Behavior Analytic Supervision: A Practice Model and Considerations for the Development of Future Behavior Analytic Practitioners

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South Carolina Association for Behavior Analysis
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Myrtle Beach, SC
Let’s start with a few updates.
Refining Supervisory Practices in the Field of Behavior Analysis: Introduction to the Special Section on Supervision

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- University-based model (Dubuque & Dubuque, 2016)
- Apprentice model (Hartley et al., 2016)
- Addressing problems in supervision (Sellers et al., 2016)
- Group supervision (Valentino et al., 2016)
- Ethics in supervision (Sellers et al., 2016)
- General supervision recommendations (Sellers et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2016)
- Supervision social validity survey / self-monitoring form (Turner et al., 2016)
Review of Major BCBA Changes (published in 2018; effective 2022)

- New categories & required hours
  - “Supervised Fieldwork” – 2000 hrs.
  - “Concentrated Supervised Fieldwork” – 1500 hrs.

- Supervisory period = 1 month
  - “Contact” (at least 15 minutes) must occur 4 times (supervised fieldwork) and 6 times (concentrated supervised fieldwork) per period

- At least 60% of total fieldwork must be spend engaged in unrestricted activities

- BCBAs cannot supervise within their first year of certification

- Greater focus on supervisor accountability (e.g., monitoring supervisee performance, skill development)
The primary goal of the supervisee has been expanded to also include the skills necessary to interact effectively with consumers, supervisors, families, and others.
What we’re going to talk about

• How to set the stage for quality supervision
• How to assess and teach supervisee skills, with a focus on professional skills
• Considerations in providing performance feedback
Setting the Stage for Effective, Ethical & Socially Valid Supervision
Maintaining Competence is Key to Being a Strong Supervisor

- Goes far beyond being fluent with the task list items.

- “Competence is not static, but is a progression toward ever evolving expertise” (Dreyfus and Dreyfus, 1986), requiring continuing assessment of competence across one’s career (Roberts et al., 2005)

- Multiple areas of competence, including competency in behavior analysis, supervision and professional skills

- Recognize that supervision was most likely not a core component of your formal training
In addition...

- Support supervisee wellbeing and prevent loss of motivation
- Model ongoing learning, consultation and self-assessment
- Develop the supervisory repertoires of our supervisees
- Practice within an evidence-based framework

BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum, 2012; Falendar et al., 2004, 2008
• Which extends to the evidence-based practice of behavior analytic supervision

• A decision making process integrating:
  ▫ Various forms of research
  ▫ Supervisor expertise in supervision
  ▫ Supervisee individual needs, values and context

• Requires expertise in problem solving
  ▫ How to individualize
  ▫ What content to teach
  ▫ How to teach the content
  ▫ How to provide feedback
  ▫ How to monitor progress
Figure 1. Behavior Analytic Practice Model for Supervision

Turner (2017)
What are our minimal competencies as behavior analytic supervisors?

- Know the BACB supervision standards fluently (Code 10.05)
- Development of individualized performance expectations for the supervisee AND supervisor
- Observation, behavioral skills training, and performance feedback
- Modeling technical, professional and ethical behavior
- Guiding behavioral case conceptualization, problem-solving, and decision-making repertoires
- Review of written materials (e.g., behavior programs, data sheets)
- Oversight and evaluation of the effects of service delivery
- Ongoing evaluation of the effects of supervision
A quick review in layman’s terms:

- Only do what you know how to do (5.01) – Do I know?
- Only take on what you can handle (5.02) – What can I handle?
- Only ask others to do what they can do (5.03) – How do I know what they can do?
- Teach effectively (5.04) – am I?
- Communicate clearly (5.05) – am I?
- Give feedback (5.06) – am I?
- Evaluate your teaching (5.07) – am I?
Evaluating your own competency across multiple areas is hard…

- What are your relative vs. normative strengths and weaknesses?
  - As a behavior analyst?
  - As a supervisor?
  - As a professional?
- Recognize that a strength in one context can be a weakness in another
- Recognition of the influence of your personal stressors on your own competence
- If you don’t know, how could you assess?

- Are they impacting your effectiveness?
- If so, what are you doing to work on them? Do you seek feedback on them?
- What are the contingencies governing these behaviors for you? “Can’t vs. won’t” do?
Should I Supervise?

• How much time will supervision take (think through all potential responsibilities)? Do I have the time right now?
• Am I competent in the majority of areas on the current BACB Task List? Are there any areas I need to seek further education in prior to supervising?
• Does the possibility of supervising someone else excite me?
• What feedback have I received about my ability to implement BST or deliver performance feedback?
• Am I comfortable role-playing and modeling my own behavior in front of others?
• Am I competent in, and willing to provide, corrective feedback? Do I tend to avoid providing corrective feedback?
• Do I currently provide positive feedback to others on a daily basis?
• Do others at work approach me for behavioral advice and guidance?
• Do I have a mentor, or another colleague I have good rapport with, to provide consultation and peer supervision of supervision when needed?
Setting the Stage for Quality Supervision: Developing the Supervisory Relationship

• “Rapport” (Carr et al., 1997, Magito McLaughlin & Carr, 2005)
  • The degree to which a supervisor and a trainee are mutual discriminative stimuli for generalized reinforcement (e.g., positive feedback, social support)
  • How? Potential impact on supervision?

• Mutually agreed upon expectations for supervision and engagement in behaviors consistent with those expectations.
  • Supervision contract
  • Guideline 5.05 of the Professional & Ethical Compliance Code (BACB, 2014)
Collaboratively Develop the Contract and Supervision Expectations

Procedural Checklist for First Supervision Meeting

Get to Know Each Other

☐ Tell the supervisee about yourself, including your credentials and professional background. **Be honest about credentials (Code 2.05)**

☐ Ask about the supervisee’s professional goals, progress with graduate coursework, previous supervision experiences (e.g., how many more hours do they need?), etc.
Discuss the Professional Supervisory Relationship

- Explain the purpose of supervision. Make it clear that you are here to support and teach the supervisee.
- Explain your role as a supervisor, including what types of interactions are appropriate and inappropriate (e.g., dual relationship).
- Explain the nature of the supervisory relationship (i.e., highly collaborative).
- Tell the supervisee that you will keep evaluative information about him/her confidential (explain any situations in which this is not the case).
- Discuss payment for supervision, if relevant.
- Discuss online, audio-visual, etc. considerations, if relevant.

Be aware of the limitations of the internet (Code 8.04)

Maintain a professional relationship (Code 1.05-1.07)

Keep supervisee confidential information to yourself (Code 2.06) – do I know what’s confidential? Do I know what situations I should disclose?
Set Expectations for the Supervision Experience

- Review BACB Experience Standards in detail.
- Ensure supervisee has completed online training module.
- Identify a clear plan and individual responsibilities for tracking supervision hours and documenting supervision activities and performance.
- Identify when supervision will end and any plans for unintended disruptions to supervision.
- Agree on consequences for not adhering to performance expectations (by either party).
- Discuss the conditions under which supervision will be terminated.
- Discuss importance of giving and receiving performance feedback.
- Set an established meeting time and establish best way to contact each other.
- Discuss any other expectations.
- Review, make any modifications and sign the supervision contract.

Don’t leave your supervisee hanging (Code 2.15)

BACB requires this and they change frequently!
Continually evaluate (or have someone else rate) if you’re following through with supervisory expectations.

Supervision Monitoring and Evaluation Form

Trainee: [Name]
Supervisor: [Name]
Placement Site: [Name]
Evaluation Period: [Date]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Arrangement</th>
<th>YES</th>
<th>NO or NOT ALWAYS: Explain</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision sessions occur as scheduled</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision sessions start and end on time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision sessions are free of distractions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision sessions can be re-scheduled as warranted</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>I am able to correspond with my supervisor between supervision sessions</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor Behavior</td>
<td>Rarely</td>
<td>Sometimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor is approachable</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor is attentive to my current abilities and training needs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor gives me behavior-specific positive feedback about my strengths</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor gives me behavior-specific corrective feedback about my weaknesses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor gives clear performance expectations and evaluation procedures</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor models professional behavior (clinical decision making, ethics, confidentiality)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor models technical skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor requires me to practice (e.g., role play) when learning new skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor delivers feedback in a variety of modalities (e.g., verbal, written, graphic)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor reviews my written work</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor facilitates my critical thinking</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor shows support and positive regard</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor listens well</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor shows energy and enthusiasm</td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor is able to shift focus during sessions as warranted</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor is prepared for supervision sessions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor advises about my professional development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervisor suggests and/or assigns up to date readings and other materials</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Turner, Fisher & Luiselli, 2016
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Supervision Content</th>
<th>Rarely</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>Always</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision addresses the BACB Task List and ethical and professional guidelines of the field</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision is a collaborative experience</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision informs me about evidence-based practices</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision addresses objectives in my individualized training plan</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision builds and enhances my clinical skills (e.g., case conceptualization)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision expands my knowledge base</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision considers matters of diversity and inclusion</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision is conducted within the boundaries of confidentiality</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision advises helpfully about my clinical interactions with clients, constituents and other service providers</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision fortifies my professional development</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Supervision enhances my ability to make clinical decisions and solve problems</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Considerations in the Assessment & Development of Supervisee Skillset
Methods for Assessing Current Skills

- Review course syllabi, previous practica settings and populations
- Talk with previous supervisors, if given permission
- Systematically review task list (e.g., Checklist, rating scale, interview, test)
- Observation, present scenarios, role play
# BACB Fourth Edition Task List Assessment

| Supervisee: |  |
| Date: |  |

**Rating Scale Instructions:** Please mark each item with either a 0, 1, 2 or 3 based on the following rating scale:

0 - cannot identify term/skill
1 - has taken course work on this skill/responsibility/principle
2 - can verbally define and give examples of the skill/responsibility/principle
3 - can display skill/responsibility/principle across multiple clients and situations (only rate a 3 for Sections I and II)

## Section III: Foundational Knowledge (FK)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explain and Behave in Accordance with the Philosophical Assumptions of Behavior Analysis</th>
<th>2 = mastery for Sec. III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>FK-01</td>
<td>Lawfulness of behavior</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-02</td>
<td>Selectionism (phylogenetic, ontogenetic, cultural)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-03</td>
<td>Determinism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-04</td>
<td>Empiricism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-05</td>
<td>Parsimony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-06</td>
<td>Pragmatism</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-07</td>
<td>Environmental (as opposed to mentalistic) explanations of behavior.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FK-08</td>
<td>Distinguish between radical and methodological behaviorism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Develop individualized goals & teach within a BST framework, integrating P.S. & D.M. when appropriate and planning for generalization throughout.

Skill Information:

- **Task List Skill**: K-05 (advanced supervisee) - Design and use systems for monitoring procedural integrity

- **Operational Definition of Correct Response**: The supervisee will create a procedural integrity data sheet including the following 4 pieces of information:
  - general information (e.g., observer, date),
  - specific instructions for data collection,
  - specific implementer behavior to measure that is appropriate to the context,
  - and a clear and organized space for recording behavior consistent with an appropriate measurement system for the context.

- **Measurement System**: Number correct

- **Objective**: The supervisee will utilize 3 questions to increase her ability to accurately design systems for monitoring procedural integrity from 1/4 steps to 4/4 steps across 2 students with individualized Behavior Intervention Plans.

Turner (2017)
Assess the Ethics Code too – how?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.02 (Boundaries of Competence)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I am fully aware of my strengths and weaknesses relative to the BACB 4th Edition Task List, including the boundaries of my competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am fully aware of my strengths and weaknesses relative to the standard of professional practice for behavior analysts (i.e., personal and professional behavior outlined in the Code), including the boundaries of my competence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable disclosing my weaknesses relative to the BACB 4th Edition Task List</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am comfortable disclosing my weaknesses relative to the Code</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1.06 (Multiple Relationships &amp; Conflicts of Interest)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can define and provide examples of a multiple relationship and am aware of the potentially harmful effects of such relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can define and provide examples of a conflict of interest and am aware of the potentially harmful effects of such relationships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am aware of any current multiple relationships/conflicts of interest that I am involved in</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable and confident resolving multiple relationships/conflicts of interest when one has arisen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am able to appropriately refuse a gift from a client</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Identifying professional targets for change in order to become competent at Task List and Code items

- Collaboration
- Self-reflective/self-aware
- Assertiveness
- Social skills broadly
- Professional appearance
- Empathy and sensitivity to others
- Flexibility
- Others?

*What are the skills that make up these professional behaviors? How do we define and measure these behaviors so that we can provide feedback and monitor performance?
Example. Defining Empathy.

- A verbal statement conveying an understanding of an individual’s current context.
  - Example: “I can imagine it’s hard for you to get here on time given the distance you have to travel”.
  - Non-example: A positive statement about the individual’s performance, such as, “You implemented the prompt hierarchy really well”.

Collaborative Training and Practice among Applied Behavior Analysts who Support Individuals with Autism Spectrum Disorder

Amy Kelly and Matt Tincani
Temple University

Abstract: Increasingly, practicing behavior analysts play an integral role as interdisciplinary team members to develop instructional programs for students with autism spectrum disorder. However, there is a lack of research on collaborative training and practice as it relates to professionals in the field of ABA. In this study, 302 behavioral professionals, 95% of whom worked with individuals with ASD, were surveyed regarding what training they received in collaboration, the type and extent of collaborative interactions with other professionals, variables they perceive to inhibit and facilitate collaboration, and the extent to which they view collaboration as a valuable component of their practice. Results indicate that while applied behavior analysts frequently collaborate with a variety of professionals and view collaboration as important, on average they received little or no formal training in collaboration, were more likely to provide than to adopt programming recommendations from professionals except for those with similar training, and reported lower ratings with respect to the experience and value of collaboration in their practice. Collectively, results highlight a need to increase collaborative training of practicing behavior analysts, particularly in relation to providing recommendations to and adopting recommendations from non-behavioral professionals, and to conduct research on modes of collaboration that lead to best outcomes.
Practice - Collaboration

* How do you define collaboration?
* What observable skills are required for someone to call you “collaborative”?
* How will you measure this skill?
* How will you teach this skill to competency across contexts? What is competency?
* Can you integrate problem solving into this skill?
Considerations in Delivering Performance Feedback
Give a lot of Performance Feedback – Quick Review

• Especially during skill acquisition
• Frequent, Immediate, Descriptive, Positive, Corrective
• Effective as a prompt or a consequence
• Link feedback to goals
  ▫ E.g., “Very impressive performance today with Johnny. Even though it was a stressful situation, you followed his plan to the tee. The great thing was that all the other staff saw you keep your cool and implement the intervention, which is important as you’re trying to establish yourself as a role-model. The more you can get in there and model, just like you did today, the more the staff will look to you as a leader.”

• Use data to support your feedback
• Develop self-evaluation repertoires

(BACB, 2014; Balcazar, 1985, 1986; Daniels & Bailey, 2015; Noell et al., 2002; Sanetti, Luiselli & Handler, 2007; Neubert, 1998; Alvero et al., 2001; Alvero et al., 2001)
Catch Supervisee’s ‘Being Good’

- 4:1 ratio
- **Quick Activity:** Think about someone you could have given positive feedback to in the last week, but didn’t - why didn’t you? What stopped you?
Giving corrective feedback is less preferred than giving positive feedback...

Barriers to giving feedback

Feedback does not happen for many reasons. Basically, providing constructive feedback is a difficult task. Most clinical teachers have received little or no instruction in giving feedback, and many believe that providing negative feedback is pointless because of a lack of resources to help the student to improve. Teachers say that they fear damaging their relationship with learners and want to avoid undermining the learner’s self esteem. Corrective feedback can be awkward to communicate, and teachers may wish to avoid appearing critical, particularly in the presence of patients or medical colleagues. Learners are often apprehensive about asking for feedback, for fear that it will be critical—and to make matters worse, they can become defensive when offered corrective feedback. In sum, giving feedback is often difficult, but the negative effects of not seeking or giving feedback are considerable (box 2).  

Cantillon & Sargeant (2008)
Research from supervision in other fields suggests:

- Corrective feedback can be most challenging when personal, often subjective, issues are interfering with the quality of professional behavior (Dittman-Tracy, 2006)

- Research suggests that supervisors often withheld negative reactions to supervisee’s clinical and professional performance, and regret it later (Hoffman et al., 2005)

- About 47% of supervisors agreed that they gave higher ratings to avoid disrupting their relationship with the supervisee (Gonsalvez & Freestone, 2007)

- If given poorly, negative supervisory experiences can produce significant and adverse effects on an individual’s future career goals (Ramos-Sanchez et al., 2002)
A few considerations.

- If needed, seek consultation prior to delivering difficult feedback.
- “They did everything wrong” – the importance of prioritizing.

Be as objective and neutral as you can.
- Don’t provide corrective feedback when in a bad mood!
- Recognize your own reactions/biases.

“Favorites”
- Has the potential to overshadow difficulties of or mistakes made by the supervisee.

- You may get uncomfortable…Take time to plan/practice
  - What do you want to get across – what is your desired impact?
  - Debrief.

- Document and have a remediation plan.
Giving Corrective Feedback

*Steps* (BACB Supervisor Training Curriculum, 2012)

* Provide an empathic statement - think about their context
* Describe ineffective performance
* Provide a rationale for desired change in performance
* Provide instructions and demonstrations for how to improve designated performance
* Provide opportunities to practice the desired performance
* Provide immediate descriptive feedback

*Don’t correct in public* (Daniels & Bailey, 2014)
Example

“Hi ____! I’m so glad I got to see you working with Johnny this morning. I was impressed by how well you remained neutral while he was flopped on the ground. That can be a frustrating situation especially when you feel like you there’s not much you can do. To avoid this situation all together, let’s talk about a way to ease the transition and prevent him from flopping in the first place. Rather than asking him to line up at the door when he’s engaged in an independent activity, one thing the BIP says to do is ask him to complete tasks he usually complies with before giving him the direction to walk to the door to line up (i.e., a task demand he usually doesn’t comply with). For example, giving high fives and picking up materials from his work area. The point of this is to gain compliance and spark responding. Let me show you quick and then I’ll have you show me.
Scenario A

- Your supervisee is going to meet with her client’s parent to develop a home behavior plan. You have been supervising the supervisee for nearly a year, but this is her first time working directly with parents. You’ve had her sit in on one of your parent meetings and you’ve role played several aspects of meeting with parents. She seemed nervous, so you decided to sit in on the meeting with her, but let her take the lead. During the meeting, the supervisee did a nice job establishing rapport with the parent; however, the supervisee often used behavior analytic jargon and did not notice that the parent was clearly confused. The supervisee was also quite directive with the parent, not making the process collaborative. You had to jump in several times to clarify and assess the feasibility and acceptability of the proposed plan.
Scenario B

You have received several comments from others regarding how unfriendly one of your supervisees is. For example, she often ignores others in the hallway and has been described as unapproachable by teacher’s aides. You have also observed the supervisee often looking “mad” or “uninterested”; however, the supervisee is always on time, completes all assignments, and states that she wants to remain in this field and enjoys her job.
Field Placement What Supervision Shouldn't Be Roleplay
Jill Hanlon, Social Works
Liesl Krebbs
Production and filming by Wayne J. Cosshall

Faculty of Health Sciences
Observations and feedback from peers/mentors ("supervision of supervision")

* How would you give her feedback, as her colleague?
* Would you?
* How could you set the stage for a context in which feedback would be expected?
Questions to leave you with…

• How are you monitoring your own development as a supervisor?
• What are you strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor?
• Will you do anything differently during your first session?
• Will you change your assessment of and approaches for developing professional behavior in your supervisees?
• Will you do anything differently while providing feedback?
• Do you have a mentor or colleague who you consult with regarding supervision issues?