



PENNSYLVANIA COUNSELING  
ASSOCIATION

*A Branch of the American Counseling Association*

## Journal of the Pennsylvania Counseling Association

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Volume 29, Number 1

Article 2

Spring, 2026

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.71463/DPWO3286>

### **You Belong Here: Supervising Underrepresented Counselors-in- Training**

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## **You Belong Here: Supervising Underrepresented Counselors-in-Training**

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### **Abstract**

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Supervising underrepresented counselors-in-training (CITs) requires culturally responsive, identity-affirming approaches that address systemic barriers and promote professional growth. This manuscript synthesizes research on multicultural competence, cultural humility, and social justice in supervision. Culturally attuned supervision strengthens the supervisory alliance, supervisee disclosure, and client outcomes. Mentorship and advocacy are vital in supporting marginalized trainees. Despite growing attention to diversity, gaps remain in understanding supervision's impact on underrepresented CITs. Practical strategies are offered to guide inclusive supervisory practice.

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**Keywords:** underrepresented, supervision, supervisor, advocacy, competence

### **You Belong Here: Supervising Underrepresented Counselors-in-Training**

Supervising underrepresented counselors-in-training (CITs) necessitates intentional, culturally responsive, and equity-focused approaches to address systemic barriers and promote professional development. As outlined in Perez et al. (2023), Steele (2024), Spellman et al. (2021), and Dollarhide et al. (2021), recent literature underscores the importance of integrating multicultural competence, cultural humility, and social justice frameworks into supervision practices. This incorporation could ensure effective support for CITs from marginalized backgrounds (Dollarhide et al., 2021).

Multicultural supervision is pivotal in shaping client outcomes and enhancing supervisee development. Perez et al. (2023) found that supervisors' multicultural competence significantly influences their perceptions of client outcomes, highlighting the necessity for training programs to emphasize multicultural supervision competencies. However, disparities often exist between supervisors' and supervisees' perceptions regarding the impact of multicultural factors, indicating a need for alignment through comprehensive training and open dialogue. Moreover, cultural humility is critical in preparing CITs to engage in meaningful discussions about culture and diversity. Steele (2024) introduced the cultural humility choice point as a tool to assist counselor educators in

facilitating culturally sensitive conversations, thereby fostering an environment conducive to growth and self-reflection. This approach encourages CITs to navigate cultural topics with mindfulness and openness, essential qualities in diverse counseling settings.

Furthermore, social justice considerations are integral to supervision, particularly in addressing the unique challenges underrepresented CITs face. Spellman et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of creating supportive structures within counselor education programs to empower marginalized students. Implementing initiatives such as mentorship programs and advocacy training can mitigate systemic barriers and promote equity in professional development. Similarly, Dollarhide et al. (2021) advocated for the adoption of the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) model, which emphasizes the importance of addressing cultural dynamics and systemic inequities within supervision. By embracing such frameworks, supervisors can better support underrepresented CITs in navigating the complexities of their professional roles.

Overall, mentorship plays a vital role in the professional trajectory of underrepresented CITs. Litherland et al. (2023) conducted a scoping review revealing that tailored mentorship interventions significantly benefit trainees with diverse identities. By fostering inclusive mentorship relationships, supervisors can enhance the academic and professional experiences of CITs, contributing to their overall success in the counseling field.

The supervision of underrepresented counselors-in-training (CITs) remains an area with notable gaps in literature, particularly concerning culturally responsive and equity-focused supervisory practices. While the counseling profession emphasizes diversity and

inclusion, empirical research on effective supervision strategies tailored to the unique needs of underrepresented CITs is limited. Spellman et al. (2021) highlighted the systemic barriers that marginalized students face in counselor education programs, including navigating culturally dominant pedagogies and progressing in doctoral programs. They advocated for incorporating structured support programs, such as the Holmes Scholars Program and the National Board for Certified Counselors' Minority Fellowship Program, to provide mentorship and advocacy for these students. However, the literature lacks comprehensive studies on how such programs specifically impact supervisory relationships and outcomes for underrepresented CITs.

Moreover, Ertl et al. (2023) examined the role of supervisor cultural humility in reducing supervisee nondisclosure. Their findings suggest that supervisors who demonstrate cultural humility can foster stronger supervisory alliances, leading to increased openness among supervisees. This underscores the importance of culturally responsive supervision practices, yet more research is needed to explore how these practices specifically benefit underrepresented CITs. Furthermore, Diacopoulos et al. (2024) conducted a systematic review on opportunity gaps in clinical practice, identifying that implicit cultural biases within supervisory relationships can hinder the development of marginalized trainees. They call for further research into how supervisors can effectively address these biases to support the growth of underrepresented CITs.

Overall, while existing studies acknowledge the challenges faced by underrepresented CITs and the potential benefits of culturally responsive supervision, there is a clear need for more targeted research. In response, this manuscript synthesizes existing findings on the experiences of underrepresented CITs. It presents practical,

developmentally appropriate strategies for clinical supervisors to enhance the inclusivity and effectiveness of their supervision.

### **Importance of Clinical Supervision**

As Bernard and Goodyear (1992) defined supervision, it is:

An intervention provided by a more senior member of a profession to a more junior colleague or colleagues who typically (but not always) are members of that same profession. This relationship is evaluative and hierarchical, extends over time, and has the simultaneous purposes of enhancing the professional functioning of the more junior person(s); monitoring the quality of professional services offered to the clients that she, he, or they see; and serving as a gatekeeper for the particular profession the supervisee seeks to enter. (p. 9)

Counselor development can be examined through the lens of this intervention regarding supervisors' role as gatekeepers of the profession. Counselors' professional identity, clinical competence, and ethical integrity are interdependent components of counselor development (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). Clinical supervision serves as the nexus where these areas converge, providing a structured and reflective space for CITs to internalize ethical guidelines, enhance their self-awareness, and develop a cohesive professional identity. Grounded in the ethical mandates of the ACA and informed by empirical research, supervision is a vital process in shaping competent, ethical, and self-aware counseling professionals (ACA, 2014).

### **Professional Identity Development**

Developing a counselor's professional identity could be viewed as a foundational component of ethical and competent practice

(Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003). The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) underscored the importance of professional transparency and self-awareness in counseling relationships. Specifically, Standard A.2.b. mandates that counselors inform clients about a range of relevant issues, including the counselor's qualifications, credentials, approach to counseling, and the limitations and potential risks of services provided. Additionally, Standard F.1.b. requires that counseling supervisors ensure their supervisees communicate their qualifications to clients (ACA, 2014). These ethical imperatives require counselors-in-training (CITs) to possess a well-defined sense of professional identity.

Professional identity has been conceptualized as integrating personal attributes and professional training in counseling (Dollarhide et al., 2021). A strong professional identity is essential, as its absence can lead to adverse outcomes such as heightened anxiety due to ambiguous training standards (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003), challenges in transitioning from external validation to internal confidence (Gibson et al., 2021), and unrealistic expectations regarding the counselor role (Moss et al., 2014).

Clinical supervision plays a pivotal role in shaping the professional identity of CITs. Supervision bridges the gap between theoretical instruction and practical application, allowing trainees to make sense of classroom learning in the context of real-world counseling (Cruikshanks & Burns, 2017). Furthermore, supervision is the space where CITs begin to develop an ethical framework for practice and cultivate a sense of identity grounded in professional standards and values (Bledsoe et al., 2019).

### **Clinical Competence**

A core ethical responsibility in the counseling profession is the duty to avoid causing harm to

clients. This principle is codified in Standard A.4.a. of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014), which states that counselors must act to prevent harm and mitigate any unavoidable or unanticipated adverse effects on clients, trainees, or research participants. For CITs, clinical supervision provides a critical space to reflect on personal processes and improve counseling skills, thereby reducing the risk of client harm (Bernard & Goodyear, 2018). Code F.1.a. of the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) reflects that notion by emphasizing that the primary responsibility of supervisors is to monitor the services their supervisees provide and to ensure client welfare and professional development of the supervisee.

As shown in Shurn (2023), research supports the impact of supervision on the development of clinical competence. Shurn (2023) found that supervision enhances self-awareness among trainees, which is directly linked to improved effectiveness with clients. This relationship between self-awareness and competence is a central tenet of Stoltenberg's (2005) Integrated Developmental Model of Supervision. At the third level of this model, considered the stage of advanced development, CITs are expected to demonstrate both strong client conceptualization and the ability to reflect on how their interactions with clients influence their own thoughts, feelings, and behaviors.

### **Ethical Competence**

Ethical decision-making is a critical aspect of counselor development and is deeply rooted in an awareness of personal values (Evans et al., 2012). The ACA Code of Ethics (2014) addresses this through Standard A.4.b., which emphasizes the counselor's responsibility to avoid imposing personal values on clients and to seek appropriate training when working with diverse populations. Ethical competence also involves the continuous monitoring of one's own emotional, physical, and psychological well-being. According to Standard

C.2.g., counselors are required to recognize signs of personal impairment and take appropriate actions, including seeking help or suspending services, to ensure client safety (ACA, 2014).

This ethical responsibility extends to clinical supervisors, who are charged with monitoring the well-being and functionality of their supervisees. Standard F.6.d. states that supervisors may only endorse CITs for licensure, employment, or program completion when they are confident the supervisee is not impaired and can perform counseling duties competently (ACA, 2014). Supervisors also play a preventive role by intervening when signs of impairment arise to avert potential harm to clients and uphold the integrity of the profession.

### **Importance of Clinical Supervision with Underrepresented CITs**

Clinical supervision plays a critical role in the development of counselors in training, especially those from underrepresented backgrounds. Effective supervision not only facilitates professional growth but also creates a space where diverse identities are acknowledged and valued (Fickling et al., 2019). Research underscores the significance of culturally responsive supervision in reducing supervisee nondisclosure and enhancing the supervisory working alliance. For instance, Ertl et al. (2023) found that supervisors who exhibit cultural humility are more likely to foster open and trusting relationships, particularly with diverse supervisees, leading to improved supervisory outcomes.

Additionally, multicultural supervision directly impacts client outcomes (Perez et al., 2023), as supervisors and supervisees may differ in how they perceive the importance of cultural factors in counseling (Perez et al., 2023). Perez et al. (2023) highlighted the necessity of integrating

multicultural competence into supervision, especially for underrepresented counselors in training who may face unique challenges in practice. Complementing this, mentorship emerges as a crucial support system within counselor education programs. According to Litherland et al. (2023), mentorship tailored to the unique needs of diverse trainees enhances their academic and professional development, bridging gaps that may arise from systemic inequities.

The importance of inclusion within supervisory relationships extends beyond clinical training into research contexts. Bager-Charleson et al. (2025) emphasized that diversity-sensitive supervision in research fosters a stronger sense of belonging and supports the academic success of underrepresented students. Peer supervision also plays a vital role, particularly in educational settings, where isolation and workload can hinder counselor development. Brott et al. (2021) advocated for peer clinical supervision as a valuable tool in reinforcing community, offering emotional support, and promoting ethical practice among counselors, particularly those from marginalized backgrounds. Overall, clinical supervision, when approached with cultural awareness, mentorship, and peer support, can significantly enhance the training experience for underrepresented counselor trainees, thereby promoting equity and effectiveness in the counseling profession.

### **Experience of Underrepresented Counselors-in-Training**

In addition to the need for structured guidance in developing professional identity and enhancing clinical and ethical competence, counselors-in-training (CITs) from underrepresented backgrounds often encounter unique stressors, such as marginalization, tokenism, and cultural incongruence, that clinical

supervisors need to recognize and address (Haskins et al., 2020). The counseling field in the U.S. has historically lacked diversity, with the majority of practitioners being older, White, and female (Lam et al., 2013; Riemersma, 2010). For instance, Lam et al. (2013) highlighted the persistent underrepresentation of diverse racial and ethnic groups across the counseling professions. Similarly, a national survey of Marriage and Family Therapists (MFTs) reported that over 90% of respondents identified as White, the average age was 56.4 years, and more than 70% were women (Riemersma, 2010). Given this demographic reality that many underrepresented supervisees may likely be supervised by a White supervisor and lack cultural connection and support during the process, culturally responsive and identity-affirming supervision is essential. Such an approach may support underrepresented CITs' growth and helps dismantle systemic barriers through intentional, empathetic, and equity-focused supervisory practices.

### **Racially/Ethnically Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

CITs from racially and ethnically diverse backgrounds often face unique challenges in navigating academic and professional expectations within counselor education programs. Wofford et al. (2021) observed that culturally diverse students frequently encounter a form of systemic confusion in educational settings, particularly around "decoding" implicit academic and professional norms. These expectations are often rooted in Western-centric frameworks that presume uniform understanding and adherence, overlooking the diverse epistemological and cultural perspectives that international and minority students may bring to the learning environment.

This disconnect can create substantial barriers for CITs whose prior educational and professional experiences were shaped by

different cultural assumptions and norms. As such, clinical supervisors and academic advisors play a pivotal role in facilitating the acculturation process for these trainees. Their ability to support students in interpreting institutional expectations is essential to mitigating confusion and enhancing student success. Moreover, the supervisory relationship itself becomes a critical mechanism for bridging cultural gaps and fostering inclusion. The absence of culturally attuned and supportive supervision may result in academic and professional disorientation and emotional distress, potentially jeopardizing the trainee's development and retention in the program (Wofford et al., 2021).

### **Religiously/Spiritually Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Adams et al. (2015) found that many counselor educators and supervisors lack familiarity and comfort when addressing topics related to religion and spirituality. The authors identified several factors contributing to this gap, including limited knowledge, fear of legal or ethical violations, and perceived irrelevance or lack of interest in the topic. This avoidance can harm counselors-in-training (CITs) from diverse religious or spiritual backgrounds, as it may convey that a significant aspect of their identity is being deliberately overlooked. Such neglect can impair supervisory relationships and hinder the development of a trusting, open environment.

Furthermore, the ACA Code of Ethics (2014) underscored the importance of counselors' competence in engaging with clients' religious and spiritual beliefs non-discriminately. Supervisors play a crucial role in cultivating a supervisory atmosphere that supports CITs in understanding clients' diverse religious and spiritual perspectives and encourages self-awareness regarding how their beliefs may influence their practice. Lee and Watkins (2016) highlighted that supervisors are integral in

fostering this awareness, ensuring that CITs are equipped to navigate religious and spiritual differences with sensitivity and competence, both within the supervisory relationship and in clinical work.

### **Socioeconomically Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Socioeconomic status (SES) is a critical factor that influences students' cultural perspectives, shaping their values, behaviors, and worldviews. Stephens et al. (2012) emphasized the importance of considering SES in understanding the diverse experiences of counselors-in-training (CITs). Clinical supervisors must recognize the role of SES in shaping these trainees' identities and employ strategies that promote their personal and professional development. Moreover, the authors highlighted that students from American middle-class backgrounds are often socialized to value norms of independence, including individual advancement, self-expression, and personal entitlement. In contrast, students from working-class backgrounds tend to prioritize interdependence, such as adjusting to the needs of others and fostering connections (Stephens et al., 2012).

Supervisors should also be mindful of the socioeconomic backgrounds of CITs raised outside of the United States. In these cases, supervisors need to consider factors such as economic capital, environmental uncertainty, and opportunities for choice and control, as these elements may significantly influence the trainees' academic and professional development (Spellman, 2021). By acknowledging and addressing these diverse socioeconomic perspectives, supervisors can create a more inclusive and supportive supervisory environment, ultimately facilitating the growth and success of CITs from all backgrounds.

### **Age Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Understanding the implications of age diversity among CITs is essential to fostering an effective supervisory alliance. Age-related factors influence interpersonal dynamics, self-appraisal, and the degree of openness CITs exhibit during supervision sessions (Clarke & Hartley, 2023; Dana et al., 2008). Clarke and Hartley (2023) emphasized that each age cohort tends to demonstrate distinct behavioral patterns, which can shape the quality and direction of supervisory interactions.

Generational identity also affects how CITs perceive their professional capabilities. Steele (2005) noted that Baby Boomers often value group cohesion and identity, whereas Generation X typically emphasizes autonomy and self-reliance. In contrast, Generation Y tends to appreciate a balance between collectivistic and individualistic orientations. These generational frameworks influence how supervisees view themselves and engage with feedback, structure, and authority in the supervisory relationship. Given these variations, clinical supervisors ought to tailor their approach to align with each supervisee's developmental needs and generational values. By doing so, supervisors can enhance the supervisee's sense of self-efficacy, a key component of counselor development (Kemer, 2025). Intentional responsiveness to generational and developmental differences allows supervisors to foster a more inclusive, supportive, and effective learning environment.

### **Sex/Gender Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Despite deliberate efforts to enhance gender diversity in counselor education programs, male enrollment remains disproportionately low. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics (2014), only 28.9% of professional counselors employed in the United States were male. This ongoing imbalance suggests that male

counselors-in-training (CITs) may encounter unique systemic and cultural barriers during professional development. One such barrier includes faculty and supervisor attitudes, significantly shaping male CITs' educational experiences. These attitudes range from supportive and affirming to dismissive and stigmatizing, potentially influencing students' sense of belonging and professional identity (Moss-Racusin et al., 2012; Sax et al., 2005).

Male CITs may also experience challenges with emotional expression, a critical counseling skill that can be incongruent with traditional norms of male socialization (Sikweyiya, 2025). Additionally, some male counselors have reported instances of client bias or rejection based solely on their gender, further complicating their clinical training experiences. Students identifying as LGBTQIA2S+ similarly face distinct challenges in counselor education programs. Craig et al. (2017) found that LGBTQIA2S+ students often feel burdened with the responsibility of educating peers about LGBTQ-related issues and may be subject to discriminatory comments or microaggressions from classmates or faculty. These dynamics can hinder students' development and sense of safety within their training environments. To address these concerns, clinical supervisors must foster inclusive, culturally responsive supervisory relationships that validate and support diverse identities. Supervisors who are attuned to the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, and professional identity are better equipped to facilitate a safe, growth-oriented space for all CITs. In doing so, they help ensure equitable development, promote ethical practice, and reinforce a strong counselor identity across diverse student populations.

### **Counselors-in-Training with Mental Health Illnesses**

CITs often experience reluctance to disclose their mental health status due to fears of discrimination within academic and clinical environments. Dixon et al. (2019) found that students with mental health diagnoses frequently encountered stigma during their training, which served as a significant deterrent to seeking accommodation and discussing their mental health needs openly. A particularly harmful form of stigma reported by CITs was the misconception that individuals with mental health conditions are inherently less capable of working effectively with clients (Carter & Moran, 2025).

Such stigma can negatively affect a student's professional identity development and overall wellness. Clinical supervisors are uniquely positioned to counteract these challenges and foster a supportive environment for CITs navigating mental health concerns. Supervisors who acknowledge and validate the lived experiences of supervisees contribute to a more inclusive and empathetic training environment (Dixon et al., 2019). By cultivating a space characterized by psychological safety and open communication, supervisors can empower students to advocate for themselves and explore their personal and professional needs without fear of judgment or reprisal. Moreover, supervisors serve a critical role in helping CITs manage the demands of the profession while maintaining their mental health. As Holstun and Bohecker (2024) noted, supervisory relationships that are grounded in trust, empathy, and cultural responsiveness are essential for promoting student growth and resilience. When supervisors normalize mental health struggles and model advocacy and wellness, they contribute to a healthier, more sustainable professional culture.

### **First-Generation Counselors-in-Training**

First-generation CITs often encounter distinct challenges in their academic and professional development due to a lack of familial exposure to higher education's cultural norms and expectations. As Arch et al. (2019) noted, these students frequently enter counselor education programs without prior understanding of academic conventions, which can hinder their ability to navigate institutional systems and meet professional standards effectively.

Research suggests that first-generation students are often members of historically marginalized groups, including individuals from low socioeconomic backgrounds and diverse racial, ethnic, and gender identities (Gardner et al., 2011; Pascarella et al., 2012). As such, they may experience compounded challenges related to access, belonging, and cultural capital within counselor education settings. These intersecting identities and systemic barriers necessitate a nuanced and culturally responsive approach from clinical supervisors.

To effectively support first-generation CITs, supervisors must adopt an intersectional framework that acknowledges and addresses the complexity of their lived experiences (Arch et al., 2019). This includes fostering inclusive supervisory relationships, promoting equity in academic support, and validating the unique strengths and perspectives that first-generation students bring to the counseling profession. By doing so, supervisors can enhance students' self-efficacy, professional identity development, and overall success within the field.

### ***The Intersection of Race, Class, and Gender***

The intersection of race, class, and gender significantly influences the experiences of CITs, often shaping their educational trajectories and professional development in complex ways

(Chan et al., 2018). Understanding these intersecting identities is crucial for counselor educators and supervisors aiming to foster inclusive and supportive training environments. Research indicates that CITs from marginalized racial and ethnic backgrounds frequently encounter systemic barriers that impede their academic success and professional growth (Chan et al., 2018).

Moreover, the concept of testimonial injustice—where individuals' accounts are unjustly discredited due to prejudice—has been explored in healthcare settings, revealing that patients from marginalized backgrounds often experience disbelief or dismissal of their concerns (Andrews et al., 2024). This phenomenon can parallel the experiences of CITs who may feel their perspectives are undervalued within training programs, particularly when their identities intersect across multiple marginalized groups. To address these challenges, it is imperative for counselor education programs to adopt an intersectional framework that acknowledges and actively works against the systemic inequities affecting CITs. This includes implementing culturally responsive pedagogies, providing mentorship opportunities that consider the unique needs of diverse students, and fostering an environment where all trainees feel valued and supported.

### **Implications for Clinical Supervisors**

CITs from underrepresented backgrounds—including those marginalized by race, ethnicity, religion, spirituality, socioeconomic status, age, gender identity, mental health diagnoses, and first-generation status—face distinct challenges throughout their academic and clinical training (Spellman et al., 2021). Clinical supervisors play a critical role in shaping the developmental experiences of these trainees and must attend closely to the supervisory relationship they co-

create with each supervisee (Spellman et al., 2021).

As Jones and Branco (2020) pointed out, establishing a growth-fostering and authentic supervisory alliance is essential for cultivating a safe and inclusive environment. Such a relationship enables CITs to explore and discuss experiences of discrimination, identity-related challenges, and other barriers that may impact their learning and performance. A strong supervisory bond also contributes to supervisees' emotional safety, professional development, and overall sense of belonging in the counseling profession. In addition to fostering supportive relationships, clinical supervisors have an ethical obligation to engage in advocacy efforts both with and on behalf of their supervisees (Jones & Branco, 2020). This includes raising awareness of the systemic barriers CITs may face and working to reduce institutional and interpersonal obstacles to their success (Fickling et al., 2019). Advocacy can take various forms, including modeling inclusive practices, challenging discriminatory policies, and promoting equity within academic and clinical settings (Fickling et al., 2019).

### **Clinical Supervision with Racially/Ethnically Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Clinical supervisors can adopt culturally responsive strategies that acknowledge and address the unique challenges CITs from underrepresented populations face. Firstly, clinical supervisors can incorporate cultural humility in their supervision practice. In supervision, this translates to an openness to learning from supervisees about their cultural identities and experiences. Broaching, the intentional discussion of cultural factors, is essential in addressing issues of race and ethnicity in the supervisory relationship. Jones and Branco (2020) emphasized the interconnectedness of cultural humility and

broaching within the multicultural orientation framework, advocating for supervisors to engage in these practices to enhance the supervisory alliance actively.

Secondly, supervisors are encouraged to follow recommendations for incorporating the Multicultural and Social Justice Counseling Competencies (MSJCC) into their supervisory practices. This involves self-awareness of one's cultural identities, understanding the worldview of the supervisee, and advocating for systemic change. Fickling et al. (2019) highlighted the importance of supervisors intentionally integrating these competencies to support the development of culturally competent counselors.

Thirdly, clinical supervisors need to address power dynamics and parallel processes. Moore (2023) explored the experiences of minority supervisees with parallel processing, where dynamics in the client-counselor relationship mirror those in supervision. Recognizing and addressing these dynamics can lead to more effective supervision and better client outcomes. Lastly, Supervisors can promote reflective practice by encouraging supervisees to explore their cultural identities, biases, and assumptions. Steele (2024) introduced the concept of the cultural humility choice point, a tool to help CITs navigate discussions about culture and identity, fostering greater self-awareness and cultural competence.

### **Clinical Supervision with Religiously/Spiritually Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Clinical supervisors are encouraged to embody cultural humility by engaging in continuous self-reflection and demonstrating openness to their supervisees' diverse religious/spiritual backgrounds. Initiating conversations about religion/spirituality can create a safe space for CITs to explore how their

spiritual beliefs intersect with their counseling practice. Steele (2024) introduced the cultural humility choice point to facilitate discussions on cultural topics, including religious/spiritual, thereby enhancing supervisees' self-awareness and cultural competence.

### **Clinical Supervision with Socioeconomically Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Supervisors must be attuned to the financial constraints that may impact CITs' training experiences. This includes scheduling flexibility, understanding the need for paid employment outside of training, and connecting CITs with financial resources or assistance programs when available (Spellman et al., 2021). The 2024 Counseling Workforce Survey Report pointed out several high-level findings, two of which were related to financial concerns in the counseling profession. Almost half (45%) of the respondents felt not fairly compensated, and 55% cited insufficient pay as a concern. Further, the report indicated that respondents have student loan debts that are 113% higher than the national average (ACA, 2024). CITs from lower socioeconomic backgrounds may experience these financial concerns as a more significant challenge or barrier to overcome while working in the field. Clinical supervisors are in a position to offer integral support to supervisees navigating these challenges.

In general, it is recommended that supervisors incorporate the MSJCC framework into their supervisory practices. This model emphasizes self-awareness, understanding of supervisees' worldviews, the supervisory relationship, and advocacy interventions. By applying this framework, supervisors can better understand the systemic barriers faced by socioeconomically diverse CITs and work collaboratively to address them (Fickling et al., 2019).

### **Clinical Supervision with Age Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Age and generational cohort affiliations are integral components of cultural identity. Golden (2021) emphasized the importance of acknowledging age as a cultural consideration in clinical supervision. Supervisors ought to be aware of their age-related biases and how they may impact the supervisory relationship. Supervisors can enhance the supervisory alliance and promote mutual understanding by fostering an environment that respects and values age diversity. In addition, supervisors need to consider the developmental stage of CITs when tailoring supervision approaches. Younger CITs may require more guidance and support as they navigate the early stages of their careers, while older CITs may bring extensive life experience but face challenges related to returning to academia or adapting to new technologies. Supervisors can facilitate professional growth and competence by individualizing supervision to meet the specific needs of CITs based on their age and experience (Golden, 2021).

### **Clinical Supervision with Sex/Gender Diverse Counselors-in-Training**

Gender-diverse CITs may grapple with decisions around self-disclosure of their identities within professional settings. Supervisors can support CITs by facilitating discussions exploring self-disclosure's implications, helping them make informed choices that align with their personal and professional goals. Research underscores the importance of supervisors being attuned to the complexities of identity integration for trans and gender nonconforming CITs (Bloom, 2024). Moreover, incorporating reflective supervision allows supervisors to examine their biases and assumptions, fostering a more supportive environment for gender-diverse CITs. Additionally, adopting a trauma-informed approach acknowledges the potential for past trauma related to gender identity. It ensures that

supervision is conducted in a manner that is sensitive to these experiences.

### **Clinical Supervision with Counselors-in-Training with Mental Health Illnesses**

The quality of the supervisory relationship significantly influences CITs' well-being. Bradley and Becker (2021) found that a strong supervisory alliance reduces burnout and increases job satisfaction. Supervisors should prioritize building trust, demonstrating empathy, and maintaining open communication to support CITs effectively. In addition, supervisors ought to actively address mental health stigma within training environments. Encouraging discussions about mental health, normalizing help-seeking behaviors, and promoting self-care practices can create a supportive atmosphere for CITs. This approach aligns with the restorative functions of supervision, aiming to enhance CITs' overall well-being (Bradley & Becker, 2021). Furthermore, connecting CITs with peer support networks can offer additional layers of understanding and encouragement. Stefancic et al. (2021) emphasize linking peer specialists to opportunities for mutual support and professional development. Such networks can serve as a resource for CITs to share experiences and coping strategies.

### **Clinical Supervision with First-Generation Counselors-in-Training**

Encouraging first-generation CITs to advocate for their learning needs empowers them to take ownership of their professional development. Supervisors can model self-advocacy behaviors and provide opportunities for CITs to practice these skills within the supervisory context. This empowerment can increase confidence and competence in clinical settings (Chae et al, 2023). Moreover, supervisors can assist first-generation CITs in identifying and accessing academic and professional resources, such as mentorship programs, counseling

organizations, and networking opportunities. Connecting CITs with these resources can enhance their professional identity and provide additional support systems (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2019).

### **Suggestions for Future Research**

Future research can examine how CITs who disclose mental health diagnoses experience professional identity development, particularly concerning stigma, stereotypes, microaggressions, and discrimination within counselor education programs and clinical settings. Such inquiry could illuminate barriers to self-advocacy and professional growth for CITs managing mental health conditions. Moreover, further exploration of the intersectionality of CITs' identities is warranted. Investigating how overlapping aspects of race, ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, sexual orientation, and mental health status shape training experiences could provide insight into systemic inequities and guide the development of inclusive pedagogical and supervisory practices. By studying the impact of these intersectional identities in academic, field, and supervisory contexts, scholars can contribute to creating more equitable and responsive training environments in counselor education. More specifically, future research can shed light on these intersectional identities by exploring strategies for clinical supervisors to help CITs from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to incorporate their epistemological perspectives into their practice. In addition, researchers can identify strategies through which clinical supervisors and counselor educators can increase their competent surrounding topics related to religion and spirituality, as well as SES status and sex/gender of CITs from inside and outside of the United States. Given the variety of cultures and SES around the world and how different sex/gender can be viewed through the variety of cultures and different SES and

religious standpoints, future research can attempt to identify a model for clinical supervisors and counselor educators to develop their competence in these areas to be able to sensitively understand the CITs from these categories, communicate effectively with them, and foster a sense of inclusion and belonging in their interactions. Furthermore, researchers can conduct in-depth studies on the effect of age-related factors not only on CITs, but also on the supervisory relationship itself. The research can emphasize the impact of age differences between CITs and their supervisors in self-appraisal and the degree of openness that CITs demonstrate. Additionally, further research is needed to evaluate the effectiveness of mentorship models and supervisory practices specifically designed to address the needs of first-generation CITs. These students often navigate counselor education without prior exposure to academic norms and may benefit from targeted support that bridges cultural and institutional gaps. Although it is not possible to include all categories of underrepresented CITs in one article (i.e. CITs who are veterans or those with physical differing abilities), future research can expand on these categories and offer strategies to clinical supervisors and counselor educators to understand the CITs better and provide more effective support.

Furthermore, there might be a need for future research to consider the possible impacts of the current political climate and anti-DEI policies on underrepresented CITs. This may include possible internalization of such policies, potential increased biases and stereotypes experienced by CITs in educational/work settings, and the level of helplessness or hopelessness these CITs may have experiences due to these policies. Future research can also study the impact of such policies on how underrepresented CITs relate to their supervisors who may or may not be from underrepresented populations. Researchers can

evaluate how comfortable clinical supervisors are to keep an open communication channel with their CITs to address such concerns and create a welcoming environment for them. Additionally, researchers can study the role of clinical supervisors in supporting underrepresented CITs to navigate possible challenges from these new policies.

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