Supervision Styles

Definition: Style- a particular, distinctive or characteristic mode or manner of acting, how one performs in a given situation.

Two main styles of supervision: *(Munson)*

1. **Active Supervision** – being direct with the supervisee and asking pointed questions, answering questions directly, and offering interpretations. Supervision is problem focused, based on exploring alternative interventions, focused on client dynamics and speculative about outcomes.
2. **Reactive Supervision** – more subdued and indirect. Involves the supervisor asking limited general questions and not giving answers. Focuses on the process of treatment, explores issues about interaction and tends to focus on practitioner dynamics, providing a forum for practitioners to struggle with their own solutions.

Three sub-styles of supervision: (Munson)

1. **Philosopher** – provides lengthy explanations or brief global statements that have no immediate practical value for the practitioner. (i.e. "That reminds me of a case…," or "it takes many years for a social worker to feel like they know what they're doing…")
2. **Theoretician** – these supervisors believe that master of a theory leads to good practice. Tend to be logical and orderly in their approach to case material. (i.e. How can you help this client develop ego strengths? Did you observe how the family was triangulating?)
3. **Technician** – supervisor deals most exclusively with details of case problems and relates them to technical skills. This style is problem focused and interactionally oriented. They ask highly specific and focused questions in skilled empathic ways. They are patient and respond in ways that encourage practitioners to find their own answers. They help the supervisee plan strategies and techniques of intervention, coach them on how to use them and then have them describe their work after the fact.