# **Clinical Supervision**

This program uses a clinical model of supervision. The clinical supervision model promotes an attitude of self-inquiry and problem-solving among practicum students. Practicum students are encouraged to generate their own solutions to challenges confronting them in practicum sites and evaluate the efficacy of their solutions. The core coursework provides the resources necessary for students to engage in the independent problem-solving process. Cooperating professionals and university supervisors serve as ongoing resources. Students will find that questioning and reflective listening are the strategies used most frequently by their supervisors. This is in direct contrast to more directive strategies typical of other approaches to supervision. Such a reflective approach may at times feel frustrating; in the long run, however, it will contribute to competence and confidence in the practicum student. The following pages further clarify the assumptions guiding this model and provide an overview of the steps in the supervision process.

**Assumptions about Adult Learners**

* They have individual abilities, skills, and needs.
* They are at different levels in their professional development.
* They must perceive a need to change if change is to occur.
* They want to be involved in planning and evaluating their own growth.
* They have the cognitive and emotional resources for solving their own problems.

**Principles of Supervision**

* The role of the supervisor is to function as a resource for self-directed professional development.
* Supervision should focus on professional growth rather than on deficits.
* Participatory supervision results in more commitment to change than does directive supervision.
* Supervision should address a mutually identified goal.
* Supervision should provide a safe framework for “practicing” new roles or skills.
* Supervision should emphasize objective observation and analysis, so individuals can make their own judgments.
* Mutual problem-solving is a major supervisory approach.

**The Cycle of Clinical Supervision**

1. Pre-observation meeting
   1. The university supervisor and practicum student meet and discuss the focus of the observation and the method of recording data. The practicum student directs the focus of the visit, with the supervisor’s help in narrowing the focus to a manageable size. Resources are shared.
2. Observation
   1. The practicum student briefs the university supervisor about the daily schedule, current activity, nature of concerns (e.g., questions, focus of the observation, last minute changes), and identifies the children involved in the observation by first name only.
   2. The university supervisor reviews procedures for recording observation notes/data in preparation for the observation.
   3. Observation begins. The university supervisor records data/notes. If appropriate, the practicum student may also record data/notes.
   4. After the observation, the practicum student briefly discusses any “critical incidents,” poses questions and concerns and generally comments on the observation. The university supervisor may respond to any immediate concerns. However, in-depth discussion should be conducted during the scheduled feedback session.
   5. Time allotted to 2a, 2b, and 2c should depend on the setting and other duties that the practicum student may be assigned, either preceding or following the activity targeted for observation.
3. Post-observation meeting
   1. The practicum student and university supervisor should organize their observation notes separately.
   2. A feedback meeting is held to compare notes, discuss salient issues related to the observation, reflect on the observation, and engage in problem-solving as needed. The university supervisor will provide copies of the observation records and a written summary of the post-observation meeting for the practicum student and cooperating professional. Copies of all written feedback should be kept in the student’s file on Box.
4. Post-observation reflection
   1. The practicum student should reflect on the observation and post-observation meeting and summarize their thoughts about the observation and own professional growth.