ELEMENTS OF EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION

Adapted from Dettlaff, A. (2003). ***From Mission to Evaluation: A field instructor training program.***

The elements of effective field supervision can be divided into four categories:

- **The agency**
- **Tasks and assignments**
- **Supervisory skills**
- **Supervision meetings**

Elements related to the Agency

- **Making the student feel desired by the agency**
- **Including the student in agency functions and activities**
- **Treating the student like a professional**
- **Helping the student learn about the agency**

Elements related to tasks and assignments

- **Clarifying the purpose of assignments**
- **Providing detailed directions and instructions**
- **Working with the student to complete tasks**
- **Regularly reviewing the student's workload**
- **Providing a variety of learning activities**
- **Clarifying expectations for the student's performance**
- **Providing early opportunities for client contact**

Elements related to supervisory skills

- **Explaining your role and the role of the student**
- **Encouraging discussion of the student's concerns**
- **Encouraging discussion of taboo subjects**
- **Helping the student link theory to practice**
- **Providing clear and consistent feedback**
- **Validating the student's feelings**
- **Reassuring students that they can succeed**
- **Demonstrating that the student is valued as a person and a colleague**

Elements related to supervision meetings

- **Holding regularly scheduled supervision meetings**
- **Being available outside of regular supervision times**
- **Providing a through discussion of the student's learning needs**
- **Reviewing and analyzing the student's cases**
- **Providing consistent supervision throughout the placement**

The Supervisory Conference

What do students want to discuss during supervision meetings?

- **Practice skills used by students**
- **Cases and clients**
- **Ongoing performance issues**
- **Personal strengths and limitations**

What topics are not associated with student satisfaction with supervision sessions?

- **Community issues**
- **Career plans**
- **Administrative issues**
- **Classroom assignments**
- **Agency gossip**

What can we learn from this?

- **Students want direct and practical information that is going to help them become ethical and effective social workers**

- **Students wanted dedicated time with their supervisor to focus on their practice issues, and areas that need improvement**

Ineffective Supervisory Behaviors

- **Supervision that is too directive – students are not given opportunities to practice skills on their own or learning opportunities are limited.**

- **Lack of monitoring – failure to monitor the student's workload or failure to make arrangements for supervision during the field instructor's absence.**

- **Inappropriate use of the student – assigning tasks that do not meet the learning needs of the student or assigning tasks that are too difficult or easy.**

- **Inadequate supervisory contact – meeting infrequently or allowing too little time to meet.**

- **Lack of information – failure to provide students with necessary information or instructions; failure to provide adequate feedback concerning their performance.**