Taking Full Responsibility: the Ethics of Supervision in Behavior Analytic Practice

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Abstract The supervision of professionals in the field of behavior analysis is multifaceted. The BACB® Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysis provides guidance for effective supervisory practices, as supervision impacts both the supervisee and the consumers. The purpose of this article is (1) to discuss rationales and consequences relative to supervision issues, (2) to provide directions for professional development in each of the seven identified supervisory areas within the code, and (3) to set the occasion for critical discourse relative to supervision. Case examples are used to illustrate each of the seven supervisory subcomponents of the "Behavior Analysts as Supervisors" section of the Code. A rationale is provided for each component, as well as a discussion of possible undesirable consequences resulting from not following the rule. While the code provides clear expectations of the desired behavior, this article explores more of the subtle nuances inherent in each section of the supervision code, with the goal of achieving a better understanding of the Code and enhancing supervisory skills.

Keywords Ethics · Mentoring · Supervisee · Supervision · Supervisor · Supervisory

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The field of behavior analysis relies heavily on supervision to shape and maintain the skills of professionals. Supervision is multifaceted, involving competence in the specific areas of practice, establishing clear performance expectations, ensuring skill mastery, correcting performance errors and issues when they arise, and keeping supervisees motivated such that the desired performance continues (Reid, Parsons, & Green, 2012, p. 3–4). All individuals seeking any level of registry or certification from the Behavior Analyst Certification Board® (BACB®) require supervision from a qualified Board Certified Behavior Analyst during the accumulation of experience hours. Individuals who become Registered Behavior Technicians™ (RBT™) or Board Certified Associate Behavior Analysts® (BCaBA®) must continue to receive ongoing supervision to maintain their status. The BACB Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts (hereafter referred to as the Code), includes a section devoted to "Behavior Analysts as Supervisors" that covers specific issues related to supervisory activities (Professional and Ethical Compliance Code for Behavior Analysts 5.07, Behavior Analyst Certification Board, 2014a, b). While this paper cites the current code system, it is assumed that the relevance of the rationales and risks presented herein transcend a particular structure and will continue to apply to future versions of the Code.

Supervisory practices not only impact supervisees and consumers directly but also have implications for the field of behavior analysis and for future BCBAs and consumers. As individuals move into the role of providing supervision to others, it is likely that they will engage in the behavior modeled for them by past supervisors. In this way, an endless cycle of either ethical and productive behavior or unethical and inappropriate or harmful behavior may be created. The BACB provides ongoing guidance through the website and newsletters regarding the schedule and nature of supervisory

activities for each level of practice. The BACB also provides, through the Code, ethical requirements and a vehicle for disciplinary action when violations of the Code occur. The guidance and requirements of the BACB are described in a manner that should produce rules following behavior, wherein the rules exert antecedent control over the behavior, as opposed to individuals contacting the direct environmental contingencies (Skinner, 1969). The consequences of unethical practice are not always clear. Furthermore, it is not guaranteed that every instance of unethical behavior will contact consequences that shape the individual away from engaging in that response. For that reason, disciplines develop ethical rules and consequences to guide practitioners when direct contingencies may not provide sufficient protection. The Code was informed by the ethical codes of related disciplines and then tailored to behavior analytic practice by an expert panel (BACB, September 2014a, b). The Code contains only rules, not examples or elaborations. There remains a need for resources that provide a more in depth description and discussion of the environmental contingencies related to ethics and supervision. Such resources should assist behavior analysts in engaging in a full and thoughtful application of the Code and contribute to a cycle of ethical responding across generations of behavior analysts.

Developing an understanding of the rationales for the specific supervisory subsections of the Code, as well as exploring the potential detrimental consequences that could result from failure to adhere to the Code, may facilitate a deeper understanding of the rules, conditions, and requirements. This, in turn, may lead to a more robust ability to critically apply the information to the wide variety of real life situations in which a behavior analyst may find herself. It is likely that responding in a manner that comports with the Code is, in some circumstances, in contrast with the first response that might be emitted, particularly by a novice behavior analyst. It is also possible that optimal responding in accordance with the Code, in some instances, requires more effort. In short, engaging in a critical analysis of the rationale and possible consequences surrounding the ethics of supervision may help us to better understand the expectations set forth, which may lead to behavior analysts proactively engaging in behavior more aligned with the Code, even when that behavior is effortful.

The purpose of this paper is threefold: (1) to provide a discussion of the rationales and possible consequences relative to specific ethical supervision issues, (2) to provide directions for professional development in each of the identified areas, and (3) to set the occasion for critical discourse relative to supervision components and contingencies. The paper was developed to add to the body of literature and resources appropriate for ethics courses, supervision activities, journal clubs, and personal professional development. It is important to clarify that whereas supervision can refer to activities carried out in the course of overseeing a clinical case, it can also

refer to the activities provided directly to the individual supervisee, and this paper focuses on the latter. The information provided is gleaned from supervision research, both within and outside of the field of behavior analysis, as well as our collective 80+ years of experience as supervisors. In the following sections, we review each of the Code's seven supervisory subsections. We provide a rationale for why the specific rule was likely included, as well as a discussion of the possible undesirable consequences that might arise should an individual fail to uphold the code. For each subsection, we also provide specific case examples and development resources. The case examples included are composites of actual cases, wherein specific details (e.g., names, locations, clinical settings) have been altered to ensure confidentiality. Finally, the appendix includes a list of potential questions and activities that may act as a study guide or a method for assessing level of understanding of the code to be used in courses, professional development workshops, or during supervision activities.

"Behavior Analysts as Supervisors"

This section of the Code is devoted to supervision and indicates that a supervisor's scope of responsibility is broad. Specifically, it states that the supervisor "must take full responsibility for all facets of this undertaking." (BACB Code, 2014a, b, p.13). This language sets the tone that supervision duties should be taken seriously and only with a full understanding of the requirements and responsibility that come with this position. It is incumbent on the supervisor to have a deep understanding of these requirements, to behave in accordance with them, and to shape the behavior of supervisees. Before beginning to provide supervision, we suggest that a behavior analyst reread this section of the Code, along with this article, and engage in a self-assessment to ensure that she fully understands the scope of the role.

5.01 Supervisory Competence: "Behavior Analysts Supervise Only Within Their Areas of Defined Competence"

This subcode of 5.0 instructs the supervisor to provide supervisory activities that are inline with the supervisor's area of competence. This directly aligns with code 1.02, indicating that a behavior analyst's clinical, teaching, and research activities are restricted by the individual's level of competence in those activities or topics. It also agrees with 1.05 that requires non-discriminatory interactions. Furthermore, if the behavior analyst does not have the needed competencies, they are required to make referrals or get training or consultation in order to competently meet the needs of the situation. Subcodes 5.02, 1.02, and 1.05 are critical in protecting consumers from

receiving services from individuals who are not equipped to practice in a given area. These subcodes also function to protect supervisees from developing faulty or inadequate repertoires, which provides a degree of future protection to all consumers and supervisees with whom the individual supervisee may eventually work. Furthermore, there is indication that a supervisor's competence will affect their ability to effectively train in the particular area of practice (McGimsey, Greene & Lutzker, 1995). Finally, these codes ensure the integrity of the field, including clinical practice and research, by restricting areas of specialization to those who are appropriately trained in a given topic or area.

One can imagine a wide variety of examples that pertain to practicing outside of competency. For example, experience exclusively with adolescents may not immediately translate to the ability to provide effective supervision to those serving very young consumers or gerontology consumers due to difference across the consumer's life span (e.g., goals, behaviors, stakeholders, physiologies, procedures, settings) that will affect the outcomes of intervention and must be considered in planning. Areas of competency might also include diagnoses of the consumers. For example, providing behavior analytic services to cognitively intact adults with mental health needs will not likely prepare a behavior analyst to supervise an individual providing clinical services to children with intellectual disabilities. Similarly, one may have worked with individuals who have a single diagnosis but not with those who have a dual diagnoses, such as a child with autism and Down's syndrome.

In addition to age and diagnostic markers, there are also considerations related to competent supervision under varied cultural conditions. Some of these may involve legal issues, some ethical dilemmas, and some cultural conflicts. The Code clearly states it is the responsibility of the behavior analyst to either be culturally competent or to obtain training and supervision to become competent (BACB Code, 2014a, b, p. 5). At the same time, the code was developed in a predominately western hegemonic context and contains rules that may appear to be at odds with some groups. Guiding the supervisee through these areas is clearly within the domain of supervision. The supervisor must have competency in these areas in order to competently assist the supervisee. For example, there may be issues related to parental rights for a same-sex couple in localities where same-sex marriages are not recognized. Such issues could affect how informed consent for treatment is carried out and how a supervisor would direct her staff to navigate such situations in non-discriminatory and beneficial ways. Other examples include conflicts related to cultural norms, such as hospitality. A skilled supervisor can help the supervisee with behaving in a respectful manner and to comply with the Code without appearing rude or uncivilized. It should be noted, however, that for some of these issues, there is no easy solution. For example, in some cultures, offering

and accepting a glass of tea is the equivalent of saying please and thank you. The Code was not developed by those cultures, and therefore, some cultural negotiation and communication may be in order. Given that these situations are varied and complex, the critical thing that a supervisor can do is to help supervisees learn to identify potentially difficult situations and engage in thoughtful and critical problem solving. Similarly, if a family maintains a particular method of daily repeated prayers that is not shared by supervisees, the supervisor should be in a skilled position to help educate the supervisee as to how to accommodate the family practices into treatment in a way that is accepting and non-judgmental. The above examples and descriptions are not exhaustive. For a discussion of the importance of cultural awareness, as well as strategies for assessing and developing such awareness, we direct readers to the article by Hughes Fong, Catagnus, Brodhead, Quigley, and Field (2016) and a seminal text by Lynch and Hansen (1992). The critical point is that the supervisor understands her competencies and has the skills to identify when a competency is lacking and make a referral, decline supervision, or pursue knowledge and skills that will allow competent supervision.

Consider a BCBA supervisor named June who completed her training and post certification work in early intervention preschools for children with autism where she focused primarily on skill acquisition programming and addressing mild problem behavior. The company June currently works for provides early intervention as well as residential services for adults with severe problem behavior. June begins to provide supervision for an individual pursuing certification who works in the adult residential program. The supervisee is assigned to a new adult consumer who engages in high levels of severe self-injury resulting in tissue damage. June's supervisee indicates that he would like to conduct a functional analysis (FA) to determine the function of the behavior, but June's only training on FA consists of reading a few articles in a course in her Master's program. She feels confident that collecting descriptive data will provide the needed information about the function. June instructs the supervisee to collect descriptive data for 2 weeks and, upon review of the data, concludes that the self-injury is automatically maintained and oversees the development of the intervention plan. To June's surprise, after a month of implementing the intervention, not only has the consumer's behavior not reduced but it has also increased in frequency and intensity.

June's situation, which is all too common, illustrates the increased risk of harm that consumers may be exposed to when behavior analysts provide supervision in an area that is not commensurate with their experience and training. This example could have taken a different turn if June had acknowledged that this case was outside her area of competence. In such a case, she could have discussed this with her own supervisor and identified other options, such as transferring

the case and supervisee to a clinician with experience assessing and treating severe problem behavior.

It should be clarified that a behavior analyst is not forever restricted to practice and supervise in the narrow area of his original training. Behavior analysts can access mentorship, supervision, and experience in new areas and with new populations. There is some evidence that working across areas, with guidance, might even strengthen problem-solving repertoires (Trivette, 2005). LeBlanc, Heinicke, and Baker (2012) provide guidance on how to develop competency in new areas. They suggest four areas for development: (1) contacting the literature related to the new competency area, (2) engaging with professional groups in the areas of practice, (3) directly pursuing training and supervision on the specifics related to the new area, and, finally, (4) identifying any particular credentialing requirements for practicing in that area. In June's case, she should have either declined supervision of this trainee or pursued additional supports, such as those described by LeBlanc and colleagues, so that she could ethically supervise outside of her area of competence. In doing so she would have provided her trainee with the effective skills and the consumer would have received appropriate treatment and not been subjected to further harm.

5.02 Supervisory Volume

Supervisors are responsible for shaping future behavior analysts, which will determine, in large part, the course of the field. One of the key components of behavioral intervention is an emphasis on measureable effectiveness. To be an ethical supervisor of practitioners, it is critical that behavior analysts are thoughtful in taking on a volume of supervisory activities that is commensurate with their availability to provide high quality, effective supervision resulting in high quality, effective behavioral analytic services. In other words, subcode 5.02 is concerned with the number of supervisees a behavior analyst accepts supervisory responsibility for at any given time. Behavior analysts taking on a volume of supervisory activities beyond their ability to be effective may result in the failure to develop adequate skill repertoires or the development of problematic skills, with their supervisees. This, in turn, could be harmful to consumers, or to future supervisees, should the person become a supervisor.

Why would a supervisor take on so many supervisees that his effectiveness is compromised? In many cases, it appears that supervisors are responding under negative reinforcement contingencies. That is, there are a lot of people who need help and training. Many behavior analysts enter the field to alleviate problems and have an inclination to help everyone (to stop the aversive situation). That is not possible. The ethical response is to only supervise as many people as can be fit logistically and technically into the supervisors' schedule while

maintaining effectiveness for consumers and supervisees. There are, of course, less praiseworthy situations. There may be substantial financial benefit to supervisors (positive reinforcement contingency) or supervisors may be directed by employers to take on an inappropriate number of supervisees (a coercive contingency). Finally, sometimes, the problem is a skill deficit, such as lack of organization and planning skills.

Let us consider the case of Davida. She works in a midsized city in a region that has very few behavior analysts. Like the rest of the world, there are an increasing number of children with autism in her city in need of effective services. Davida was fortunate that she had finished both her undergraduate and graduate degrees in behavior analysis and was one of the first BCBAs in her region. She was also responsible for helping start an affiliate ABAI group in her region and a treatment center in her town. Over the course of 5 years, she continually encouraged her colleagues to pursue graduate training to meet the needs of her area. Davida is enthusiastic and has a lot of energy, but over the course of time, she found herself committing to the supervision of more and more staff and colleagues. She tried combinations of group, individual, and teleconferencing supervision to effectively manage the volume. She eventually found herself canceling supervisory sessions, not scheduling meetings within the time frames required by the BACB, and spending less and less time actually observing and giving feedback on performance. She began to get a terrible reputation among other service providers, and eventually, the funding was withdrawn from her center due to abuse allegations that staff, which she was supervising, harmed a child in her center.

Davida's case demonstrates an unfortunate outcome of inappropriate supervisory volume. When she had an appropriate number of supervisees, she was an effective practitioner and supervisor. However, as the volume of supervisees increased, her efficacy decreased. Ultimately, section 5.02 of the Code clearly indicates that one should take a functional approach in determining supervision caseload. Specifically, supervisors are directed to take on only the volume of supervisory cases or duties that will allow for delivery of effective, high quality supervision to the supervisees (BACB Code, 2014a, b).

With regard to Davida's example, several courses of action may have prevented her ethical downfall. First, a clear schedule that allowed for appropriate supervision time for each supervisee, as well as her other clinical responsibilities (if there were no slots in her schedule, she could not add supervisees); second, supervisory evaluation mechanisms (for more detail, see the proceeding section on evaluation); and finally, a community of practice to support her professional development as a supervisor and a leader in her community. Ellis and Glenn (1995), Lattal and Clark (2005), and Bailey and Burch (2010) offer suggestions for creating environments that support ethical and effective behavior analytic repertoires. Some of these recommendations involve creating ongoing

verbal communities that review rules and provide feedback and having trusted colleagues to help problem solve through ethical dilemmas. If Davida had organizational structures, evaluation feedback, and a community of practice, she would likely have had a different outcome and been able to continue her leadership role in her region.

5.03 Supervisory Delegation

The supervisory relationship extends to the tasks and undertakings the supervisor assigns to supervisees. Therefore, it is incumbent on the supervisor to confirm that the supervisee has the required skill set to effectively carry out a given task. Allowing a supervisee to carry out a task for which s/he does not have the requisite skill set may expose the supervisee, coworkers, and/or consumers to safety or ethical risks (e.g., implementing a behavior reduction intervention could lead to injury; addressing a critical topic with a family or staff could lead to ethical violations).

It is also part of the supervisory responsibility to identify a task or activity that a supervisee should be able to carry out but cannot (due to lack of skill) to be independent and effective. It is then the supervisor's responsibility to identify or create an opportunity for the supervisee to acquire the said skill. Failure to ensure that a supervisee acquires the skills necessary to safely and ethically carry out the critical tasks associated with her jobs puts future consumers and coworkers at risk of harm. In addition, failure to address a supervisee's needs and deficits may model for the supervisee that it is acceptable for her to do so when she assumes a supervisory role in the future.

Let us examine the case of Michael. Michael has a team of RBTs working under his supervision in a community-based residential facility. Michael is the BCBA-D responsible for the programming and supervision of five young men with disabilities who live in a group home. One of the supervisees, Carmen, has worked in the homes for several months. She went through initial RBT training, reaching mastery criteria quickly and beyond expectations. She performs very well on all her assigned tasks. Michael encourages Carmen to pursue a Bachelor's degree and BCaBC certification. The agency where Michael works is opening up a new home and as his time is spread more thinly, he begins to ask Carmen to take more responsibility. The parents of one of the young men would like him to come home for weekend visits, and they request training on how to manage his challenging behavior. Michael asks Carmen to train the parents. She gives them a copy of the behavior management plan and describes the procedures. The young man goes home and attacks his younger sister, leaving her in the hospital with multiple injuries.

Carmen had not gone through training to deal with behavior challenges across multiple settings, and RBTs are only to assist, not conduct, parent training. Further, Carmen had not received instruction on how to implement effective training, telling a parent what to do is not the same as training. Although Carmen performed well in her RBT role, training the young man's parents was beyond the scope of her abilities and responsibilities and should not have been delegated.

One of the best ways to prevent such ethical difficulties in supervision is to have clear descriptions of both responsibilities and prohibitions. In this way, all parties are clear on which tasks and activities are allowable. In this case, the RBT role is relatively new and has restricted clinical responsibilities that are specified on the BACB website. Listing out the tasks and actions that are allowable and prohibited can have two direct benefits. First, and foremost, it allows the supervisor to have a conversation with the individual about the practical and ethical implications of proper training and preparation. Second, reviewing the lists may provide the supervisee with a clear understanding of what the job requirements might be for the next level of her professional development.

5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training

Using the principles of behavior analysis to design effective, evidence-based supervision and training is best practice and increases the probability of achieving optimal outcomes. Doing so also ensures that high-quality supervision is modeled for the supervisee. Failure to model use of effective supervision and training may result in the supervisee providing poorly designed, ineffective, or coercive supervision in the future.

There are two key points to understand when designing effective training and supervision programs for behavior analysts. First, there are specific disciplinary requirements describing the features of effective, evidence-based supervision that is grounded in the knowledge of basic principles (BACB, Supervisor's curriculum). These requirements entail the use of effective and ethical methods that meet defined goals, as well as professional and legal mandates. Second, supervision, like intervention, has a research evidence base and the supervisor has a responsibility to keep up with advances in training. That is, new procedures will be developed and evaluated, contributing to the evidence base on effective supervision. This research literature should be contacted on a regular basis and incorporated into supervision as appropriate. Carr and Briggs (2010) offer a series of recommendations for maintaining regular contact with the literature. At the most basic level, the supervisor must have access to journals publishing research on effective methods for teaching adults to produce behavior change. Careful selection and arrangement for frequent accessibility (e.g., bookmarks, alerts, aggregators, journal reading, and discussion clubs) are most likely to put the supervisor in contact with relevant advances.

Let us look at two examples, one regarding effective training procedures and one regarding ethical misconduct. Jamal was a BCBA who had been in practice for 5 years and a supervisor for 1 year. He was responsible for the supervision of staff in an early intervention program. His typical supervision practice was to conduct assessments, develop baseline measures, design and implement the general teaching protocol himself, and then to train the staff using behavioral skills training. Modeling was an important component, as timing and reinforcer selection were critical to the success of the procedures. Jamal was to supervise Lucy, a woman 20 years his senior who presented as having extensive knowledge of the procedures. Jamal felt disrespectful and self-conscious modeling for an older person who seemed to know what she was doing. He gave her the protocols without the modeling component of training. The data from the children she served suggested that she did not implement the procedures correctly; they made very little progress. Regardless of Lucy's confidence in her skills, Jamal should have provided the modeling as part of the initial training package. At the very minimum, he should have observed her following training and provided follow-up coaching and modeling as soon as it became clear that the procedures were not implemented correctly.

Our second example focuses on Robert who was a BCBA supervising in a facility that served people with traumatic brain injury (TBI). The facilities were located across several states; some states required certification of TBI practitioners, and one of the states did not allow funded TBI practice under the professional title of "behavior analyst." Robert met the qualifications mandated by all the involved states, as he was both a BCBA and a rehab counselor. His supervisees, however, did not meet the licensure requirements and were billing and practicing as behavior analysts. He allowed this practice to continue. This was a problem of meeting locality requirements and Robert was knowingly allowing his supervisees to commit fraud. Although he supervised their practice in a highly effective evidence-based manner and his staff demonstrated appropriate and proficient use of techniques producing favorable outcomes, this was an ethical breach of 5.04, as they were not meeting the legal requirements of the state that required a license. Robert should not have allowed the staff to work and bill as behavior analysts.

5.05 Communication of Supervision Conditions

The BACB requires supervisors to provide the supervisee with a written breakdown of the supervision conditions at the beginning of the supervisory relationship. Providing clear descriptions of the scope and content of supervision allows for both parties to make an informed agreement to proceed. A technological description of the scope of the relationship ensures that each person understands the requirements of the

supervisory relationship (e.g., time requirements, content to be covered, determination of skill and concept mastery, conditions under which a supervisor may refuse to sign a supervision form, etc.) and will likely reduce future misunderstandings. Engaging in a thoughtful and thorough review of the supervisory relationship is one of the first opportunities for a behavior analyst to model for the supervisee.

Entering into a supervisory relationship without making expectations clear at the outset may result in a mismatch between the supervisee and the supervisor's perceptions about things such as the purpose and scope of the relationship. This could lead to confusion and disputes about which activities and tasks are appropriate for the parties to expect of one another or whether a task or content area has been met. It is possible that these issues could lead to a supervisor refusing to sign supervision forms and to a supervisee losing experience hours. Behavior analysts can access practice guideline articles specific to supervision that provide recommendations for structuring supervision for success (Sellers, Valentino, & LeBlanc, in 2016; Turner, Fisher, & Luiselli, 2016).

To illustrate some of the potential issues resulting from failing to clearly communicate the supervision conditions, let us take a look at the case of Tyson and Sarah. Sarah is a BCBA with 4 years of experience providing supervision to individuals accruing fieldwork experience. She is providing supervision to Tyson who works as a paraprofessional in a special education classroom. She takes notes for herself at the end of each supervision meeting and assumes that Tyson is doing the same. She spends several supervision meetings discussing dimensions of applied behavior analysis with Tyson, but based on her notes, she determines that he is not mastering the concepts. At the next supervision meeting, she tells Tyson that she will not sign his supervision forms until he masters these concepts. Tyson is confused, as he had no idea that she would withhold her signature, nor how she was measuring his performance; he thought that they were just discussing the concepts. Tyson submits a complaint with the BACB for a potential violation of Code 5.07.

In Sarah's scenario, the issue is not that she had certain performance standards or that she wanted to withhold signing off on the hours, the issue is that she did not clearly outline and discuss with Tyson the performance expectations and conditions under which she might refuse to provide her signature. This could have been avoided by taking the time to systematically outline and review critical components. As behavior analysts, we should use the tools and strategies provided to us by our science in all facets of professional activity. Borrowing from the behavior skills training (BST) literature, supervisors should implement the first two steps of behavior skills training (description and written summary) at the start of the supervisory relationship to clearly indicate the scope of the supervisory activities (Parsons, Rollyson, & Reid, 2012).

5.06 Providing Feedback to Supervisees

Because the focus of the supervisory experience is to gain knowledge and skills, positive and corrective feedbacks are essential components of that process. The supervisor should design systems using the principles of applied behavior analysis to ensure that the desired effects are obtained (that is, shaping and acquisition of skills to criterion). Failure to use effective feedback and reinforcement may result in the supervisee not acquiring a skill or acquiring ineffective, faulty, or potentially harmful skills. Furthermore, if poor feedback and reinforcement systems are modeled for the supervisee, the supervisee may employ the same methods once s/he becomes a supervisor.

Given that behavior is most effectively shaped when consequences closely follow the relevant behavior, supervisors should design systems that allow delivery of reinforcement and feedback in a timely manner. This increases the likelihood that the desired change in the supervisee's performance will occur and also models effective supervisory behavior for the supervisee. Because the supervisor is responsible for signing off (or not signing off) on the experience hours, the supervisor must collect data to document areas covered, skills acquired, persistent deficits, feedback provided, and other relevant information. A supervisor's failure to document progress and feedback provided to the supervisee prevents the supervisor from assessing the data and using those data to make decisions about supervisory activities. Lack of documentation may also result in future disputes should the supervisor refuse to sign a supervision form or elect to discontinue the supervisory relationship. Behavior analysts can access the field's ample resources on reinforcement for guidance (Bailey & Burch, 2010; Lattal, 2012; Reid et al., 2012; Turner et al., 2016).

For this section, we will discuss the case of Jack, a BCBA with 2 years of experience of supervision to clinical staff at a center for children with autism. Jack conducts in vivo observations of his supervisees, as well as office meetings. During in vivo observations, he observes quietly and does not take notes, as he does not want to intimidate the supervisees. He is very pleasant in his interactions with his supervisees, and in meetings, he provides frequent general praise statements. However, he rarely provides any sort of critical evaluative or corrective feedback, despite the fact that each of his supervisees has at least one area of significant concern to him. When Jack does provide corrective feedback, it is typically during meetings in his office, up to a week after the observation occurred, and it presented as "something to consider working on." As a result, his supervisees perceive that they are doing very well and do not engage in critical self-evaluation. A few supervisees who were jointly supervised by a BCBA who was more direct and timely with her feedback have asked to be supervised solely by Jack. Another supervisee of Jack's demonstrated significant and consistent performance issues resulting in stalled acquisition for several consumers. When Jack finally provided an unfavorable performance evaluation for one of his supervisees, she became very upset, stating that he had not addressed the concerns nor did he provide her with documentation.

Jack's case highlights several possible risks associated with poor feedback and reinforcement systems. On the one hand, providing general praise might make a supervisee feel comfortable, but it does not shape up desired repertoires. Doing so might also result in a false sense of competency and an inability to evaluate and tact one's own strengths and deficits. On the other hand, failing to provide timely and specific feedback about performance issues may result in the development of insufficient skills and negatively impact the progress of consumers.

5.07 Evaluating the Effects of Supervision

It is required that supervisors evaluate the effectiveness of the supervision provided so the s/he can make data-based decisions related to continuing with the supervision activities or making modification to enhance effectiveness. Supervision is evaluated at three different levels: (1) consumer performance, (2) staff performance, and (3) supervisor performance. The supervisor must be able to assess if the supervision activities are effective at establishing a successful supervisory relationship (i.e., the supervisee regularly attends meetings, completes tasks, seeks out the supervisor's feedback and guidance, makes changes to own behavior based on supervisor feedback), increasing the supervisee's knowledge, skills, and effectiveness in the targeted areas (i.e., consumers make progress, staff implementation with fidelity) and establishing a relationship between supervision practices and consumer and staff performance. If changes need to be made, the supervisor must evaluate if those changes were effective at producing the desired effects. In evaluating the effectiveness and outcomes of the BA's own supervision, s/he models evidence-based supervisory/training practices and data-based decision making for the supervisee.

If the supervisor fails to evaluate the effectiveness of the supervision provided, three risks are posed. First, the supervisor could be providing effective supervision but not specifically evaluating the effects, which may reduce the supervisor's ability to replicate those effects with subsequent supervisees. Second, the supervisor could continue to provide ineffective supervision, which increases potential risks to current and future consumers, as well as poses the risk of the supervisee emulating the ineffective supervision practices in the future. Third, the supervisor could unknowingly provide damaging supervision, thereby doing harm to the current supervisee and potentially consumers, as well as the future risks listed in the second point.

Critically evaluating the effects of supervision is perhaps one of the hardest areas of the supervisor's responsibilities. Building in the time and systems to evaluate across consumer, supervisee, and supervisor performance and pinpoint if the barriers reside in the supervisor's behavior can be effortful and require a willingness to engage in self reflection. A functional relationship between a supervisor's behavior and consumer and staff performance can sometimes be difficult to evaluate. The BACB Supervisor Curriculum Outline recommends a multipronged approach with multiple sources of data that include objective measures of performance goals, as well social validity measures at each of the three levels (BACB, Supervisor's Curriculum, 2012). Data systems for consumer behavior are well established, as this is a cornerstone of behavior analytic practice (Greenwood & McConnell, 2013; Taubman, Leaf, & McEachin, 2011), and systems for observing staff behavior also enjoy a robust literature (Greenwood, Carta, Arreaga-Mayer, & Rager, 1991; Quilitch, 1975; Weinkauf, Zueg, Anderson & Ala'i-Rosales, 2011). Recommendations and resources for measuring supervisory behavior have increased in the last few years (Harchick, Sherman, Sheldon, & Strouse, 1992; Reid et al., 2012; Sellers et al., 2016; Turner et al., 2016). All of these resources provide examples of procedures, operational definitions, and protocols. Some like the Greenwood et al. (1991) resource are books providing multilayered and complete examples for evaluation systems. Others, such as Turner et al. (2016), provide downloadable supervisory evaluation forms. Finally, experienced groups like Sellers et al. (2016) provide recommendations for multitiered evaluations that include consumer acquisition measures and feedback and survey protocols. There are many ways to evaluate the behaviors and environments of consumers, supervisees, and supervisors. It is a complex process, but supervisors fortunately can turn to these, and many other, resources for guidance.

To illustrate the complexities of this process, let us review the case of Xuan. She contracted with a public school to supervise the staff and oversee the programming in a self-contained special education classroom. Xuan provided training but did not measure performance and had no indicators of mastery. She did conduct regular observations of the staff using treatment fidelity checklists and posted performance-specific feedback in a prominent place in the classroom. The treatment fidelity data were initially low, but over time, they increased. At no point did she solicit feedback from the team regarding the effectiveness or quality of the supervision she was providing. Because of that, it came as a shock to Xuan when the principal met with her to revoke her contract, explaining that the staff felt that she was not providing high-quality supervision services. They noted that they were embarrassed by the treatment fidelity data that was publicly posted without warning, and that when they approached Xuan about it, she told them that they just needed to pay more

attention during trainings. They shared that they thought the only reason that their treatment fidelity data increased was because they sought outside support and stayed after school to practice with each other to master the skills. Because Xuan did not collect performance measures during training, it was impossible for Xuan, or an outside evaluator, to determine if the staff members were acquiring the skills as a result of the training. Furthermore, because she did not seek any feedback from the staff about the desirability and impact of the supervision she was providing, she had no idea that the staff did not like the public posting of feedback, felt that the training was inadequate, or that they were putting in additional time to secure effective training.

Xuan's situation highlights the need for behavior analysts to be technological with regard to their supervisory practices, measure the effects of those practices, and evaluate those data. Specifically, in addition to taking direct measures of staff and consumer performance, supervisors should find other ways to assess the effects of supervision, such as asking directly for feedback or using surveys. Had Xuan been soliciting feedback and monitoring the staff and her own behavior throughout the supervision process, the outcomes may have been quite different. There are numerous guidelines and examples that Xuan could have turned to for support, beginning with the BACB Supervisory Curriculum Outline that outlines the critical components of effective supervision (BACB, Supervisor's Curriculum, 2012) and texts containing data systems for evaluation at multiple levels (Reid et al., 2012). Furthermore, Xuan could have accessed the article by Turner et al. (2016) and used the provided evaluation form for the purpose of having the supervisee rate the supervisor's behavior and the content of the supervisory activities.

Evaluation at each level allows responsible for supervision. That is, if there is *measurable evidence* that (1) the consumer is making progress, (2) the staff is performing with competence and fidelity, and (3) the supervision is being carried out in an evidence-based, socially valued, and effective manner, then the behavior analyst is functioning within the ethical boundaries of BACB supervision requirements. Furthermore, evaluation is the mechanism to insure that the purpose of supervision is fulfilled in that high-quality services are provided that result in consumer improvement and that the staff is fully supported by the BCBA supervisor in producing these outcomes.

Conclusion

The BACB Code for behavior analysts provides the supervisor with an entire section outlining the requirements aimed at ensuring that BCBAs provide ethical supervision. These rules are meant to exert antecedent control over the supervisor and supervisee's behavior. It is possible that rule following is

enhanced when the rule-follower is aware of the rationale behind the rule, as well as the potential negative outcomes to be avoided by following the rule. Whereas the Code provides clear expectations of the desired behavior, it is beyond the scope of such a document to include in depth rationales, examples, and resources.

The purpose of this paper was to explore some of the nuances inherent in each section of the supervision code section in an attempt to provide a rationale for the codes to promote critical analysis. Another focus of this paper was to provide the BCBA supervisor with directions and resources to maintain and enhance their supervisory repertoires, not only for the well being of their consumers and supervisees but also toward the favorable shaping of the field of applied behavior analysis. Within the supervisory relationship, supervisors should not only work to ensure familiarity with the Code but also to engage in thoughtful analysis and conversations with supervisees.

Compliance with Ethical Standards

Funding   No funding was received for this project.

Conflict of Interest   The authors declare that they have no conflict of interest.

Ethical Approval   This article does not contain any studies with human participants performed by any of the authors.

Appendix

Potential Study Guide for Journal Clubs:

1. How do the practices of current supervisors have implications for the field of behavior analysis and for future BCBAs and consumers? Use examples of your own, or examples from the article.

2. What does it mean to supervise only in your area of defined competence? Why is this important? What aspects of practice could this influence?

3. What might motivate a behavior analyst to take on an inappropriate supervisory volume? What are some consequences for this action? How can behavior analysts avoid the temptation to take on more supervisees than they can effectively manage?

4. When supervising registered behavior technicians (RBT), what should a BCBA know about the credential and training of RBTs? How can this influence effective supervisory practice?

5. Why is it important to clearly communicate the supervision conditions prior to beginning supervisory relationship? Give some examples of expectations that should be a part of this contract or agreement.

6. The Code provides guidance on the importance of feedback when supervising. Give examples of types of feedback one could give and why doing so is critical to effective supervision. What is the role of "signing off" on supervisory hours and what sort of information should be documented?

7. What are three risks from failing to provide effective supervision? Using the resources mentioned in the chapter, what are some of the components of effective evaluation systems?

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