leadership. Participants responded to a questionnaire that explores group leadership, group peers, and group environment. The next section examines how group dynamics might affect the group experiences with the SRTS model.

### Group Dynamics

The participants’ responses from the GSIS revealed no significant hindering events with regard to supervisor, peers, or the group environment. Because all of the participants were positive about the experience at the end and the GSIS revealed no significant issues, it appears participants were satisfied with the experience overall. It might be interesting for future researchers to give the GSIS two or three times throughout the semester to see how group dynamics change over time. It would also be interesting to see how participants, who are experience hindering group issues and less satisfied with the group dynamics, might respond to the experience. Because participants did not report

significant problems, it is hard to determine the affects of group dynamics on using the SRTS model or implications for future groups. It is equally difficult to discern how much the SRTS model affects the dynamics of group supervision as well. Other studies on the reflecting team did not specifically address the affect of group dynamics on the reflecting team model or the affect of reflecting team model on group dynamics (O'Connor et al., 2004; Sells et al. 1994; Smith et al., 1992). Initially, Prest et al. (1990) reported their students felt less defensive and more open to feedback using an RTS model. Then later, Smith et al.'s (1992) participants stated the model created and encouraged dialogue among team members. Early authors of the RTS model (Landis & Young, 1994; Prest et al., 1990) highlighted the importance of the theoretical influence driving the differences between reflecting teams versus a group discussion of a session or a case presentation. Future training in the SRTS should include a discussion of the theoretical shift highlighting the importance of the approach or posture of the team members' as well as the methodological, structural change in supervision.

Finally, because group leadership is also an important aspect to the group supervision experience, the next section explored the academic group supervisors' experiences of the semester. Specifically, I was interested in exploring their assessment of and the consistency of use of the SRTS model. I also wanted their perspective on their group dynamics especially in comparison to other groups they have supervised in the past.

#### Group Supervisor Reflections

There was a difference in implementation of the SRTS model by university. MU reported using the model in the last third of the semester after using two other models. In

addition the MU group supervisor also reported eliminating the interview step between the supervisor and supervisee because it seemed to be too stilted. Because the NU department as a whole has embraced the SRTS model and all group supervisors have agreed to follow the model, they provided the most consistency to the study. Given the lack of consistency with the MU group, it is important to weigh participant responses with that information.

In exploring group dynamics across the years, one group supervisor reported a significant difference during the study's semester. The MU group supervisor did acknowledge that this group of school counseling interns was also different from past groups. She stated the group as a whole was "VERY different from the cohorts from my first two years" and, they "had a wide range of skills, attitudes, and neediness." The NU group supervisors reported no significant differences, but Drs. Blair and Culver stated their groups were respectively more supportive than past groups and "meshed well a bit more than other groups in the past." Dr. Art reported no difference from years past. Once again, because the dynamics with the MU group were noted as being different from the past and Drs. Blair and Culver reported more positive dynamics than the past, it might be important to weigh out participant responses with this information.

In examining group supervisor preference for using the SRTS model, it was clear that the MU group supervisor liked a modified version of the model while the NU group supervisors were the most positive about the model. The MU group supervisor felt the interviewing step was too stilted and wanted the "students to have the opportunity to fully conceptualize without being prompted." On the other hand, all three NU group supervisors stated they had used other models in the past, and preferred the SRTS model.

After using it for two years, NU group supervisors stated it enhanced the learning process and took interns deeper than other supervision models had in the past. One said she also likes the direction and consistency the SRTS gives as well as it is something “students can take with them as they go out into their jobs.”

When RTS was initially introduced, Prest et al. (1990) stated the reflecting team’s primary function became fostering the development of their fellow counseling interns. Responses from this study indicated that the SRTS model does indeed meet that primary function. All participants had a positive experience with the use of SRTS model or a variation of the model. Two of the group participants and academic group supervisors, Drs. Blair and Culver from NU, reported the most consistent and unified focus on taking diverse ideas, implementing them and reporting back to the group. Dr. Art remains somewhat of an enigma because there was only one member participating, who did not like the SRTS model from the previous and current semester. Yet, the same participant acknowledged the importance of the structure as well as expressed the same points of growth as other participants. It may be that individual preference does not play a significant role in school counseling intern growth. Finally, since Dr. Darden’s group had a number of issues affecting the experience (exposure to multiple models, varying developmental levels, and a variation of the SRTS model), it is more difficult to interpret the findings. This was the only group one participant would have wished for less “sharing” and more critical thinking about their cases. A different participant wished for more time using the varied SRTS model in order to implement ideas and report back to the group. Once again, it is hard to draw firm conclusions regarding the differences in the group affected by the varying experiences.

### Potential for Future Use

Bacigalupe (2003) suggested the use of reflecting teams has become one of the central features in training marriage and family therapy students to think reflexively as well as to learn to collaborate and consult in teams. Participant responses from this study also suggested the SRTS model helped them to think more critically and exposed them to a wider variety of perspectives and ideas in approaching individual cases. School counseling interns also face two other issues as they look toward graduation. First, ASCA requires its members to contribute to the profession through the sharing of skills and ideas with colleagues as well as providing support and mentoring for novice school counselors (Standards F.2.b & c), but there is no requirement they received further clinical supervision once they finish their degree, receive their license and begin their work as a school counselor. Borders (1991) highlighted the intensive and cyclical nature of clinical supervision. Clinical supervision is characterized by a cycle of feedback, practice, and additional feedback. Because school counselors will most likely be receiving clinical supervision from their peers, finding supervision models to use in a collaborative way is important. A number of participants commented on the importance of being given a model to take with them for collaboration and consultation. It would be interesting to follow up on these participants in using the SRTS model.

### Limitations of this Study

As with any study, limitations exist which affect the outcome, interpretation, findings and implications. There were a number of limitations with this study, which included lack of comparison groups, issues of transferability instead of generalizability,

and a limited ability to assess differences between the group supervisor and peers from group to group.

The first limitation in this study was the difficulty of comparison between groups. Specifically, this qualitative study focused on a small sample of school counseling interns exposed to one model of group supervision, the SRTS model; therefore, there were no planned avenues to make comparisons to other models or a control group. However, because one group supervisor did expose four participants to two other group supervision models, there was the potential to hear if these four participants made comparisons between their three different experiences. In addition, because one group supervisor exposed participants to a different experience to the other three groups, it is difficult to assess the affect of changing group supervision models as well as deviating from the SRTS model had on participant experiences.

A second limitation closely aligned with the first limitation is the ability to articulate findings and implications based on the participants by group. As noted previously, the MU's group supervisor handled the group experience and process differently from the three NU supervisors. The NU group supervisors as a department have agreed to follow with SRTS guidelines and have been doing so for two years. There is more confidence in the consistency of experience with the three NU groups. However, Dr. Art's group only had one school counseling intern participate in the study while Drs. Darden, Blair and Culver had multiple participants. Multiple participants allow for the use of triangulation in interpreting the responses to address the findings and possible implications for the study.

A third limitation of any qualitative study is that of transferability, which is similar to the limitation of generalizability in quantitative studies. The results of this study can only speak in terms of transferring findings to similar groups within the populations that participated in the study. Thus, findings of this study can only apply to school counseling interns' experiences with the SRTS model of group supervision during the internship semester. Further, because there have been no previous studies with the SRTS model, results can only be transferred in school counseling interns at these two universities.

Finally, because school counseling interns were from two different university school counseling programs with four different group supervisors and 12 different peers, it is difficult to assess the affect of those relationships upon the school counseling intern's experience. Some of the comments from the SOIGs and the GSIS sought to assess supervisor-supervisee relationship and peer relationships, yet it still is difficult to know what specific interactions at specific times might have made a difference to participants.

#### Recommendations for Future Study

Results of the present study suggest several avenues for further research in the future. First, research is needed to replicate the present findings in other settings with more ethnically and geographically diverse populations. It would also be helpful to expand this exploratory study to a broader and larger group of school counseling interns. Secondly, it would be helpful to study this process primarily from a group supervisor's perspective further examining how the group supervisor's preferences and use of the SRTS model affects the group's experience. Another possible avenue of study might be to further examine the group experience from a developmental perspective of both the

intern and supervisor. Another possibility is that it would be interesting to follow up on participants from this study to see if they did use the SRTS model in their first few years of school counseling work, and to explore their experiences if the SRTS model was used. Finally, it would be interesting to modify this process from a distance perspective using upcoming technology for practicing school counselors. This might enable them to conduct the SRTS model using a secure audio/video software for case presentation purposes and secure chat room for the structured discussion throughout their work week as they are able to participate in the reflective consulting team.

Given that the very nature of group supervision is a complex one, and the SRTS model was introduced to a limited group of school counseling interns, the initial responses in this study were positive. All participants found hearing differing and multiple perspectives on the same case to be the most important aspect of the time together. Several participants at the end wished the SRTS model had been introduced earlier in the semester to give an opportunity to follow the cycle of implementation of new ideas and reporting back to the group progress from those ideas. The SRTS model holds potential for school counseling interns in their early development as well as potential for use in the field through peer consultations to meet the needs for further clinical supervision.



## APPENDIX A

## SRTS PROCESS GUIDELINE

*Stage #1 (25 minutes) – Presenting counselor presents case and then the interviewer asks questions and makes probes with presenting counselor while team members silently generate their own questions and thoughts and write them down:*

Example questions:

- What concerns led you to want to discuss this case?
- What dilemmas do you face in your work with this client/family/group?
- What understanding or explanations do you have about these dilemmas?
- What would you like to focus upon?
- What do you need from the team in this case?
- How would you describe the dilemma from the client(s)' perspective?
- How would you like to use this meeting?
- Tell me more about...
- Give me the specifics about...

*Stage #2: (10 minutes) – Team members offer questions and thoughts while the interviewer and presenting counselor remain silent and make notes of the discussion:*

Example questions and leads:

- How is it now compared to then?
- Who did what when?
- What helped the most?
- What were the circumstances?
- Who has been involved or not involved?
- When did it start?
- When did it become worse or better?
- How can it be explained?
- How can that be understood?
- I wonder why...
- I noticed that...
- If ... then maybe...
- I am wondering if...
- Maybe the client feels/thinks/acts... because...

[continued on following page]

*Stage #3 (10 minutes) – Presenting counselor focuses on any questions or ideas he/she is interested in commenting on while interviewer and team remain silent and write down any further thoughts:*

Example leads:

- The items that caught my attention were...
- I was particularly struck by...
- I would like to respond to the question brought up by... about...
- I thought ... was really interesting.
- I question whether... is relevant to this dilemma.
- I am not sure it would be helpful to...

*Stage #4 (10-15 minutes) – Interviewer/counseling discussion resumes while the rest of the team listens and writes down any further thoughts or questions.*

[Utilize the same type of suggested wording for this segment as Steps 2 & 3 above]

*Stage #5 (5 minutes) – Optional: dependent upon time. Invite an open discussion among all members.*

### **HELPFUL HINTS**

- Educate all involved about the process and roles of reflective teams.
- For those new to the process, a case study or role-playing might be helpful.
- Express ideas in terms of curiosity and not definitive conclusions.
- Write down questions or ideas when in the listening mode.
- Frame input in positive, helpful terms and not negative, critical ways.

APPENDIX B  
PARTICIPANT E-MAILS

Dear Academic Clinical Supervisor:

I am writing to invite you and your school counseling internship students to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore school counseling interns' experiences using a model of group supervision, the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS).

I am inviting you to be in this study because you are an academic clinical supervisor, who has agreed to use the SRTS format in the group supervision part of your internship class during the Spring 2008 semester. I obtained your name and email address from personal contact with you, through CESNET, or with the assistance of Dr. Tarrell Portman. Approximately 25 people will take part in this study at the University of Iowa.

If you agree to participate, I will ask you to use the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision model in your internship class during the Spring 2008 semester, if you are not already using this model. I will ask you to answer three questions at the end of the semester via email. These questions should take you approximately 30-40 minutes to answer. An example question is: how would you describe this semester's group supervision experience in comparison to past groups? You might be asked follow-up questions such as tell me more about the climate differences you mentioned, which would take another 30 minutes to answer. You are free to not answer any question that you would prefer not to answer. You will be asked to distribute an e-mail with information about participation in the study to your students.

I will keep the information you provide confidential, however federal regulatory agencies and the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. A pseudo name will be attached to any of the information that you complete and any links between your real name and pseudo name will be destroyed once the study is complete. I will access any information through the internet by my home office computer, which is password protected. However, be aware that any information transmitted over the internet could be viewed by other persons and any computer data may not be totally destroyed when it is deleted from the computer. Information provided via e-mail may be viewed by individuals with access to e-mail accounts, and it may not be possible to destroy all records of the correspondence. If I write a report about this study we will do so in such a way that you cannot be identified.

There are no known risks from being in this study, and you will not benefit personally. However we hope that others may benefit in the future from what we learn as a result of this study.

You will not have any costs for being in this research study. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won't be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Kathleen Kellum at [kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu](mailto:kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu) or 336-870-6560. If you experience a research-related injury, please contact: Kathleen Kellum at 336-870-6560. If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 300 College of Medicine Administration Building, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail [irb@uiowa.edu](mailto:irb@uiowa.edu). To offer input about your experiences as a research subject or to speak to someone other than the research staff, call the Human Subjects Office at the number above.

Thank you very much for your consideration. Should you wish to participate, please email with your name and a sentence agreeing to participate in the study so I can begin the study procedure.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hartney Kellum,  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Student Development  
College of Education  
The University of Iowa

Dear School Counseling Intern:

Your academic clinical supervisor for the spring 2008 semester has forwarded this invitation for participation in a qualitative research study. I have not been given your name or contact information.

I am a graduate student at the University of Iowa, and I am conducting a study designed to explore school counseling interns' experiences with the use of the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS) model of group supervision. Your academic clinical supervisor has agreed that he or she uses this model and has also agreed to assist me in contacting students in the internship class.

The reflecting team method of group supervision is a method that includes case presentations, but processes the case in four to five steps. A crucial component is that conversations convey ideas in terms of questions and wonderings versus definitive conclusions, opinions, or answers. The following page provides a more detailed description and guideline of the process.

This research may provide new and useful information regarding school counseling interns' experiences with group supervision. Please read the enclosed Informed Consent Document that is attached to this e-mail for additional information about the research study.

If you have any questions, please contact me at [kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu](mailto:kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu) or call 336-870-6560. Should you wish to participate, please e-mail giving you name, contact information, and a sentence indicated your consent for participation, and I will begin the study procedures.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hartney Kellum,  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Student Development  
College of Education  
The University of Iowa

Dear School Counseling Intern:

I am writing to invite you to participate in a research study. The purpose of the study is to explore school counseling interns' experiences using a model of group supervision, the Structured Reflecting Team Supervision (SRTS).

I am inviting you to be in this study because you are a school counseling intern, whose academic clinical supervisor has agreed to use the SRTS format in the group supervision part of your internship semester. Approximately 25 people will take part in this study at the University of Iowa.

If you agree to participate, I will enroll you in a virtual discussion group using a pseudo name to protect your identity. There will be three times throughout the semester that you will be asked to answer a set of questions regarding your experiences with group supervision. Each group of questions should take you approximately 30-40 minutes to answer. Example questions are: (1) Describe any previous experiences to group supervision, and (2) what incidents were most memorable for you. In addition, you will be asked to fill out a demographic survey at the beginning of the semester which asks for your age, gender, race/ethnicity, name of University, and supervising professor's initials. You will also be asked to complete a scale at the end of the semester which asks for your perceptions of your experiences in your most recent group supervision meeting. The demographic survey should take 10 minutes to complete and the final scale should take 20 minutes to complete. You might be asked follow-up questions such as "tell me more about the particulars of the incident" after each of the three data gathering points that would take an additional 30 minutes to answer. You are free to not answer any question that you would prefer not to answer.

I will keep the information you provide confidential, however federal regulatory agencies and the University of Iowa Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves research studies) may inspect and copy records pertaining to this research. Your pseudo name will be attached to any of the information that you complete and any links between your real name and pseudo name will be destroyed once the study is complete. I will access any information through the internet by my home office computer, which is password protected. However, be aware that any information transmitted over the internet could be viewed by other persons. If I write a report about this study I will do so in such a way that you cannot be identified.

You may experience one or more of the risks indicated below from being in this study. It is possible that you may experience fatigue while working on the questions through the computer. Also, as stated previously, I cannot guarantee privacy as information is transmitted over the internet. Finally, it is possible you could find interacting with others through others on the computer to be frustrating or possibly embarrassing. To these, there may be other unknown risks, or risks that we did not anticipate, associated with being in this study.

You will not benefit personally from being in this study. However we hope that others may benefit in the future from what we learn as a result of this study.

You will not have any costs for being in this research study. You will not be paid for being in this research study.

Taking part in this research study is completely voluntary. If you decide not to be in this study, or if you stop participating at any time, you won't be penalized or lose any benefits for which you otherwise qualify.

If you have any questions about the research study itself, please contact Kathleen Kellum at [kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu](mailto:kathleen-kellum@uiowa.edu) or 336-870-6560. If you experience a research-related injury, please contact: Kathleen Kellum at 336-870-6560. If you have questions about the rights of research subjects, please contact the Human Subjects Office, 300 College of Medicine Administration Building, The University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA 52242, (319) 335-6564, or e-mail [irb@uiowa.edu](mailto:irb@uiowa.edu). To offer input about your experiences as a research subject or to speak to someone other than the research staff, call the Human Subjects Office at the number above.

Thank you very much for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Hartney Kellum,  
Doctoral Candidate  
Department of Counseling, Rehabilitation and Student Development  
College of Education  
The University of Iowa

## APPENDIX C

## DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEY

*Please complete the following demographic questions:*

**Gender:**  *Female*  
 *Male*

**Age:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary Race/Ethnicity:**  
*(check all that apply)*

*American Indian and Alaska Native*  
 *Asian*  
 *Black or African American*  
 *Hispanic or Latino*  
 *Native Hawaiian & Other Pacific Islander*  
 *White*  
 *Other:* \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of University:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Initials of the Supervising Professor:** \_\_\_\_\_



## APPENDIX D

## GROUP SUPERVISION IMPACT SCALE

*[Developed by M. A. Getzelman. Unpublished dissertation. Reprinted with permission of the author]*

*This scale is intended to get your perceptions of your experience in your current or most recent group supervision. Please mark the number that best describes your experience with your group supervision. Please use a seven-point scale where 1 = never and 7 = always.*

	<b><i>Supervisor Impact: To what extent...</i></b>							
1.	<i>Did your supervisor demonstrate openness?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2.	<i>Did your supervisor demonstrate a sense of humor?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3.	<i>Did your supervisor seem flexible?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	<i>Was your supervisor competent?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	<i>Did your supervisor provide you with useful feedback?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	<i>Did your supervisor give you validation?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	<i>Did your supervisor help you to better understand your client?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	<i>Did your supervisor structure group time effectively?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	<i>Did your supervisor constructively use group dynamics?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	<i>Did your supervisor effectively resolve conflicts in the group?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	<i>Was the group a safe place for you to ask questions?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	<i>Was your supervisor reliable?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13.	<i>Was your supervisor's feedback unfairly negative?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**[continued on next page]**

	<b><i>Peer Supervisee Impact: To what extent...</i></b>							
14.	<i>Did you receive candid feedback from other group members?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	<i>Did you receive useful treatment planning help from other group members?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	<i>Did your fellow group members help generate ideas through group discussion?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	<i>Were you able to benefit from mistakes others in the group reported having made?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<b><i>Group Environment Impact: to what extent...</i></b>							
18.	<i>Was there between-member competition within the group?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	<i>Was there between-member conflicts that did not get resolved?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	<i>Did some members dominate the group time?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	<i>Did you like the other people in the group?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	<i>Did group members seem mutually supportive?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	<i>Did you feel anxious when you presented your work to the group?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	<i>Did you feel a part of the group?</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

APPENDIX E  
SAMPLE CASE REPOSSES

Sample Interview Response:

Timeline #1 Questions & Sample Response:

#1 – Describe any group supervision experiences previous to this current class.

I have very limited experience with group supervision. We used some techniques in a classroom management class I took last year in my graduate program. There were three designated "supervisors" with each classroom presentation. At the end of each presentation, the supervisors would comment on their observations and give suggestions to the presenters. Other than this, I have never used these techniques in a formal work setting. (P) We had a class of about 17, and each week one of us would present, three of us would be "supervisors" and the rest of the class would observe.

#2 – What were those previous supervision experiences like for you?

I enjoyed being on both sides of the process. When I was the presenter, it was nice to get feedback immediately after from your peers. I viewed it as constructive criticism and it was actually very helpful for future situations. I also enjoyed being the "supervisor." It was a very non-threatening way to make suggestions to my peers in the class. At first it was a little awkward having to make sure you phrased things just the right way, but eventually it became more natural.

#3 – As you begin this semester, what are your thoughts and feelings about the group supervision process?

I look forward to using this process in my current class. I had a positive experience with it in the past and I liked the way everyone seemed to benefit from the process. It is always helpful to get a variety of perspectives and to get helpful suggestions. Also, I think it helps everyone improve their counseling skills, keep an open mind, and practice giving advice with a positive attitude.

Timeline #2 Questions & Sample Response:

#1 -- What has this current experience of group supervision been like for you at this point in the semester?

I am enjoying the group supervision process. In the beginning it was difficult to watch the first couple steps take place and not voice my opinion. I have yet to be the student who is reflected on, so I dont know how that will go when I have to sit and listen to everyone's responses without responding right away. However, I do feel like I am learning a lot and

that my fellow classmates are gaining a lot from the process. No one is critical, but rather everyone is sharing their perspective and they have actually helped several other students take another angle on their current dilemmas.

#2 -- What helps you in participating in the reflecting team process?

what is most helpful to me is hearing a variety of perspectives. Even though I have not brought up my own issue yet, I have learned a great deal on how to tackle other issues and have been able to see just how helpful it can be to get a variety of people exploring one concern. We often overlook the numerous strategies that could be utilized and fail to see any way but our own. So far, everyone has been able to take something from the supervision process that will help them with their clients.

#3 -- What hinders you from participating in the reflecting team process?

I am only hindered by the time constrictions of my class. We have a lot of people to get through in a short time and sometimes I do not get a chance to express my reactions to someone's case.

#4 -- What about the reflecting team process helps you develop your ability to conceptualize cases?

The group process gives everyone a chance to speak on what stood out to them. Therefore, each person gets a wide variety of suggestions that can help them view their problem from a whole new perspective that they may not have considered prior to supervision. It has helped me see the many ways we can go about our daily challenges.

#5 -- What about the reflecting team process hinders you develop your ability to conceptualize cases?

Nothing. You can choose to utilize as many or as few of the suggestions as you want. But, I have yet to see someone not find at least one thing helpful in their case challenges. I enjoy hearing others responses on each case and have learned some strategies that I would not have ever come up with on my own.

Timeline #3 Questions & Sample Response:

#1 -- In what ways have you changed throughout the semester because of the group supervision process?

I have become more open to getting feedback on how to handle challenging situations. I never realized how many perspectives can be overlooked if you try to do things your own. Also, because I have gotten to hear many views, I have gained confidence in my work as a counselor. I now have a larger toolkit that I can utilize in my work with students. Lastly, I learned the importance of group supervision and helping one another.

It is so important to get others feedback and it also feels good when someone takes your ideas into consideration and they work!

#2 -- What incidents were the most memorable for you?

The times that were most memorable to me were when people reported back to the group that things had worked for them that group members had suggested previously. It is nice to see our suggestions put into practice and know that people are benefiting from them.

#3 -- What would have made this process better for you and/or the group?

I wish I had one more class session to report back. I was one of the last people to bring my case to discussion, which left me little time to implement some of the suggestions with my client as well as no time to report back to the group whether or not they were successful. More time would be my only suggestion to make this process better. Sessions themselves were very effective.

Field Note Sample (Written During Timeline #2):

It appears that Amy is the main participant who is struggling with using the SRTS model. While I have given some probes to try and get at what the issue is, it seems that she continues to give a straight “just don’t like it” type of response. I really wish that I could figure out what it is? Is it her, her peers, the supervision? Not sure.

Reflective Journal (Written During Timeline #2):

Since the majority of the participants seem to be liking/getting something out of the SRTS model, it would be easy for me to ignore any evidence to the contrary of my bias...my bias says this is a really good group supervision model to use, and I would use this one over any of the others I have seen/studied.

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