

A Training Resource for Counselor Supervisors

Welcome to the North Carolina Counseling Journal (NCCJ), the official journal of the North Carolina Counseling Association (NCCA). This present issue is the NCCJ's second edition since its revival in 2023. Clearly, with this being just the second edition, we're not making super fast progress with our revival, but we're at least making progress, and that's important. The journal had not run since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, and it is again making its way forward.

We are all finding our way forward, aren't we? As I write this editor's letter, and as I make my way to sharing a helpful supervision resource with you, I want to reflect briefly on my recent experience at the NCCA's annual conference, which was held in Concord, NC, in late February. I am someone who has attended the conference many times over my nearly 30 years in the field. Each time, I see familiar faces and new faces, all making their way forward in one way or another. I also see the NCCA, in general, working to make its way forward in many ways. I see old and new faces stepping up to lead in various capacities; I see old and new faces looking to the NCCA as a resource that might help them make their way forward.

One of the sessions I attended was led by my friend, Robin Campbell, who has been a familiar face in the NCCA and in the Winston-Salem/Greensboro, NC, college counseling community for many years. Robin's session was about counselors and supervisors prioritizing self-care and wellness to avoid burnout. This is yet another important facet of making our way forward. We all must continue to examine and be honest with ourselves about our work-life balance and about making needed changes so that we might preserve and nurture our peace and better fulfill personally meaningful goals. I believe Robin said something like, "I will not give up my peace." That and many other messages of late have me thinking about my own wellness and peace and about what is most important to me. Among these messages, I hear a common theme—to make my way forward, I will need to make important changes.

One of the changes I will be making is stepping down from the role of editor of the NCCJ sometime in the coming months. In wanting to leave the journal better than I found it, I have a few more tasks to accomplish before I hand off the role to whoever is coming to help move the journal forward. But, I know it is time to step aside and make way for the next leader to step up. Stay tuned for more information on how you might get involved with the journal in some capacity, including serving as an editorial reviewer. As the old saying goes, "many hands make light work." And, that will be what's needed for the journal to maintain its positive momentum.

And now, on to the supervision resource that the title of this article/letter promises. At the NCCA conference, a group of us led a session titled: Empowering Site Supervisors: Navigating Real World Scenarios to Cultivate Trauma Informed Counselors-in-Training. My colleagues' names

are all listed at the end of the resource. As part of our presentation, I created this “Supervision Training Resource.” It features a case study that I and my colleagues hope will be helpful to any of you who are serving as university supervisors, site supervisors, or clinical supervisors. We want to see supervisors and supervisees move forward in their understanding and practice of trauma-informed supervision, and so this resource was created with that goal in mind. The resource is shared in its entirety below, just as I wrote it and just as our team shared it with our session participants on Saturday morning of the conference.

I trust you will enjoy the articles that make up this second, post-COVID edition of the NCCJ. Thank you to the contributing authors.

Thank you to my co-editor, Demi Cobb, a PhD student at East Carolina University. Way to go, Demi! You’re making your way forward!

Thank you to the NCCA for giving me the opportunity to serve these past couple years as co-editor of the NCCJ!

Let’s all keep making our way forward!

Sincerely,
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*The Supervision Training Resource follows on the next page.

Supervision Training Resource

[Provided as part of NCACES conference presentation, March 1, 2025]

The following activity is intended to generate helpful conversation related to effective facilitation of trauma-informed counseling supervision. Beyond serving as a discussion starter, the activity may also serve as content for learning via role play. The activity is aimed at training counseling supervisors, but discussion of the activity could also benefit supervisees.

Self-care warning: The following case contains content related to suicide of a loved one and a tragic car accident in which a loved one was killed. Please ground yourself accordingly, or feel empowered to not continue on with the activity.

Case Study

Katie has an associates-level CMHC license and has worked with her clinical supervisor, Tamika, for three months. Tamika has been a licensed counselor supervisor for four years. She and Katie have a good supervisory relationship. They meet once weekly for an hour. Katie is doing well overall in her work and in supervision. In their most recent supervision meeting, Katie and Tamika discussed one of Katie's new clients. The client's father died by suicide a year ago; the client feels as if she could have saved her father if she had not been away at the time with her friends. In processing the case with Tamika, Katie expressed the following:

"As I was listening to the client recall some of the details of her father's death, I was distracted momentarily a few times, thinking about my best friend who died in a car accident when I was 17. She had just dropped off me and another friend at my house. The crash happened just a few miles away from my house."

Tamika was empathic toward Katie but did not want to pry into the accident or stir up hurtful personal feelings while in supervision. She instead allowed a brief silence and said,

"That had to be such a hard loss for you, Katie. Many of us would be distracted in our session just like you felt. How were you able to refocus on the client's story?"

Tamika and Katie went on to discuss diagnosing and treating the client for depression; they also discussed the importance of continuing to assess and monitor for any signs of suicidal risk by the client. As for Katie's countertransference, Tamika normalized countertransference and talked about the importance of continuing to process any future

countertransference. Tamika and Katie agreed they would follow up on the case at their next supervision meeting.

Discussion

Feel free to use creative license with the case study to hypothesize what else did or did not happen in the supervision session. Generally, though, it is safe to believe Tamika would want to grow as a supervisor in her understanding of and/or practice of trauma-informed and wellness principles in supervision.

Discussion prompts

- How could Tamika have facilitated hers and Katie's conversation in a more trauma-informed way?
- How could Tamika have attended to Katie's wellness as part of this supervision session?
- If you were Tamika, what steps would you next take with Katie to revisit her trauma's impact on her as a counselor?
- If you were Tamika, what steps would you next take with Katie to co-identify wellness goals and encourage Katie in accomplishing those goals?
- In what ways might it be helpful for Tamika to openly broach with Katie, the subject of trauma-informed and wellness principles in supervision?
- In what ways might Tamika want to stay attentive to her own wellness needs, as they relate to supervision?

Role play suggestions

If you and a group choose to use this activity to learn through role play, the person playing the supervisor ("Tamika") might approach the role play as a "do-over." That is, the supervisor could act out how you would attempt to **rewrite** Tamika's handling of the conversation as shared in the case study. **Or**, another possible way to approach the role play may be for the supervisor to act out how Tamika might handle the conversation in the **following week's** supervision meeting.

Observer feedback

If learning through role play, one or more of the group can observe the supervisor role ("Tamika") and provide the supervisor with feedback, based on the following prompts:

The supervisor demonstrated trauma-informed supervision in the following ways:

The supervisor demonstrated wellness principles in the following ways:

Some possible trauma-informed and wellness-related suggestions for improvement for the supervisor might be:

The North Carolina Association of Counselor Education and Supervision is committed to providing resources and support for counselor educators and supervisors. NCACES thanks you for your interest in our NCCA Conference presentation titled: Empowering Site Supervisors: Navigating Real World Scenarios to Cultivate Trauma Informed Counselors-in-Training. This presentation was created and delivered by:

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