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Supervisors' Experiences of Providing Difficult Feedback in Cross-Ethnic/Racial Supervision

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Abstract

Seventeen clinical supervisors were interviewed regarding their experience of providing difficult feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision, and their responses were analyzed using consensual qualitative research (CQR).

European American supervisors described supervisees of color who had difficulty in their clinical work with culturally different clients. These supervisors then shared with supervisees their concern that supervisees' interpersonal skills may negatively affect their clinical and/or supervision work. Supervisors of color described European American supervisees who exhibited insensitivity toward clients of color in session or during supervision. These supervisors shared their concern that supervisees' lack of cultural sensitivity may negatively affect their clinical work. These contrasting feedback experiences had a profound effect on supervisory relationships and the processes within supervision.

Keywords

Feedback in supervision is considered essential to the process of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). In fact, feedback is perhaps the best way for supervisors to provide guidance for supervisees (Hoffman, Hill, Holmes, & Freitas, 2005), for feedback is often used to address a specific training goal or concern. For example, a supervisee may want to improve his or her responsiveness to a client's cultural background, and supervision feedback can help supervisees understand how to be more responsive. Despite the important role of supervisory feedback, many supervisors are hesitant to provide feedback, especially difficult feedback, because such comments are often emotionally laden for both supervisee and supervisor or may address personality or personal concerns, which may cause supervisees to wonder if the feedback is even relevant to supervision (Hoffman et al., 2005; Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). Furthermore, the presence of multicultural concerns or cultural difference between supervisee and supervisor introduces another layer of complexity to the feedback process, for supervisors and supervisees often feel quite cautious when such topics are broached in or when such cultural differences are present during supervision (Burkard et al., 2006; Burkard, Knox, Hess, & Schultz, 2009). For instance, supervisors or supervisees may hold certain cultural values as important, but these values may conflict with their responsibility to provide psychological treatment that is in the best interest of the client. In such situations, supervisors may find feedback difficult to provide because of their commitment to respecting clients' cultural values while also trying to maintain the ethics of their profession (Mintz & Bieschke, 2009).

Despite the theoretical importance of feedback in supervision, there is a surprising paucity of empirical literature in this area, particularly regarding difficult feedback. Furthermore, neither feedback nor difficult feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision has been a focus of empirical investigation. Examining how difficult feedback events are influenced by discussions of multicultural issues or cultural differences between supervisors and supervisees will further our understanding of cross-ethnic/racial supervision. This current study, then, sought to examine supervisors' experiences of providing difficult feedback when supervisors and supervisees were of different cultural (i.e., racial, ethnic) backgrounds as they addressed multicultural concerns in supervision. For this study, we use Hoffman's et al. (2005) definition of difficult feedback as any feedback given reluctantly or hesitantly by a supervisor to a supervisee during the process of supervision.

Feedback

Definitions

Broadly defined, feedback is any information that one person provides to another person, generally regarding task performance relative to a goal or standard (Claiborn, Goodyear, & Horner, 2001). Feedback can be viewed as either linear (e.g., originating from supervisor to supervisee) or as interactional (e.g., continuous and ongoing between supervisor and supervisee) (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Dewald, 1997). Additionally, feedback can also be defined as either formative or summative (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Formative feedback is ongoing and

identifies specific aspects of performance that are strong and those that need to improve, whereas summative feedback focuses more on global themes and patterns of performance and is often provided through formal evaluation procedures (Claiborn et al., 2001). Feedback has also been defined as positive (e.g., affirming that a supervisee is "on track") or as corrective/challenging (e.g., noting that a supervisee is "off track") (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Hoffman et al., 2005). According to Stoltenberg, McNeill, and Delworth (1998), both types of feedback (i.e., positive and corrective/challenging) are important throughout counselor development, with novice counselors needing more positive feedback and advanced supervisees (e.g., predoctoral interns, postdoctorates) needing a balance of both positive and corrective feedback.

Research on Supervisory Feedback

Research on supervisory feedback indicates that most feedback is global and positive (Daniels & Larson, 2001; Hoffman et al., 2005) and usually focuses on client concerns (Friedlander, Siegel, & Brenock, 1989; Hoffman et al., 2005). Perhaps this tendency to provide largely positive feedback stems from the belief that such feedback will increase supervisee self-efficacy and reduce anxiety, a perspective supported by research (Daniels & Larson, 2001). When supervisees reflect on feedback provided by supervisors, they identify the quality and quantity of feedback as essential to their learning and the process of supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Furthermore, supervisees who are dissatisfied with supervision often report the lack of feedback from their supervisors as a key factor in their frustration (Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996). Interestingly, when the supervisory relationship is strained, Lehrman-Waterman and Ladany (2001) found that providing feedback helped supervisors improve their relationship with supervisees, perhaps an indication that feedback can serve as a bridge to difficult supervision circumstances. Although, supervisors also noted those supervisees' defensive reactions to specific feedback and overall evaluation anxiety as contributing factors to conflict in supervision (Nelson, Barnes, Evans, & Triggiano, 2008).

As a more specific type of supervision feedback experience, corrective feedback has been found to increase supervisee anxiety, although supervisee performance is actually enhanced in subsequent sessions with clients (Daniels & Larson, 2001). Despite the positive gains in supervisee performance, the intense anxiety that supervisees experience after corrective feedback has been linked to their use of impression management strategies during supervision such as presentation of their best tapes of counseling sessions or focusing on their successes in counseling rather than areas where they struggle (Rønnestad & Skovholt, 1993) and interpersonal conflict with supervisors (Nelson et al., 2008). Such tactics in and difficulties with supervision can derail supervisees' focus on skill development or client care and possibly lead to impasses in supervision relationships because supervisees are perceived as disingenuous in supervision (Mueller & Kell, 1972). Not surprisingly, supervisors have found it easier to provide feedback when supervisees are open, receptive, and eager to learn rather than when supervisees are defensive, uncomfortable, or embarrassed by the feedback. Specifically, when feedback was given under these difficult circumstances, supervisors felt the supervisory relationship promoted little professional growth in supervisees (Hoffman et al., 2005).

In sum, supervisors often view feedback as a chance to communicate whether a supervisee's behavior was on target and as either progressing toward competence or diverging in an inappropriate direction (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009). Yet given the complexity of supervision, the supervision relationship, and the emotional responses that feedback can elicit among supervisees, it is not surprising that 98% of supervisors admit withholding feedback, especially corrective feedback, from supervisees at some point in time (Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). One possible explanation for such reticence is that corrective feedback is difficult for supervisors to provide.

Corrective Feedback as Difficult Feedback in Supervision

According to Weisinger (1989), supervisor reticence in providing corrective feedback is a significant problem. While corrective feedback is often intended as educational and motivational, the potentially emotional-laden discussions either preceding or following the feedback leaves supervisors hesitant to deliver it (Chur-Hansen & McLean, 2006; Ilgen, Mitchell, & Fredrickson, 1981; Ladany & Melincoff, 1999). Supervisors also report reluctance to provide corrective feedback because they fear that processing the feedback would cross the boundary between supervision and therapy or that the feedback might reflect the supervisors' personal agenda (Hoffman et al., 2005). Furthermore, supervisors who viewed the supervision relationship as strained were hesitant to provide corrective feedback for fear that it would worsen an already weak bond (Hoffman et al., 2005). Relatedly, both supervisors and supervisees reported experiencing discomfort with evaluation and corrective feedback, rendering them difficult topics to address in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009).

As noted, corrective feedback may be difficult to provide because it can extend beyond clinical problems to include personal concerns or problems in the supervisory relationship (Hoffman et al., 2005). Although the supervisors' goal may be to assist their supervisee with professional and personal concerns, supervisees often react negatively, including not viewing the concerns as problematic, becoming defensive, and refusing to discuss the feedback (Hoffman et al., 2005). In these circumstances, there is often little consensus between supervisors and supervisees about feedback, conditions in which supervisors typically use subtle approaches in guiding supervisees. For instance, supervisors often progress from using leading questions to direct a supervisee to using more confrontive strategies, such as providing directives to supervisees (Ratliff, Wampler, & Morris, 2000). If the goal of the supervisor feedback is to develop supervisor and supervisee consensus about a supervisee concern, supervisors may want to consider the nature of the feedback as well as the goal of the feedback.

Despite the apparent discomfort elicited by difficult feedback, there is also evidence that supervisees desire corrective feedback (Chur-Hansen & McLean, 2006; Daniels & Larson, 2001; Heckman-Stone, 2003; Hoffman et al., 2005; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979). In studies of supervisee preferences with respect to supervision, supervisees report that they prefer specific and critical feedback about their performance (Carifio & Hess, 1987; Kadushin, 1992; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979), but there is concern that supervisees actually receive little supervisory feedback during the process of supervision (Friedlander et al., 1989; Kadushin, 1992). Unfortunately, this lack of supervisor feedback appears to also lead to supervisees' diminished feelings regarding the value of supervision (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001). Relatedly, Chur-Hansen and McLean (2006) found that supervisees reported having supervisors who wanted to be nice rather than frank and honest, but these supervisees defined a good supervisor as someone who did not feel bad providing corrective feedback. It appears that supervisors are reluctant to traverse the murky waters of corrective feedback and find it difficult to provide, despite the critical role of such feedback in supervisee development.

Difficult Feedback in Cross-Ethnic/Racial Supervision

As indicated above, corrective feedback may create discomfort for both supervisors and supervisees and is often difficult to provide. Specific to cross-ethnic/racial supervision relationships, corrective feedback concerning multicultural topics or events in supervision may be particularly difficult to provide when supervisors have not previously addressed attitudes, beliefs, values, biases, or stereotypes (Burkard et al., 2006). For example, pointing out to supervisees that they have not sufficiently incorporated cultural identity into client conceptualizations might be difficult for supervisors who have previously avoided addressing the role of culture in both therapeutic and supervision relationships or lacked training in this area. Additionally, differences between the cultural values of clients, supervisees, or supervisors can create confusion in regards to which value system is important and even ethical to follow for appropriate client care, creating a training dilemma that may be difficult to reconcile in supervision (Mintz & Bieschke, 2009). As such, this training dilemma may make some feedback particularly difficult to provide in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. Constantine and Sue

(2007) acknowledge that some supervisors may fear providing feedback to supervisees because of concerns about being viewed as a racist. Unfortunately, little research has been conducted regarding how supervisors experience difficult feedback, more specifically the delivery of difficult feedback in the context of cross-ethnic/racial supervision relationships. Such research is essential to helping supervisors understand how to provide feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision, particularly feedback that is intended to address multicultural concerns.

Purpose of the Study

Given the importance of providing culturally competent services (Pope-Davis & Coleman, 1997; Sue & Sue, 2007) and the integral role of feedback in supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009), the time has come to examine the delivery of feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. Previous research (Hoffman et al., 2005) has investigated supervisor experiences in providing easy, difficult, or no feedback to supervisees; the current study extends this research by focusing on difficult feedback within cross-ethnic/racial supervision relationships when multicultural topics or events were the focus in supervision. This research will shed light on the factors that contribute to difficult feedback experiences, an important area of investigation in the profession's continuing efforts to enhance the cross-ethnic/racial supervision process.

Method

Participants

Supervisors
Participants were 17 supervisors (14 psychologists, 3 postinternship/all-but-dissertation graduate students; 10 counseling psychology, 7 clinical psychology) geographically dispersed across the United States. Twelve were women and 5 were men, and they ranged in age from 28 to 53 years (M = 40.12, SD = 8.37). Nine participants identified as European American, 3 as African American, 2 as Asian American, 1 as Biracial, 1 as international, and 1 as Latina. Participants indicated having worked with 3 to 125 (M = 21.71, SD = 29.56) supervisees and stated that between 1 and 63 (M = 13.06, SD = 16.84) of these supervisees were culturally different from themselves. Using a scale from 1 (*very uncomfortable*) to 7 (*very comfortable*), participants had a mean rating of 4.53 (SD = 1.37) for overall comfort in providing difficult feedback to supervisees and a mean rating of 4.35 (SD = 1.37) for their comfort in providing difficult feedback to culturally different supervisees.

Interviewers and auditors
The research team consisted of a 49-year-old European American male faculty member; a 47-year-old European American female faculty member; a 33-year-old Black, West Indian female graduate student; and a 33-year-old European American male graduate student. All team members served as interviewers and judges for the data analysis. A 46-year-old Asian female faculty member served as the auditor for all phases of the project. The two faculty team members and the auditor were experienced CQR researchers and interviewers.

Interviewer and auditor biases
Each team member documented and discussed his or her beliefs, experiences, and biases with regard to the focus of the study. Three authors described their experiences with cross-ethnic/racial and multicultural supervision as very positive and growth-producing, one as mixed, and another had no such experiences. Two authors worried that some supervisors may treat cultural concerns in supervision with superficiality, and all team members agreed that difficult supervision feedback should be provided in the context of a supportive supervision relationship. Two authors acknowledged that providing such feedback may be more difficult if the supervisor is uncomfortable with cultural concerns. Four authors acknowledged having difficult feedback experiences in supervision as supervisees that were growth-producing, although one team member

acknowledged that these experiences caused feelings of embarrassment. Finally, three researchers reported having experiences with difficult feedback in cross-ethnic/racial and multicultural supervision as supervisees. These feedback experiences were growth-producing, particularly when the supervisor was specific with his or her feedback.

Measures

Demographic form
Participants completed a demographic form with open-ended questions that asked for the following information: age, sex, race/ethnicity, degree program (i.e., PhD, PsyD), level of training, area of specialization (i.e., clinical psychology, counseling psychology, other), total number of trainees supervised, and total number of trainees supervised who were culturally different from participant. Participants also rated their comfort level in providing difficult feedback to supervisees overall and to supervisees who are culturally different from themselves (1 = *very uncomfortable*, 7 = *very comfortable*).

Interview protocol
The research team developed a semistructured interview protocol to facilitate participant discussion of an experience providing difficult feedback when cultural concerns were a topic of discussion during supervision of a supervisee who was culturally different from the participant. Pilot interviews were conducted by each team member to further develop the content and clarity of interview questions. The questions were modified based on the feedback acquired from these pilot interviews. The protocol began with opening and contextual questions regarding how culture influenced supervision experiences and the types of supervisory feedback supervisors considered difficult to provide in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. The next section focused on a difficult feedback event in cross-ethnic/racial supervision when multicultural concerns were the focus, addressing events prior to the feedback, the feedback itself, and the effect of the feedback on supervision and the supervisory relationship (see the appendix for the complete interview protocol). Interviewers also used probes to clarify information or encourage participants' elaboration of responses. Each participant also completed a follow-up interview 1 to 2 weeks after the initial interview. The second interview afforded the researcher an opportunity to clarify information gathered from the first interview, elaborate on new ideas or information, and explore participant reactions to the initial interview.

Procedures for Data Collection

Recruitment of participants (ie., supervisors)
The webmasters of the Association of Psychology Postdoctoral and Internship Center and the South Asian Psychological Networking Association listservs provided the first author permission to post an announcement and invitation for participation in this study. The listserv announcement provided a description of the study, criteria for participation, and researcher contact information. These recruitment efforts resulted in 14 potential participants. Based on prior qualitative research recruitment experiences of participants to multicultural studies, the research team anticipated that initial recruitment efforts through the listservs may not yield a complete sample, and we planned to use snowballing to obtain the final participants. This strategy yielded an additional nine potential participants. To meet the criteria for participation, supervisors must have attended an APA-accredited counseling psychology or clinical psychology program, be postdoctoral or be engaged in their predoctoral internship, and have provided difficult feedback (feedback given reluctantly or hesitantly to a supervisee during to a culturally different supervisee within the past 2 years). The supervision had to have lasted for at least one academic semester, supervisee and supervisor had to have met weekly for at least 1 hour per week, and the supervisee had to be a master's- or doctoral-level student involved in a practicum or internship setting. Although 23 potential participants expressed interest to the researchers, 17 supervisors (8 from listservs, 9 from snowballing) returned the completed demographic form and informed consent letters. Once all

materials were received from participants, they were contacted by a team member to arrange telephone interviews.

Interviews
Interviews were assigned to researchers on a rotating basis, and each interviewer completed four or five interviews. Both initial and follow-up interviews of a participant were completed by the same researcher. The first interviews lasted 45 to 60 minutes, and the follow-up interviews lasted 10 to 20 minutes.

Transcription
Each interview was transcribed verbatim, although minimal encouragers and other nonlanguage utterances were excluded. Personally identifying information was deleted, and each transcript was assigned a code number to protect confidentiality.

Procedures for Data Analysis

Consensual qualitative research (CQR; Hill et al., 2005; Hill, Thompson, & Williams, 1997) was used to analyze the data. All decisions regarding the data are made by consensus. The procedures include identification of domains, coding data into domains, development of core ideas based on the data in each domain for each individual case, and creation of a cross-analysis that consists of all data from all cases for each domain. In addition to the research teams' review of data, the auditor also reviewed all domains, cores ideas, and the cross-analysis. The auditor's suggested revisions were then discussed by the team, who reached consensus regarding any changes to the analysis.

The research team also noted the possible influence power differentials between team members may have on the final data analysis. To address these concerns, we noted places these differences may have influenced the data analysis and discussed to consensus how these influences may have influenced the preliminary findings. As a consequence of this review, the team determined three potential areas of concern and thus revisited the preliminary analysis to determine if power had influenced the analysis. Additionally, the team asked the auditor to review those sections to determine if power differentials between team members may have adversely influenced the data analysis. In one category, a minor modification was made to the final data analysis.

Finally, after the cross-analysis was completed, the research team noted a high degree of variability in this analysis; however, when subsamples were formed for European American supervisors and supervisors of color, the variability was reduced in the final results. Differences between dominant culture and nondominant cultural groups is not unusual in CQR research (e.g., Hill et al., 2003) and specifically clinical supervision research (e.g., Burkard et al., 2006; Burkard et al., 2009), and subsample analysis is increasingly being used in CQR research when such subsample differences emerge to further understand the results (Ladany, Thompson, & Hill, 2011, see pp. 125-127 for a complete description of this CQR analytic method). Ladany et al. specifically recommend that at least one frequency category difference emerge (e.g., general vs. typical) in the findings to be considered when determining potential subsamples, a recommendation this research team adopted for this data analysis. It is important to note that of 26 total categories in the final analysis, 21 subsample differences were found. The final results after the subsample analysis are provided below.

Results

The results for participants' specific Difficult Feedback Events (DFE) in cross-ethnic/racial supervision are presented below. For the following results, the domains, category, and frequencies are presented for European American supervisors (EASR) (general = 8 to 9, typical = 5 to 7, variant = 2 to 4 participants) and for supervisors of color (SRC) (general = 7 to 8, typical = 5 to 6, variant = 2 to 4 participants) as well as illustrative quotes of each

category or subcategory. We chose to present EASR and SRC findings separately because the data analysis yielded a clear pattern of responses that could be differentiated by these two groups of supervisors.

Specific Difficult Feedback Event

In discussing their specific difficult feedback event, EASRs described events that occurred with supervisees of color (3 African Americans, 1 Asian American, 2 Asians of international origin, 1 Middle Eastern, and 2 Latina), and SRCs described events that occurred with 6 European American supervisees and 1 supervisee of Middle Eastern descent.

Pre-Event Conditions

Relationship with supervisee prior to difficult feedback

In the only typical category that emerged in this section, EASRs reported a predominately problematic relationship with supervisees prior to the difficult feedback event. For instance, one supervisor indicated feeling a great deal of excitement about working in cross-cultural supervision with his African American supervisee but stated, "We got off to a poor start . . . because she had no goals for supervision, and she [supervisee] was polite but very cautious and guarded." Variantly, EASRs reported predominately close/collegial relationships with SEs, with a participant indicating, "We had a good relationship, and I had nothing but good feelings with her. We just worked well together."

In regards to SRCs' experiences, they variantly indicated that relationships with SEs were predominately problematic, with one participant stating, "He [supervisee] did not seem very comfortable with me. There was a large personality difference between us, and our relationship was task-oriented, not much casual chatting outside of supervision." SRCs also variantly suggested that they had predominately close/collegial relationships with SEs. As one participant shared, "We had a good, smooth-rolling relationship. We shared a common theoretical orientation which made it pretty easy to talk."

Multicultural discussions prior to difficult feedback

How culture affects work with clients was a typical focus of supervision for both EASRs and SRCs. As one EASR reported, "Multicultural discussions were prevalent early in our supervision relationship particularly as it related to my supervisee's work with clients. These early discussions seemed to create permission for my supervisee to talk about cultural issues at any time during supervision." Similarly, one SRC indicated, "I tried to help my supervisee understand clients' cultural dynamics as well as the values and belief systems of the population with which he was working." Typically, EASRs also reported that they and their supervisees discussed the cultural differences between themselves and the effect of these differences on their supervision relationship. As one supervisor stated, "I introduced myself to my supervisee and offered information to him on my history, family, how I got into the profession, and how my cultural background manifests itself in my theoretical orientation and professional identity. I invited my supervisee to do the same so that we would have a better understanding of how culture influences our work in supervision." SRCs variantly indicated discussing such cultural differences. As one SRCs reported, "I addressed the cultural differences between her [supervisee] and myself. I usually say 'there may be times where we might not get each other, and I hope you may be open to processing through those struggles.'"

Stimulus for supervisor difficult feedback

EASRs generally noted that supervisees were struggling to engage with their culturally different clients. For instance, a supervisor commented that her Latina supervisee was struggling to connect and understand her White, female client who came from a financially privileged background. The supervisor elaborated, "My supervisee questioned whether she had a good working alliance with her client, and asked a lot of questions about what she should do in session with this client. It really took her [supervisee] awhile to see the struggles

this 'privileged' client was having even though the client had an abuse history and an alcoholic parent." SRCs variantly noted such concerns, with one supervisor stating, "One of my supervisee's clients was biracial, the client was talking a lot about seeing herself as White growing up but after reconnecting with her Latino father she was re-examining her identity. My supervisee was really struggling to connect with this client, but was not seeing the importance of her [client] identity struggle and the need to explore what being part Latina may mean to her."

In a category that did not emerge for EASRs, SRCs typically revealed their supervisees were exhibiting some concerning attitudes and/or behaviors regarding cultural concerns associated with client care prior to the difficult feedback. To illustrate, a supervisee was querying a White female supervisee about the ethnic identity of a client, and the supervisee expressed hating discussions of multicultural topics because she felt labeled as a racist. The SRC stated, "She [supervisee] became very defensive in any multicultural discussions, and resisted discussing any cultural concerns even though these issues may be appropriate to address with clients." Another SRC shared that a White supervisee became very angry with a White client who disclosed having a problem being around Black staff members in a shelter, the supervisee expressed strong emotional reactions (e.g., anger, outrage) to the client's expressions of prejudice, and the supervisee broke the client's confidentiality to share the information with a Black staff member. The supervisor stated, "I felt really puzzled and unsure whether to start with the fact the supervisee inappropriately broke client confidentiality or to discuss her [supervisee] rather strong emotional reactions to the client's expression of prejudice."

Finally, both EASRs and SRCs variantly reported that supervisees had difficulty with cultural concerns during supervision. One EASR stated, "My supervisee was willing to talk about himself, but often struggled to talk about client concerns and particularly cultural issues in supervision. I would often invite him to talk about his clients and how culture influenced his conceptualizations, but he was very cautious and tentative in anything he shared." Similarly, an SRC declared, "We were talking about a cultural concern related to client work, and I had pressed her [supervisee] to explore what these issues may have meant to her. She initially just froze up. I did try to process what was happening for her, and she was eventually able to share the question was difficult for her and that she was struggling to talk about the cultural aspects of the problem."

Difficult Feedback Event

Content of difficult feedback
EASRs variantly indicated that feedback was difficult to provide when they expressed concern to the supervisees that their lack of sensitivity to cultural issues was negatively affecting their clinical work. To illustrate, an EASR indicated, "I told him [supervisee] that he was not integrating culture into his work with clients, such as conceptualizations, treatment plans, or even in work with clients. I provided him with a specific example of how he could integrate culture into work with a client, and pointed to where he had not done so in a client session." This category was also generally reported by SRCs. For example, one SRC was working with a White supervisee who was not integrating cultural concerns in the conceptualizations of her clients, so the supervisor attempted to facilitate such discussions by asking the supervisee about how cultural concerns may be influencing one specific case where she was working with a client of color and the supervisor directly asked the supervisee to conceptualize the case using ethnic and racial identity theory. As result of the supervisee's unwillingness to discuss how culture may be influencing the case and to examine her reasons for resisting such discussions, the supervisor stated, "I believe your unwillingness to examine how culture influences this client's life negates the importance of culture and this client's cultural identity. You seem closed to other's cultural views, which I feel will hurt your counseling and may also hinder your ability to connect to a whole group of clients professionally."

In a category that did not emerge for SRCs, EASRs typically reported expressing concern to supervisees that their interpersonal skills were negatively affecting their clinical or supervision work. In one case, a supervisor had

observed an African American supervisee being directive in counseling with several clients, and the supervisor worked with the supervisee to integrate more nondirective counseling strategies. After several attempts to help the supervisee, the supervisor told the supervisee, "It is important that you stop being so directive in counseling and work on reflecting content and affect rather than advising clients what to do." Another EASR expressed to a Latina supervisee that she came across in group supervision discussions as unassertive and overly quiet and concrete in her presentation of client cases. The supervisor also commented, "I hope you will not internalize this feedback, for I am concerned this feedback will keep you from becoming more assertive because you feel watched and judged."

Goal of difficult feedback
Typically for EASRs and generally for SRCs, the goal of the feedback was to facilitate their supervisees' self-reflection and to open a discussion about their multicultural awareness and knowledge. One EASR indicated that "it was important for my supervisee to consider their cultural view and expectations of their client, how the client's cultural perspective may influence their [sic] perception of the supervisee, and how these different perspectives may affect each of their [client and supervisee] approaches to counseling." Similarly, one SRC stated, "I wanted my supervisee to realize that we all have gut reactions to events in therapy, and that it is important to examine these initial reactions for biases or other culture assumptions."

Additionally, EASRs also typically sought to improve their supervisee's skills when working with culturally diverse clients. As one supervisor stated, "I wanted to clear a barrier for my supervisee and help her understand that her approach to counseling may be getting in the way of helping kids." EASRs also variantly sought to support their SEs. An EASR indicated, "I wanted to free up my supervisee, and help her realize that she had much to offer to clients."

Why feedback was difficult to provide to supervisee
Generally, EASRs and SRCs reported concern about imposing their own culture in providing the feedback when considering why the feedback was difficult to provide. For instance, an EASR commented, "I had a hard time drawing the line between a supervisee who was practicing from a certain cultural perspective and if there are basic counseling skills a supervisee should have. I wondered if my feedback on counseling skills to the supervisee [of color] may have been based more on White cultural values." Similarly, an SRC indicated, "I have not had to provide this kind of feedback to a supervisee of color, and I felt that he [European American supervisee] had such a different worldview then I, and that I was almost imposing my own perspective onto him."

EASRs were typically afraid their difficult feedback may be hurtful to the supervisee, while this concern emerged on a variant basis for SRCs. As one EASR stated, "the supervisee felt fragile to me, and as I provided the feedback the supervisee looked like he felt mistreated and betrayed." An SRC declared, "I felt like I was in edgy territory with my supervisee. I was afraid to hurt him and felt kind of protective. I was really uncertain how he would take the feedback."

Consequences of the Feedback Event

Supervisee reactions to difficult feedback
Supervisee reactions to the feedback varied, and EASRs typically indicated that supervisees seemed to also initially experience discomfort with the feedback, but they eventually became more engaged in supervision. One supervisor acknowledged his supervisee did not understand his feedback on her direct counseling style, but over time the supervisee expressed "feeling hopeful about her ability to make the necessary changes," and she [supervisee] commented, "I'll do what I can to make this happen." SRCs acknowledged such experiences on a variant basis, with one SRC commenting, "She [supervisee] initially indicated that she had taken a class and knew all of the theories (i.e., racial identity). She did seem nervous and she did not initially respond much to the

feedback [on failing to address racial identity issues], but eventually she seemed to come around. She became more engaged, trusted herself more, and eventually expressed that she was focused on herself and her own embarrassment."

While EASRs variantly felt their supervisees reacted negatively, became defensive about the feedback, and questioned the participating supervisor, SRCs indicated this negative reaction was typical of their experience. For instance, one EASR stated, "She [supervisee] was defensive, angry, guarded, and rolled her eyes when I provided the feedback. She wanted to move on even though we needed to talk about the feedback. She even sarcastically indicated that she would be happy to be more attentive to culture in her work with clients." As another example, a SRC reported a supervisee commented, "Here we go again, people are calling me racist because I don't believe in these models [multicultural counseling] that everyone else supports." The supervisor went to say, "She became very defensive, clammed up and became more entrenched in her perspective, and expressed to me that I was not being accepting of her views."

Effect of difficult feedback on supervision
The difficult feedback appeared to have several effects on the supervision relationship. For instance, EASRs typically indicated their relationships became more mutual and open. As one supervisor stated, "the feedback became the turning for our relationship, the relationship became less strained, and the supervisee became more engaged, invested, and personally involved in the process." SRCs experienced this reaction on a variant basis, and as one supervisor stated, "The feedback seemed to open up a whole different area of our supervision relationship. We learned more about each our personal lives and she [supervisee] asked for advice on career goals, professional issues, and of course clinical cases. She was also more willing to look at how race and culture may be influencing her clinical work. The feedback allowed her to experience clinical supervision rather than administrative supervision."

In a second reaction, EASRs variantly reported that an impasse emerged in the supervision relationship. As one EASR declared, "My supervisee pulled back in discussions about cultural issues and generally in supervision. We eventually became focused on tasks related to cases, and we stopped doing any process-oriented work in supervision." SRCs typically reported such impasses emerging in the supervision relationship. One SRC commented, "My supervisee avoided talking about multicultural concerns, became more closed off nonverbally by shaking her head and tightly crossing her arms during supervision, and avoided any attempt to process through the rupture."

The DFE also affected the process and content of supervision, with EASRs generally and SRCs typically discussing the feedback with their supervisee in more depth. More specifically, EASRs typically helped their supervisees examine the relationship between multicultural topics/concerns and the difficult feedback. For example, a supervisor reported, "After the feedback, we [supervisor and supervisee] spent the rest of the session talking about cultural differences between my supervisee and her client, and how these cultural differences may be affecting the therapeutic relationship, in addition to our own supervision relationship."

Supervisors also processed the reasons for providing the feedback. As an example, EASRs variantly offered such opportunities, with one supervisor reporting, "I provided some specific examples of her [supervisee] skill deficits and indicated that I offered the feedback to help her make improvements in her ability to connect to clients. I also suggested that all she needed to do is translate what she does in supervision to what she does in session." SRCs typically afforded supervisees this opportunity, and as one supervisor stated, "We [supervisee and supervisor] discussed how the whole situation and the feedback had been triggered by her [supervisee] perceptions of race, and I explained that I thought it was important that she [supervisee] examine her biases against people who say racist things because it [biases] seemed to be affecting her judgment and her ability to 'step back' from the situation."

Finally, both EASRs and SRCs variantly addressed the supervisee/supervisor reactions to the difficult feedback. One EASR stated, "We [supervisor and supervisee] talked about whether the feedback was accurate for her. She was initially defensive, but as we worked through the feedback she begin to notice a positive difference in her work with her clients. She eventually commented the feedback helped her to focus less on herself and more on her client." Similarly, an SRC declared, "She [supervisee] acknowledged feeling ambushed by the feedback and that her opinion did not matter because of the power differential (i.e., supervisor's experience as a person of color trumped whatever she had to say). I shared how difficult it was for me to have my experience discounted as a human being, and wondered what it would take for her to feel safe enough to work through this issue."

Supervisor's reactions to difficult feedback event
EASRs typically reported they felt uncomfortable delivering the difficult feedback, a category that did not emerge for SRCs. As an example, one EASR indicated, "The feedback felt very risky for me. Here I was, a White man providing feedback to a supervisee of color about integrating culture into their [sic] work with clients who were from the same country as the supervisee. It felt very uncomfortable."

EASRs variantly and SRCs typically felt uncomfortable with or disturbed by their supervisees' reactions to the feedback. As one EASR reported, "I was irritated and disappointed that she [supervisee] indicated there was nothing that I could do that would counter her past experiences with Whites." As another example, a SRC stated, "I was taken aback by my supervisee's challenge of my experience as a woman of color, and considered it hurtful and I struggled to understand her [supervisee] unwillingness to consider the importance of culture in working with clients of color."

Discussion
Overall, these difficult feedback events in cross-ethnic/racial supervision appeared to have powerful effects for our participants. Although EASRs and SRCs shared some common experiences when providing difficult feedback (e.g., prior to the feedback, supervision relationships were problematic as often as they were close, most supervisors had discussed multicultural issues with supervisees prior to the feedback, the goal of the feedback was to facilitate supervisee self-reflection), they differed markedly with regard to the precipitating event, the content of the supervisory feedback, the reasons that the feedback was difficult to provide, their supervisees' reactions to the difficult feedback, and the effect of the event on the supervision relationship and process. The findings suggest, then, that such events followed quite different patterns for these participants: For EASRs, the feedback commonly led to positive outcomes; in contrast, the events for SRCs ended poorly. We now elaborate further on these findings.

Pre-Event Conditions
Although it seemed reasonable that the supervision relationship prior to the feedback event may somehow be related to, influence, or provide some context for providing difficult feedback to supervisees by EASRs and SRCs, our findings did not support this position. As such, a fairly equal number of EASRs and SRCs described their prefeedback supervision relationships as problematic, while others noted that the relationships were close. Furthermore, the quality of the supervision relationships prior to the difficult feedback event did not correspond to the quality of the supervision relationships in any discernable pattern after the event. These findings are not consistent with prior research. For instance, Hoffman et al. (2005) found that strong supervision relationships facilitated the provision of difficult feedback, while weak relationships hindered such feedback, indicating that the supervision relationship was an important factor that contributed to the difficult feedback experience. Interestingly, other research suggests that problems in a supervision relationship have often elicited more feedback from supervisors (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001), which may be an indication that feedback can be used to address important concerns in a supervision relationship eventually shaping the nature of this

relationship. Our findings appear to parallel these later results, for it appears that difficult feedback involving cultural concerns in cross-ethnic/racial supervision may influence the later development of the supervision relationship. In this sense, quality of the supervision relationship emerges after the feedback, rather than preceding the feedback. Perhaps the quality of a cross-ethnic/racial supervision relationship is not determined before being tested by a challenging event, such as difficult multicultural feedback.

We also believed that discussions of multicultural concerns prior to providing difficult feedback may provide an important context for the later difficult feedback events in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. By and large, both EASRs and SRCs discussed how culture influenced supervisees' client work, and they discussed the cultural differences between them, an indication that supervisors were aware of and sensitive to the importance of cultural issues in both clinical and supervision work. However, these early multicultural discussions were not associated with nor seemed to influence the feedback event or the consequences of the difficult feedback. Here again, these findings are puzzling, for prior research suggests that discussions of multicultural issues in cross-ethnic/racial supervision are important to establishing a productive process in supervision (Burkard et al., 2006). Given that the process of supervision and the relationship often changed dramatically after the difficult feedback events for both EASRs and SRCs, it may be these feedback events were turning points in the supervision process that altered the very nature of the supervision experiences, regardless of prior multicultural discussions.

Difficult Feedback Event

With the goal of facilitating supervisee self-reflection, stimulating an open discussion of cultural concerns associated with client care, improving supervisee skills, or supporting supervisees, EASRs offered feedback that supervisees' interpersonal skills were negatively affecting their clinical and/or supervision work; in a few cases, supervisors also expressed concern about supervisees' lack of sensitivity to cultural concerns. As such, EASRs called into question how their supervisees were connecting with their culturally diverse clients, and in doing so most often identified specific counseling skills of concern. Such feedback is consistent with supervisees' expectations, for they desire feedback that is about their skills, that is clear and specific, and that relates to their work with clients (Carifio & Hess, 1987; Kadushin, 1992; Worthington & Roehlke, 1979). EASRs appeared to meet these expectations and offered feedback that was specific, clear, and based on examples from supervisees' clinical work with culturally different clients, all factors important to a constructive feedback experience (Bernard & Goodyear, 2009) and to addressing feedback in potentially conflicted supervision circumstances (Nelson et al., 2008).

Regardless of the ultimate effectiveness of the feedback, its delivery was difficult when EASRs feared imposing their own cultural perspectives or feared that it would be hurtful to their supervisees, perhaps creating some internal conflict within supervisors. They wondered, for example, whether they had crossed a boundary by asking supervisees to correct a style of communicating or counseling that may be an important aspect of supervisees' cultural heritage and personality (e.g., asking supervisees to be less direct, provide less advice, or listen more and talk less with clients). Perhaps such questions by EASRs reflects a lack of confidence in understanding culture in such circumstances, which may be an indication that they continue to struggle with the meaning of culture during interpersonal communication. Such internal struggling also arose for supervisors in Hoffman et al.'s (2005) study, for they reported a concern about crossing a boundary with their supervisees when generally providing difficult feedback in supervision. Allowing for these internal dialogues in such difficult situations may be important for supervisors, for Nelson et al. (2008) found that experienced supervisors mentally talk themselves through such situations in order to address any potential conflict. They labeled this process as self-coaching, and supervisors found this skill important to recognizing their own limitations, accepting these concerns, and finding ways to address the issues.

SRCs, in comparison, shared with supervisees their concern that the latter's' lack of sensitivity to cultural issues was negatively affecting their clinical work. With this feedback, supervisors sought to facilitate supervisees' self-reflection and encourage open discussion during supervision of cultural concerns associated with client care, for they feared that service to clients may be compromised. This feedback may have challenged supervisees' cultural belief systems, their personal identity, or even their sense of self as a therapist. Such a challenge to one's belief system may perhaps be a reason that past White supervisees reported experiencing considerable discomfort when discussing cultural concerns with culturally diverse supervisors (Utsey, Gernat, & Hammar, 2005).

Similar to the EASRs, SRCs also feared imposing their own cultural values on supervisees, but for quite different reasons. Recall that EASRs were concerned about supervisees' skills and feared imposing their own cultural communication patterns onto supervisees. In contrast, SRCs offered feedback that drew supervisees' attention to their cultural insensitivity in working with clients, which involved focusing on supervisees' inability to empathize with oppression or discrimination, their unwillingness to address or query clients about their cultural background during treatment, or being unaware of the clients' cultural expectations of helpers. Although this feedback would have been important to provide, the feedback was based on an evaluation of what supervisees did not do rather than direct observations of supervisees' skills or examples of client work. As such, it may have been difficult for supervisors of color to be specific or behaviorally anchored in providing feedback about cultural sensitivity, and yet these qualities are important to providing corrective feedback in supervision (Abbott & Lyter, 1998; Nelson et al., 2008). Relatedly, SRCs often talked about the great differences between their own worldview as a person of color and that of their supervisees, who were predominately White. SRCs seemed abundantly clear that these differences in worldview could create a significant barrier in helping supervisees understand and/or accept the feedback.

Consequences of the DFE

EASRs' supervisees were initially uncomfortable with the corrective feedback about cultural topics but later actually became more engaged in supervision, perhaps because they gradually saw the relevance of the feedback. Such a change may have arisen because EASRs and their supervisees discussed the feedback in more depth (e.g., how cultural topics and concerns were related to the feedback, the EASR's reasons for the feedback, supervisor and supervisee reactions to the feedback). In these discussions, supervisors often detailed how supervisees' skills may be affecting clients, as well as the connection between cultural issues and supervisees' choice of skills. Several important elements were present in these follow-up discussions: Supervisors provided feedback, they offered support by addressing supervisees' and supervisors' mutual reactions to the feedback, and they explained their reasons for providing the feedback. Prior research suggests that a balance between corrective feedback and support is important to supervisees' eventual receptiveness of feedback (Gross, 2005). In addition, EASRs specifically linked multicultural concerns and the feedback they offered. Given that these White supervisors were willing to openly address cultural concerns in supervision, the supervisees of color may have felt more connected to and understood by their supervisors. Such a finding has been important in prior research to supervisees of color (Burkard et al., 2006; Norton & Coleman, 2003) and to addressing conflict in supervision (Nelson et al., 2008). Our findings extend these prior results and suggest that discussing the relevance of multicultural concerns to supervisory feedback may further supervisees' acceptance of feedback.

EASRs' perception that supervisees initially had difficulty with feedback is not surprising, for supervisees likely required time to reflect on the comments and reconcile whether the feedback fit with their perspectives of themselves. That most supervisees eventually opened up and engaged in supervision suggests that the feedback was helpful, a finding paralleled in other research on difficult or challenging feedback (Hoffman et al., 2005; Ratliff et al., 2000). Furthermore, many EASRs also found the event rewarding.

In contrast to EASRs' supervisees, SRCs' supervisees' reactions to the feedback remained negative. Seeing such reactions, SRCs predominately offered reasons for the feedback and to a lesser extent explained the relationship between cultural concerns and the feedback and addressed supervisor and supervisee reactions to the DFE. Such strategies are consistent with those approaches used by experienced supervisors who successfully addressed conflict in supervision (Nelson et al., 2008) but the same positive outcomes were not achieved by the SRCs in this current study. What supervisees many have been experiencing during the feedback event remains unclear. It is possible that these White supervisees may have felt intimidated by the SRCs' knowledge or competence, or perhaps they felt as if the SRCs were far too focused on cultural concerns in counseling. Although we can only offer conjecture on what the supervisees may have been experiencing, we do know that SRCs worked hard in supervision to help their supervisees understand and integrate the feedback. Furthermore, SRCs' earlier concern for imposing their cultural perspectives onto supervisees may have been affirmed by the supervisees' reactions, for SRCs commented that supervisees often became more entrenched in their own view of the client situation rather than considering the viability of the supervisors' feedback. Such reactions are not surprising, for prior research on DFEs suggest that supervisees initially react negatively to difficult feedback, evincing defensiveness, rejection of the feedback, and even unwillingness to discuss the feedback (Hoffman et al., 2005; Nelson et al., 2008).

The reasons for White supervisees' reported strong reactions to SRCs' feedback are not clear, but there are a number of possible explanations. Supervisees may have felt judged by SRCs, believed these supervisors were incompetent, or felt that the feedback was incongruent with their views of themselves. Alternatively, perhaps SRCs were working with supervisees who had negative or colorblind attitudes and beliefs about cultural concerns, for several supervisors noted that supervisees actively denied the importance of culture. Any challenge to these beliefs would not likely have been received well by these supervisees.

Given supervisees' negative reactions, the feedback often led to a supervision impasse and only rarely to more mutually open and engaged relationships. Supervisees appeared to shut down in supervision, not only withdrawing from discussions about multicultural concerns with SRCs but also from supervision more generally. Understandably, SRCs felt very uncomfortable with and disturbed by supervisees' reactions, including a sense that supervisees rejected supervisors' life experiences as persons of color. Not unlike Hoffman et al. (2005), the feedback, which was intended to be helpful, was received poorly by supervisees.

Conclusions

The results of this investigation offer some important insights into what feedback supervisors find difficult to offer in cross-ethnic/racial supervision, how these events unfold, and the effect the feedback events have on the supervisee, supervisor, and their relationship. Not only do cultural differences between supervisors and supervisees influence the feedback process in supervision, but the results of this study indicate the type of cultural topic (e.g., difficulty connecting with clients, unwillingness to integrate cultural issues into work with clients) may also influence the feedback process in supervision. We are also struck by the type of feedback EASRs and SRCs offered to supervisees, because the feedback was quite different: EASRs addressed specific counseling skills (e.g., communication patterns, attending, active listening, use of restatements, questions and reflections of feelings), while SRCs addressed supervisees' cultural insensitivity. These findings may be similar to Hoffman et al. (2005) in that they recognized there may be strong differences in providing supervision feedback about skills in contrast to personality-based feedback. The differences in the cultural issues EASRs and SRCs elected to address in supervision are striking and may be an indication of what supervisees present in supervision, supervisees' comfort with cultural concerns, supervisors' cultural competence, or even supervisors' comfort with cultural issues in supervision. Overall, these different types of difficult feedback appeared to result in different in-session experiences for EASRs and SRCs in cross-ethnic/racial and multiculturally oriented supervision.

Limitations

Our participants may not reflect the experiences of all supervisors, so caution must be exercised in translating these findings to other contexts. Furthermore, it was not possible to know if the feedback supervisors provided was warranted or how skillfully the feedback was delivered. In addition, the definition of difficult feedback in supervision relied upon instances when our participants felt reluctant or hesitant to provide feedback. Thus, what was difficult for one supervisor may be entirely different for another and may be influenced by such factors as competence, personality, clinical setting, or even level of clinical or supervisory experience. Participants also discussed their perceptions of supervisee reactions; we do not have the supervisees' actual perspectives on these events. We must also acknowledge that we did not collect information on supervisors' training background in supervision, and it is possible that supervisors' level of competence in supervision may have influenced the final outcomes. As an additional limitation, we note that all SCRs were collapsed together for analysis and presentation even though these supervisors likely had wide cultural diversity between them. Analyzing the data in this way may have minimized any unique cultural interactions. We reasoned there may be some similarities in supervision experiences for SRCs given their potentially shared experiences with White supervisees. Relatedly, we also collapsed all White supervisors together and all supervisors of color together for data analysis and comparison. Although these groups were formed based on common patterns between participants, it is possible the findings may have missed other possible patterns.

Implications for Future Research

First, this study should be replicated, perhaps using quantitative methods such as surveys or further qualitative investigation, to identify factors that may affect the feedback process in cross-ethnic/racial supervision. For instance, how do supervisory and cultural competence, as well as cultural sensitivity, affect the giving and receiving of difficult feedback? Additionally, we focused much of our discussion on the most frequent findings from our investigation, but this focus should not detract from interest in some of the less frequently reported events. For instance, not all SRCs reported negative outcomes and not all EASRs reported positive outcomes from the DFEs. It would be important to understand the reasons for these differences. Finally, we examined both EASRs' and SRCs' experiences of providing difficult feedback; it would clearly be important to understand how supervisees experience difficult feedback events in supervision.

Implications for Supervision Practice and Training

When the difficult feedback events did not go well, supervisors perceived that supervisees reacted negatively, as if they were surprised by the feedback. Such supervisee reactions suggest that they were not prepared for the feedback, perhaps an indication of discrepancies between supervisor and supervisee expectations and goals for supervision. Prior research has illustrated the importance of aligning the focus of supervision with specific goals that are established at the onset of supervision (Lehrman-Waterman & Ladany, 2001). Thus, we recommend that during initial supervision sessions, supervisors and supervisees set specific goals, including those related to cultural competence. Furthermore, we recognize that not all cultural competency goals can be anticipated at the beginning of supervision; thus, it is important that supervisors take the lead in setting expectations with supervisees that such issues will be addressed in supervision.

Although addressing goals and expectations may help supervisors and supervisees create better conditions for providing feedback, our findings indicate that most supervisors experienced some reticence in providing the feedback. It is curious that all supervisors were concerned about imposing their cultural worldview upon supervisees, suggesting that our participants were struggling to discern the differences between their cultural values and appropriate clinical practice (Mintz & Bieschke, 2009). We are reminded that clinical practice is embedded in a cultural perspective laden with Eurocentric values and that it may be nearly impossible to fully differentiate culture and these values from practice. Certainly such a perspective would create an ambiguous

situation for supervisors, and this uncertainty may lead to confusion and anxiety during supervision. Alternatively, it may also be that supervisors simply preferred to be liked by their supervisees and were aware that raising a concern could lead to difficulties in supervision. So we urge training programs to help future supervisors anticipate these ambiguous cultural situations and to develop supervision skills to address such situations both intra- and interpersonally. For instance, determining when and whether boundaries have been crossed in providing feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision seems an important training topic. Additionally, supervisors will want to consult the recent position statement, *Counseling Psychology Model Training Values Statement Addressing Diversity* (Association of Counseling Center Training Agencies, the Council of Counseling Psychology Training Programs, and the Society for Counseling Psychology, 2006), an excellent resource in further differentiating boundaries between personal cultural values and the ethnics of responsible professional psychology practice. Finally, supervisors also should learn to address impasses in cross-ethnic/racial supervision to help them feel more confident, and perhaps less reticent, when providing feedback that may be corrective.

Appendix

Interview Protocol

Opening Questions:

1. We would like to ask you about your supervisory style (e.g., theories, approach, roles).

    a. Please describe your supervisory style in general.

    b. In addition to the general supervisory style described above, please describe what if any differences exist in your supervisory style when supervising someone who is culturally different (i.e., ethnically, racially) from you.

2. As a supervisor, what types of feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision are difficult to give?

Specific Event:

In this study we are focusing on a time when you, as the supervisor, provided difficult feedback involving cultural issues (i.e., regarding ethnicity or race) to a supervisee who is culturally different (i.e., ethnically, racially) from you. We define difficult feedback as feedback that is given reluctantly or hesitantly to a supervisee during supervision. The difficult feedback was given in individual supervision with a supervisee with whom you had at least weekly, face-to-face contact for at least 1 month, and whom you supervised in total for at least one academic term (e.g., quarter, semester).

- 4. First we would like to talk about your supervision with this supervisee *prior to* the difficult feedback event.

    a. Please describe your relationship with the supervisee.

    b. Please describe the content of any discussions you had with your supervisee regarding multicultural topics.

    c. Please describe how you felt during these discussions about multicultural topics with your supervisee?

- 5. Now we would like you to talk about the difficult feedback.

    a. What was the difficult feedback?

    b. What made this feedback difficult to provide?

      c.   What part, if any, did culture (i.e., ethnicity, race) play in the difficulty of providing this feedback?

      d.   What did you recall feeling or observing that prompted you to provide this feedback to the supervisee?

      e.   What were you hoping to accomplish by providing this difficult feedback to your supervisee?

      f.   What were the supervisee's reactions to the feedback?

- 6. Please describe the interactions (i.e., nonverbal and verbal) that occurred after the feedback was given.

      a.   Within that supervision session.

      b.   Subsequent to that supervision session.

- 7. Please describe the effects of this event on supervision with this supervisee.

- 8. Looking back, how, if at all, would you change your approach to providing this difficult feedback?

- 9. Please describe the effects of this event on supervision with *other* supervisees.

- 10. Please provide some basic demographics for your supervisee (e.g., age, sex, race/ethnicity, type of program [e.g., counseling psychology, clinical psychology], type of degree [i.e., master's or doctoral], year in program, amount of clinical experience, length of supervision relationship at time of feedback event, total length of supervision relationship).

Closing Questions:
- 11. What advice would you give for supervisors about providing difficult feedback in cross-ethnic/racial supervision?

- 12. Is there anything else about this topic that we have not addressed that you would like to discuss?

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Funding

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