

SUPERVISION PHILOSOPHY

OF THE CONNECTIONS DAY SCHOOL

CLINICAL TRAINING PROGRAM

The Clinical Supervisors and Consultants at Connections Day School are strongly committed to the highest level of professional training. We believe that active participation in the training of Clinical Psychologists benefits not only our Trainees (Externs, Interns & Post-Docs), but also their Clinical Supervisors and our profession of psychology as a whole. Our Clinical Staff supports a culture of inclusion and views professional growth as interconnected to personal growth – it is a never-ending, ever-changing process. Therefore, Trainees are consistently challenged to examine themselves and their worldviews as they develop as Psychologists.

Each Trainee is assigned to a Primary Supervisor (a full-time, on-site, Licensed Clinical Psychologist), and Interns and Post-Docs are also assigned to an Auxiliary Supervisor (part-time, Licensed Clinical Psychologist). Trainees meet with their Primary Supervisor for one hour per week, and on an as-needed basis throughout the week; and Interns and Post-Docs meet with their Auxiliary Supervisor for one hour per week. In addition, the Clinical Team spends one-and-a-half hours in a weekly Clinical Training Meeting, and one hour per week in Group Supervision. All of these group meetings are done under the supervision of the Clinical Director/Director of Clinical Training, and other licensed members of the Clinical Training Staff.

The multidisciplinary composition of the CSC staff, allows Trainees to receive monthly supervision from the school's consulting Child & Adolescent Psychiatrist and have informal access to him throughout the year. There are also consistent opportunities to consult with the school's Professional Counselors, Occupational Therapist, Speech and Language Pathologist, Art Therapist, Music Therapist, Substance Abuse Specialist, Behavioral Intervention Specialists, and Special Education Teachers and Principal. In addition, trainees have consistent opportunities for informal consultation and supervision with the multidisciplinary clinical staff at our parent company, Counseling Connection (an outpatient practice established in 1982) – this staff is comprised of highly experienced Psychologists, Psychiatrists, Social Workers and Licensed Clinical Professional Counselors.

The Clinical Supervisors at CDS take a Constructivist approach to the supervision process. Constructivism postulates that knowledge is created within a person, not communicated from the outside (i.e., knowledge is internally constructed based on the way we interpret our experiences); and that problem-solving is at the heart of learning, thinking, and development.

Therefore, the Supervisor's role is not so much to lecture at Trainees, but to act as an expert lifelong learner who guides Trainees in their adoption of cognitive strategies such as self-testing, articulating understanding, asking probing questions and reflection. The Supervisor also organizes information in a way that engages their interest, and encourages them to develop new insights and connect with their previous learning – to compare and resolve discrepancies between what they feel they know and what seems to be evident or implied in new experiences. Supervisors support Trainees through the process of reflecting on past and immediate experiences, so that Trainees can solve problems, discover cause & effect relationships, and construct their own understanding. Learning is thus an active process that encourages change and growth in the Trainee, because people only deeply understand what they themselves have constructed.

The Constructivist approach also recognizes that each Trainee comes to the program with unique clinical abilities to foster, along with areas of clinical growth that require enhancement. Therefore, Supervisors work with Trainees to identify their areas of strength and struggle, and the professional level at which they would like to be functioning by the end of their training year (all while maintaining expected NCSPP clinical competency standards in the areas of Assessment, Relationship, Intervention, Diversity, Research & Evaluation, Management & Supervision and Consultation & Education). Supervisors then work with each Trainee to create a unique supervision experience where these goals can be achieved throughout the course of the year. As such, no Trainee's supervision is exactly the same, This allows for a unique learning experience for each Trainee and their Supervisors.

Constructivist Approach Resource Material:

Cooperstein, S. E. & Kocevar-Weidinger, E. (2004). Beyond Active Learning: A Constructivist Approach to Learning. *Reference Services Review*, 32(2), 141–148.

Thanasoulas, D. (n.d.). *Constructivist Learning*. Retrieved from:
http://www.seasite.niu.edu/Tagalog/Teachers_Page/Language_Learning_Articles/constructivist_learning.htm and
http://dimitrithanasoulas.com/wordpress/?page_id=8

Lamon, M (n.d.). *Learning Theory - Constructivist Approach*. Retrieved from:
<http://education.stateuniversity.com/pages/2174/Learning-Theory-CONSTRUCTIVIST-APPROACH.html>