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SUPERVISION EXPERIENCES AND NEEDS OF NEW-ENTRANT PROFESSIONAL SCHOOL COUNSELORS: A QUALITATIVE STUDY

by

Shawn Allan Bultsma

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
Department of Counselor Education and Counseling Psychology
Dr. Suzanne Hedstrom, Advisor

Western Michigan University
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SUPervision Experiences and Needs of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors: A Qualitative Study

Shawn Allan Bultsma, Ph.D.
Western Michigan University, 2008

Although the field of professional school counseling has recognized the positive impact that supervision offers, discussion of its use with new-entrant school counseling professionals has been limited. This study responds to the limited discussion of supervision with new-entrant professional school counselors by describing the supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant professional school counselors.

Participants of this study described advantages and disadvantages of receiving supervision. When discussing supervision activities as new-entrant professionals, participants frequently confused the process of supervision with mentoring and evaluation. Supervision quality was described as deficient, and the structure of supervision varied among participants. Participants described that they needed support in their new role as professional school counselors. They also identified supervision needs that have been met as well as needs that have gone unmet in their work as new professionals.

Supervision types and the focus of supervision emerged as overarching themes from participants' descriptions of their supervision experiences and perceived needs. The participants most frequently described their supervision experiences and perceived needs as administrative supervision. Reports of clinical and developmental supervision
experiences were limited to participants whose supervisors were licensed as professional counselors. Fewer participants described their need for clinical and developmental supervision when compared to those who described their need for administrative supervision. As participants described their supervision experiences and perceived needs, their descriptions largely focused on concerns with their own performance rather than the impact of their performance on others.

Implications for the practice of professional school counselor supervision and for the specific practice of supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors were discussed based on the experiences and perceived needs reported by the study's 15 participants. Implications of these results were also included for professional school counseling organizations as well as for counselor educators who prepare both school counselors and supervisors. Limitations of this study were described and recommendations were made for future research as it related to the practice of new-entrant professional school counselor supervision.
I am in awe of the way in which so many have invested their time, guidance, and patience in me throughout this process. I owe a tremendous amount of thanks to the participants of this study. They selflessly made themselves available to me as they invited me into their world of work as new professionals.

Special thanks to Dr. Suzanne Hedstrom, who sold me on the idea of completing a counselor education degree and so competently served as the chair of my committee. Her wisdom, gentle guidance, and encouragement kept me focused throughout this major undertaking. I appreciate that she models a focus on professional identity and academic excellence without sacrificing personal identity and the priorities of life outside the world of academia.

I have also appreciated the support of Dr. Stephen Craig, who served as a member of my dissertation committee, offering his suggestions and comments in a way that created thoughtful reflection. Dr. Gunilla Holm, who shepherded me through the early stages of the dissertation process, deserves recognition for challenging me to consider ways of knowing the world that provided a good fit for my worldview. I would like to thank Dr. Karen Blaisure for her willingness to join my committee when Dr. Holm left to accept another university appointment. Dr. Blaisure’s comfort and familiarity with qualitative research methodology had a significant impact on the development of Chapter III. Dr. John Geisler also deserves recognition for providing me with direction during dissertation seminar where the vision for this study first took shape.
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Special thanks to my cohort at Western Michigan University (WMU). Each of them has contributed the support that I needed to complete this degree. Their contributions to my development throughout this experience are valued, and I already miss the fellowship that we shared during our coursework. I look forward to continued collaborations with them in the future.

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inspired my own confidence in my counseling skills and abilities. My current and continuing levels of development as a professional counselor are a tribute to their efforts.

The late Dr. Lenore Hummel, my advisor and mentor from William Paterson University, encouraged me to pursue a career as a professional school counselor. She inspired wellness in her students and clients alike and always ended her email communications with the sign-off, “Be Well.” My use of this sign-off serves as an acknowledgment of her influence on me as I partner with students and clients to build wellness and “Shalom” in a hurting world.

I am blessed to work in a community that values my skills as a scholar and practitioner. My colleagues in the College of Education at Grand Valley State University (GVSU) have filled my needs for support and encouragement throughout this experience as they demonstrated their unending patience with my slow but steady progress. Members of this community deserving special recognition include Dean Elaine Collins, Dr. John Shinsky, Dr. Stephen Worst, Dr. Wei Gu, and my 8th floor support crew who have tiptoed around me between the hours of 8:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m., also known as “my writing time.”

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expectation did not always make this process easy, but with her support I kept my end of the bargain. I look forward to the opportunities that the completion of this degree opens up for us, and I am grateful for her love and inspiration. I share this degree with her.

Shawn Allan Bultsma
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ................................................................. ii

LIST OF TABLES ........................................................................... xii

CHAPTER ......................................................................................

I. INTRODUCTION ......................................................................... 1
   Background of the Problem ..................................................... 2
   Statement of the Problem ...................................................... 5
   Significance of the Study ......................................................... 7
   Research Questions ............................................................... 8
   Assumptions ........................................................................ 9
   Definitions of Terms ............................................................ 9
   Limitations ........................................................................... 11
   Overview of the Study .......................................................... 12

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ........................................... 14
   Organization of the Chapter .................................................... 14
   Supervision .......................................................................... 15
      Supervision Advantages and Disadvantages ....................... 16
      Ethical and Legal Issues in Supervision ............................. 17
      Models of Supervision ....................................................... 19
   Professional School Counseling .......................................... 21
      Professional School Counselor Roles and Responsibilities .... 21

vii
# Table of Contents—Continued

## CHAPTER

- Student Needs ................................................................. 22
- Professional School Counselor Competencies ....................... 23
- Professional School Counselor Supervision ......................... 25
- Types of Professional School Counselor Supervision ............... 26
- Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional School Counselor Supervision ................................................................. 32
- Models of Supervision Applied to Professional School Counseling ..... 38
- Supervision of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors .......... 46
- Professional Organization Statements and Positions on Supervision .... 47
- Chapter Summary .................................................................... 50
- Communication of Professional School Counseling Supervision Practices ................................................................. 51
- Need for Additional Research ................................................ 52

## III. METHOD ................................................................. 54

- Chapter Overview ............................................................... 54
- Research Design ................................................................... 54
- Data Collection ..................................................................... 56
- Pilot Study ............................................................................. 57
- Participants ........................................................................... 59
- Phenomenological Analysis ................................................... 63
- Using Software for Qualitative Data Analysis ......................... 67
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inductive Data Analysis</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Summary</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV. RESULTS</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chapter Overview</td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of Supervision Experiences</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Credentials of Supervisors</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages of Receiving Supervision</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages of Receiving Supervision</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of Supervision Experiences</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Activities</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure of Supervision</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Experiences Summary</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Report of Perceived Supervision Needs</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for Support</td>
<td>115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet Supervision Needs</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met Supervision Needs</td>
<td>129</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived Supervision Needs Summary</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Themes Identified Across All Frames of Analysis</td>
<td>133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision Types</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of Supervision</td>
<td>141</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Summary of Themes Identified Across All Frames of Analysis ............ 146
Chapter Summary ........................................................................... 147

V. DISCUSSION ............................................................................. 150

Overview of Significant Results ..................................................... 150
Discussion of Results ..................................................................... 152
Supervision Objectives ................................................................. 153
Ethical and Legal Issues ............................................................... 154
Supervision Practices .................................................................... 156
Results Summary ........................................................................... 158
Implications .................................................................................... 159
Implications for Professional School Counselor Associations .......... 159
Implications for Counselor Educators ............................................ 164
Summary of Implications ............................................................... 168

Limitations ..................................................................................... 169
Demographics of Participants ......................................................... 170
Use of Interviews ........................................................................... 170
Use of a Transcriber ....................................................................... 171
Use of Qualitative Data Analysis Software ..................................... 172

Recommendations for Future Research ........................................... 172
Supervision Training ....................................................................... 173
Table of Contents—Continued

CHAPTER

Differences in Supervision Experiences .............................................. 173

Exploring and Developing Practices for New-Entrant School
Counselor Supervision ................................................................. 174

Conclusions ................................................................................. 175

REFERENCES .............................................................................. 177

APPENDICES

A. Human Subjects Institutional Review Board Letter of Approval ............. 186
B. Initial Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide .................................. 188
C. Revised Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide .............................. 190
D. Scripts for Participant Recruitment ...................................................... 192
E. Consent Form ............................................................................... 196
F. Demographic Information Form for Participants .................................. 199
G. Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement Form ....................................... 201
H. Interview Summaries ....................................................................... 203
I. Member Checking Responses ............................................................. 287
LIST OF TABLES

1. Demographic Information for Participants ........................................ 62
2. Summary of Themes, Units of Meaning, and Domains............................ 79
3. Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified in Participants’
   Descriptions of Supervision Experiences ........................................... 84
4. Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified in Participants’
   Descriptions of Perceived Supervision Needs ..................................... 116
5. Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified Across Participants’
   Descriptions of Supervision Experiences and Perceived Supervision
   Needs ................................................................................................. 135
CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally, professions in the mental health field have been permitted to regulate themselves under the ethical condition that they place the welfare of the general public above their own interests (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Supervision, an intervention employed by mental health professions to help satisfy this provision, has become a widespread practice used during the preparation of new professionals as well as an intervention utilized to support the socialization of new professionals into mental health professions once their training is complete. Supervisors seek to balance the ethical imperative to ensure client welfare with the needs of supervisees to learn to function effectively as mental health professionals. Seeking this balance is particularly important as mental health professionals make the transition from their formal training to employment in the field. Supervision has served as an effective means of facilitating this transition while following the ethical need to protect the public’s welfare (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

Although the field of professional school counseling has recognized the positive impact that supervision offers (Borders & Usher, 1992; Page, Pietrzak, & Sutton, 2001; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Sutton & Page, 1994), discussion of its use with new-entrant school counseling professionals has been limited. This study responds to the limited discussion of supervision with new-entrant professional school counselors by describing
the supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant professional school counselors. Recommendations are included in this study to inform the work of those who provide these new-entrant school counseling professionals with supervision as well as for counselor educators who prepare both school counselors and supervisors.

This chapter of introduction continues by providing a detailed background of the problem followed by a statement of the problem that affects the supervision practice of new-entrant professional school counselors. The significance of this qualitative study for the school counseling profession as well as for professional school counselor preparation programs is also detailed. The chapter includes a description of the research questions that were used to direct this study followed by sections that describe assumptions, definitions of terms, and limitations of this study. An overview of this study concludes the chapter.

Background of the Problem

The counseling profession, represented by the American Counseling Association (ACA), is one of several mental health professions that has recognized its duty to protect the welfare of the general public as evidenced by its code of ethics in which monitoring the welfare of clients is described as a primary role of those providing supervision (ACA, 2005, Section F.1.a.). As experienced counseling professionals provide supervision, they assist less experienced counselors with professional growth while assuming vicarious responsibility and liability for the welfare of their clients. This intervention serves as an essential component during the training of less experienced counselors as their knowledge
of counseling skills, techniques, and theories is translated into real-world practice (Roberts & Morotti, 2001).

Although researchers have studied the efficacy of counselor supervision across work settings (Bernard and Goodyear, 2004), few have studied the application of supervision within specific environments (i.e., mental health agencies, private practices, and schools). Consequently, much of the research used to inform the supervision of professional school counselors is drawn from supervision literature without consideration of counselors' specific work settings (Studer, 2006). In fact, consideration of the unique supervision needs of professional school counselors designed to inform the supervision practice of these professionals had been limited until a study published by Barret and Schmidt (1986). This study drew attention to the lack of counseling supervision research that specifically addressed the supervision of professional school counselors. Barret and Schmidt recommended that research focusing on school counselor supervision become a priority for future studies within the profession.

Over the last two decades, a growing body of research has informed the applied practice of supervision in the field of professional school counseling for school counselors-in-training (i.e., Baker, Exum, & Tyler, 2002; Getz, 1999; Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Peterson & Deuschle, 2006; Roberts & Morotti, 2001; Stickel, 1995; Studer, 2005, 2006; Wood & Rayle, 2006) and practicing school counselors who have completed their formal educational training (i.e., Agnew, Vaught, Getz, & Fortune, 2000; Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Borders 1991b; Borders & Usher, 1992; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Gainor & Constantine, 2002; Henderson & Lampe, 1992; Herlihy, Gray, & McCollum, 2002; Luke & Bernard, 2006; Roberts &
Borders, 1994; Schmidt, 1990; Sutton & Page, 1994). However, in spite of these gains in research informing the practice of supervision for both school counselors-in-training and post-degree practicing school counseling professionals, there continues to be a shortage of competent professional school counselors who are trained and/or certified to provide supervision in schools both during and after formal professional school counselor training (Henderson, 1994; Studer, 2005, 2006). As a result of this shortage, supervision of practicing school counselors is most often being provided by practicing school counselors and/or principals who have had no formal training in supervision to inform their supervision work.

An additional concern is that professional school counselors who have been trained in supervision received training in supervision theories, models, and modalities that were designed and implemented for use in clinical settings such as agencies and private practices. Until recently, these supervision training experiences have informed the practice of school counselor supervision rather than training that specifically addresses the unique application of supervision in school settings (Getz, 1999; Henderson, 1994; Studer, 2006). Consequently, when school counselor supervisors have had supervision training, it is likely that this training has relied on one aspect of supervision that focuses primarily on the development of school counselors' clinical skills.

While it is critical that school counselors develop clinical skills when providing responsive services as part of the delivery of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program (American School Counselor Association [ASCA], 2005), the responsibilities of school counselors also include activities that require professional school counselors to develop skills in the areas of individual student planning, guidance curriculum, and
system support. School counseling professionals trained in the use of clinical supervision models and theories have the skills necessary to facilitate the development of responsive services that school counselors provide to others; however, clinical supervision does little to inform the remaining areas of responsibility for school counselors. Without supervision that addresses the development of all the skills needed to perform their work as school counselors, these professionals may be losing the opportunity to receive adequate professional development experiences that support them as new professionals in their roles as school counselors (Borders, 1994; Roberts & Morotti, 2001).

This lost opportunity for adequate professional development has potentially negative outcomes for new-entrant professional school counselors who are developmentally characterized as dependent on support from other professionals to meet the increasingly complex needs of their students as they transition into their new roles following the completion of their formal education (Stoltenberg, McNeill, & Delworth, 1998). These complex needs can quickly overwhelm new-entrant school counseling professionals, leading to anxiety, fear of not appearing or feeling competent, feelings of inadequacy in meeting students' needs, and burnout (Portman, 2002). For those new-entrant school counseling professionals who function in isolation, the process of induction into the school counseling profession has been described as "sink or swim" (Matthes, 1992, p. 248).

Statement of the Problem

Supervision is intended to help new-entrant professional school counselors maintain ethical standards of practice by facilitating their socialization into the profession
following the completion of their formal training (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). For example, when reflecting on her own positive experiences as a supervisee, Borders (1994) reported that three of her supervisors challenged her to stretch and grow as she entered the profession. However, as demonstrated by the “sink or swim” analogy reported by Matthes (1992), new-entrant professional school counselors who are isolated are expected to assume the same responsibilities of more experienced peers with little support. These new-entrant professional school counselors are often left on their own to socialize themselves into the profession without appropriate guidance or supervision to help ensure ethical standards of practice.

Using supervision to protect the welfare of those served and to assure appropriate delivery of services and interventions has become the standard in counselor preparation programs that are accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP, 2001). However, no similar guidelines exist in the ethical standards adopted by ASCA (2004) to inform the supervision practice of professional school counselors who have completed their formal educational training as they begin their work as new professionals. Students served by new-entrant professional school counselors could face negative outcomes if these school counselors are not adequately supervised as they provide services and interventions to effectively respond to and meet students’ counseling needs (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). As students’ needs go unmet, the profession of school counseling risks failure to fulfill its charge of self-regulation in order to protect the welfare of these students.
Significance of the Study

Although supervision experiences and needs of beginning counselors have been briefly discussed in developmental theory of counselor supervision literature (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Loganbill, Hardy, & Delworth, 1982; Stoltenberg et al., 1998), this literature has not detailed the specific supervision experiences and perceived needs of new-entrant professional school counselors (Studer, 2006). The paucity of research that documents the lived experiences and perceived needs of new-entrant professional school counselors makes it difficult for the school counseling profession to assess whether or not these emerging professionals receive the supervision designed to protect the welfare of those served. This study seeks to expand the awareness of new-entrant professional school counselor supervision by exploring both lived supervision experiences as well as the perceived needs described by new professionals when talking about their beliefs about their supervisory experiences.

A clear understanding of these experiences and perceived needs could provide impetus for professional school counselor organizations such as ASCA to create expectations and guidelines for the supervision of new-entrant professional school counselors. These efforts could serve to help the school counseling profession fulfill its mandate to protect the public’s welfare. As the number of new-entrant professionals in the field of school counseling rises, a position that articulates expectations and guidelines for supervision of new professionals could encourage the development of new-entrant professional school counselor supervision that focuses on more than clinical skills in the context of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.
The results from this study could also be used to provide professional school counselor preparation programs rationale for developing relevant training programs to inform the practice of professional school counselor supervision. Results could also offer counselor preparation programs valuable information about basic supervision training so they could teach students to become better consumers of supervision during their training as well as during their first few years as new professionals. Such supervision training could also prove helpful to these students should they decide to provide supervision as they become more experienced professional school counselors.

Research Questions

The purpose of this study was to inform the school counseling profession about the supervision experiences and perceived needs of new-entrant professional school counselors as they talked about their supervisory experiences. This study used qualitative methodology to examine the supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant professionals. The following research questions were designed to provide data intended to inform professionals in the field of school counseling who recommend, select, and implement appropriate supervision practices and programs for new-entrant school counselors:

1. What are the supervision experiences reported by new-entrant professional school counselors?

2. What do new-entrant professional school counselors describe that they need from supervision experiences?
Assumptions

It was assumed that new-entrant professional school counselors have received supervision that impacts their work as new professionals in the field of school counseling. Another assumption of this study was that these lived experiences, whether past or present, could be described in effort to construct an understanding of their current supervision experiences as new-entrant professional school counselors. It was further assumed that new-entrant professional counselors' perceived supervision needs could be identified and described by participants as they considered their past and/or present supervision experiences.

Definitions of Terms

The working definition of supervision that was used throughout this study is similar to the definition of supervision used by Bernard and Goodyear (2004). Supervision refers to an intervention provided within the context of a relationship between a more experienced member of the counseling profession (supervisor) and a less experienced member of the same profession (supervisee). Further, supervision refers to the relationship between a supervisor and supervisee, is evaluative in nature, and includes a variety of activities (i.e., evaluation, monitoring services, teaching, and consulting) provided over time by supervisors intended to enhance the professional performance of supervisees (Getz, 1999).

The title professional school counselor refers to individuals working in elementary, middle/junior high, or high/senior high school settings who have earned
master’s degrees and are appropriately credentialed as professional school counselors (e.g., not social workers or school psychologists). Professional school counselor is preferred to guidance counselor because it more closely reflects the language used in current literature and professional organizations (ASCA, 2005).

Novice and new-entrant are terms that describe the beginning counselor and are used interchangeably throughout this study. For the purpose of this study, novice or new-entrant school counselors refer to those in their first three years of post-master’s employment as professional school counselors.

Although supervision needs can refer to any needs that one has when supervised, this study uses the term supervision needs to refer to the perceived supervision needs described by each participant. Descriptions of supervision needs of new professional school counselors are included in professional school counseling literature in discussions of supervision paradigms or theories (e.g., Studer, 2006). Discussions of supervision needs of supervisees provide the focus for the various paradigms or theories that are presented. In this study, the discussion of perceived supervision needs was important to consider because the supervision needs as expressed by participants helped to understand their beliefs about the value of their supervisory experiences. These accounts also helped to identify the motivation of supervisees to pursue supervision as new professionals. The report of perceived supervision needs by these new professionals can also be compared with the supervision needs of new professionals that have been documented in school counseling literature.
Limitations

The intent of qualitative research is to gain understanding into ever changing, complex, socially constructed variables that make up reality (Glesne, 2006). Given the qualitative approach used in this study, generalizability of the supervision experiences of 15 new-entrant school counselors from a limited geographic region is difficult if not impossible to establish; however, generalizing these results is not the goal of qualitative research. Consequently, the contributions of this study are not found in the transferability of experiences from one new-entrant school counselor to another. Rather, the contributions are found in the trustworthiness of the described phenomena of the lived supervision experiences of these 15 new-entrant school counselors. This trustworthiness as described by Guba and Lincoln (1989) involves a process of ensuring that these lived experiences are indeed the true representations of the participants’ experiences and not the preconceived thoughts of the investigator.

A limitation impacting the trustworthiness of the results in qualitative studies is that investigators’ personal interpretations of the data cannot be avoided as they serve as the primary instrument used to collect data (Creswell, 2003). As a result, researcher bias can often jeopardize the trustworthiness of the data in qualitative studies unless precautions are taken to avoid this outcome (Hatch, 2002). One strategy used by qualitative investigators to control researcher bias and preconceptions impacted by impressions and early interpretations of the data is to separate these biases from the data using a process called bracketing in which investigators create an awareness of their reactions to and reflections on the data throughout the collection process (Hatch, 2002).
While this strategy seeks to minimize researcher bias when it is employed, it remains virtually impossible to eliminate all bias from interpretations of the data as results are reported.

Relevant to this study, it is significant to note that the investigator has been a professional school counselor with 10 years of experience in the field. Additionally, in selecting a topic for dissertation research, this investigator reflected back to his own early experiences as a new-entrant school counselor. It is this investigator's recollection of feeling frustrated with a lack of supervision experiences combined with the fear of making mistakes as a novice in the field which made entry into the profession more challenging than it might have otherwise been with guidance from a knowledgeable and experienced supervisor. Although the investigator's experiences have been bracketed in attempt to minimize researcher bias in this study, it is noted that these experiences may have impacted the design along with the interpretations of the data. Since researcher bias was anticipated as a limitation of this study, the investigator sought to continuously and systematically consider how his biases, values, and interests have shaped the study in effort to minimize this limitation as recommended by Creswell (2003). A more detailed discussion of the bracketing process used to minimize the impact of researcher bias is included in the methodology section of this study (Chapter III).

Overview of the Study

Chapter II of this dissertation study summarizes the professional literature that describes the more general practice of supervision in the field of counseling that informs the need for and functions of supervision as it is applied in the counseling profession. A
review of literature that describes the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors and examines the specific application of supervision when it has been practiced in the field of professional school counseling follows this review. Specific attention is given to literature that describes supervision as it has been applied to new-entrant professional school counselors.

The qualitative methodology used to answer the research questions of this study are detailed in Chapter III. These details include the rationale for the phenomenological research design that was selected to answer these research questions. Phenomenology as both a philosophical paradigm and qualitative research method is described. Chapter III also includes a summary of the data collection process and includes the discussion of a pilot study that was conducted to inform the efficacy of interview questions in generating dialogue about the phenomena of the supervision of new-entrant school counselors. The chapter continues with a description of the individuals selected to participate in this study followed by a section that explains the phenomenological analysis process used to analyze the data. This section describes the use of qualitative software in data analysis and details how Transana (Version 2.12) was used to assist with data analysis.

Chapter IV includes a report of the results from this qualitative study providing a description of the phenomena of supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs of the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors who participated in this study. Finally, Chapter V includes a discussion of these results including implications and limitations of these results for the practice of supervising new-entrant professional school counselors along with a consideration of recommendations to professional school counselor associations and counselor educators. Future research is also recommended.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Organization of Chapter

This chapter begins with a summary of supervision literature that includes a broad description of its use in the counseling profession. This summary includes a section that discusses the advantages and disadvantages of supervision as well as the ethical and legal issues that impact the general practice of supervision as reported in the literature. A description of supervision models that have been utilized in supervision training is also reviewed.

In order to set the stage for a more detailed portrayal of what has been written about supervision as it has been applied to the field of professional school counseling, the broad description of supervision in counseling is followed by a section that describes the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors. This description distinguishes this specialization in counseling from other areas. The complex counseling needs of students in schools and the competencies that professional school counselors require to address student needs are also examined.

This literature review next considers specific application of supervision in the field of professional school counseling and includes an examination of the following: (1) types of professional school counselor supervision, (2) ethical and legal issues in
professional school counselor supervision, and (3) the application of supervision models to the specific practice of professional school counseling.

Chapter II next includes a discussion of literature that describes the supervision of new-entrant professional school counselors, followed by an examination of professional organization statements and positions that informs the supervision practice with new-entrant professional school counselors. The chapter concludes with a summary that describes the need for communication of professional school counseling supervision practices as well as a need for additional research in the field, further demonstrating the significance of this study.

**Supervision**

The field of counseling has long advocated the use of supervision in the profession, and this practice has been the primary vehicle used for three purposes (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004): (1) enhancing the professional functioning of junior members in the profession, (2) monitoring the quality of services offered to clients, and (3) establishing more experienced professionals as gatekeepers for those seeking to enter the profession. Recognizing the importance of counseling supervision and the need to encourage its practice, the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES, 1993), a professional division of the ACA, established professional ethical standards to inform the practice of supervision. These standards promote legal and ethical behavior of practicing supervisors as they attempt to promote, maintain, and improve appropriate counseling behaviors of both counselors-in-training and practicing professionals (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Borders & Usher, 1992; Matthes, 1992).
Supervision Advantages and Disadvantages

Numerous advantages have been noted when supervisees have been in supervisory relationships. Supervised counseling experiences often result in increased professional development for counselors serving as supervisees (Usher & Borders, 1993). Supervision is effective in helping counselors become more skilled in their work, benefiting clients (Borders, 1991a). Other advantages of supervision include that it provides (1) a greater likelihood that therapy will go well, (2) an increased safeguard for clients’ welfare, (3) shared responsibilities for interventions that allow supervisees to provide therapy with confidence, (4) input from supervisors that generate more systematic approaches to therapy, and (5) an opportunity for professional school counselors to observe more seasoned supervisors as they model case conceptualization skills and discuss the rationale for selected interventions (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004).

Disadvantages of supervision include that it demands a significant amount of time for supervisors, lacks research demonstrating that skills learned in supervision contexts are generalized and transferred to other counseling situations when the counselor is not receiving supervision, and can involve counseling interventions recommended to the supervisee by the supervisor that are beyond supervisees’ skill levels (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Disadvantages to supervision offer areas which need to be discussed between supervisors and supervisees and addressed by the counseling profession as it seeks to improve the professional functioning of the supervisee while monitoring the quality of the services that supervisees deliver.
In Ethical Guidelines for Counseling Supervisors (1993), ACES advocates that "supervisors should have had training in supervision prior to initiating their role as supervisors" (Section 2.01). Absence of supervisor training among counseling professionals has created a potential for legal issues in the form of supervisor malpractice suits (Guest & Dooley, 1999). Since courts look to the profession itself in addition to public health codes for a definition of the standard of care, professional counselors who have provided supervision without training risk breaching the standard of care established by professional counseling organizations such as ACES. A breach in this standard of care was one of four malpractice aspects examined by Guest and Dooley. They noted that although a breach in the standard was not enough to substantiate a malpractice suit, it gave ambitious attorneys footholds in establishing cases.

Two interventions that supervisors should utilize when providing supervision to help ensure ethical practice described in the literature include the use of professional disclosure statements and formal plans for supervision (Cobia & Boes, 2000). Professional disclosure statements are intended to inform supervisees of the rights of all parties involved in the process, the methods of evaluation, the anticipated outcomes, and the descriptions of the risks and benefits of supervision. Creating mutual formal plans for supervision serves to establish a contract of sorts between supervisors and supervisees that define how and when supervision would take place, what goals would be established, and who would be responsible for goals that are not accomplished. Since these interventions cannot prevent all ethical dilemmas, it is recommended that both
supervisors and supervisees should acquaint themselves with relevant statutes and professional codes that impact the practice of supervision (Cobia & Boes, 2000).

Although the counseling profession encourages the use of supervision, many counselors who serve as supervisors have little or no training in the practice of supervision (Guest & Dooley, 1999; Loganbill et al., 1982; Studer, 2006). Two reasons for this practice reported in the literature are that (1) supervision training is generally not a requirement in counseling master's degree programs given the extensive coursework that is required, and (2) there are few opportunities for counselors to receive training because such training is most often reserved for specialist and doctoral programs (Studer, 2006). The lack of supervision training for counseling supervisors is an ethical issue faced by both those who provide and seek supervision (Cobia & Boes, 2000).

Training in supervision helps supervisors identify potentially damaging supervision behaviors (Magnuson, Wilcoxen, & Norem, 2000); however, lack of supervision training does not mean that professional counselors serving as supervisors will invariably provide poor supervision experiences. Borders (1994) claimed that only one of her three supervisors who provided her with effective supervision had received supervision training. It is not surprising that many professional counselors make effective supervisors with no formal supervision training. Similar to effective counselors, effective supervisors are empathic, genuine, and open (Borders, 1994; Neukrug, 2002). These qualities ensure a respect and sensitivity for supervisees in much the same way that they ensure these qualities for clients.

Although counseling and supervision share similarities, successful counselors do not always provide effective supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Borders (1994)
reported hearing many colleagues and students describe their supervision experiences with poor supervisors. She related anecdotal stories about supervisors who were too busy, lacked interest in the supervision process, provided theoretical mismatches, were too critical, or who put in minimal time with as little work as possible. Borders commented that in spite of the similarities between counseling and supervision activities each involves a unique set of skills, and she indicated that professional counselors serving as supervisors can benefit from supervision training.

**Models of Supervision**

Three types of models used in supervision training to inform the practice of supervision are described in supervision literature (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004): (1) models grounded in counseling theory, (2) developmental models, and (3) social role models. Models of supervision that are grounded in counseling theory conceptualize the process of supervision as an extension of one’s world view that is formed from life experiences, values, and morals. This general outlook on life influences each person’s theoretical orientation which in turn impacts both therapeutic and supervisory roles for counselors (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). Theoretical orientation provides supervisors a frame of reference that can be used to provide support to supervisees. Theoretical orientation impacts the supervision concepts and practices used when supervising from a particular orientation (e.g., person-centered supervision, psychodynamic supervision, and cognitive-behavioral supervision). Although counseling supervision is impacted by one’s theoretical orientation, it does not limit supervisors to work with supervisees using models of supervision that are grounded in counseling theory.
Developmental models have been formulated specifically for supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004) and focus on how supervisees change as they receive supervision rather than on the theoretical orientation of the supervisors used to facilitate supervision. Developmental models can focus on the role of the supervisor, the growth of the supervisee, the environment in which supervision takes place, and/or the interaction between supervisors and supervisees. Most developmental models conceptualize supervisee growth as linear stages of development or as a step-by-step process to resolve a conflict or master a skill that may repeat as the supervisee faces more complicated situations (Bernard & Goodyear). Four developmental models that have received much attention in the literature include (1) a four-stage supervision model (Littrel, Lee-Borden, & Lorenz, 1979), (2) the Integrated Developmental Model (IDM; Stoltenberg et al., 1998), (3) the Ronnestad and Skovholt Model (1993), and (4) the Loganbill, Hardy, and Delworth Model (1982).

The third type of supervision model described in the literature is based on the role that the supervisor assumes when providing supervision. These models are referred to in the literature as social role models of supervision. Similar to developmental models of supervision, social role models have been developed specifically to inform the practice of supervision. These models differ from developmental models in that they focus on several social roles learned by supervisors throughout their professional training to inform the practice of supervision rather than focusing on the developmental stages or steps of the supervisees. Bernard and Goodyear (2004) identified several of the roles that supervisors assume as they provide social role supervision: teachers, counselors or therapists, consultants, administrators, facilitators, lecturers, evaluators or monitors, and advisors.
The Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1979) is one of the most commonly considered social role models used in the delivery of supervision.

Professional School Counseling

*Professional School Counselor Roles and Responsibilities*

The number of different professional school counselor roles described in the literature reflects the ongoing confusion and controversy about the appropriate tasks that professional school counselors should be performing (Paisley & Borders, 1995). These roles include counseling, guidance, consulting, coordinating, student appraisal, referral, crisis situations, providing peer/intern supervision, advocating, building team partnerships between stakeholders, providing school leadership support, demonstrating multi-cultural competencies, developing programs, providing prevention services, and ensuring quality services (Borders & Drury, 1992; Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sutton & Page, 1994).

The national model presented by ASCA (2005) has recently attempted to clarify professional school counselors’ roles with the creation of a national model for comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools. This model clearly articulates the role of the school counselor at each of the three school levels where school counseling services are delivered: (1) elementary, (2) middle/junior high, and (3) senior high. This framework shifted school counselors’ attention from what school counselors do to national standards (Campbell & Dahir, 1997) that describe how students are different because of the work that professional school counselors do (ASCA, 2005). The
national standards contain three domains that are developed throughout the education process of students: (1) academic, (2) career, and (3) personal/social. These domains are developed in students using comprehensive guidance and counseling programs according to a number of standards, benchmarks, and indicators in which professional school counselors monitor achievement of these standards by engaging in four types of delivery activities: (1) school guidance curriculum, (2) individual student planning, (3) responsive services, and (4) system support.

Although the implementation of school counseling programs is the primary responsibility of professional school counselors, ASCA (2005) indicated that school counselors are not alone in delivering these programs. Authors of this national model identified stakeholders who share in the responsibility of encouraging development in the three domains. These stakeholders include the students themselves, parents, teachers, administrators, board of education members, counselor educators, post-secondary institutions, and the community that include business, labor, and industry. The national model does not, however, consider the role that school counselor supervision has in the implementation of these programs.

Student Needs

New-entrant school counselors continue to join the profession at a time when the needs of student populations are becoming increasingly complex (Baker, 2001; Borders, 1991a; Page et al., 2001; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Portman, 2002). Baker documented this increase in the complexity of student needs in an extensive literature review in which he examined counselors’ efforts to assist at-risk students and identified 23 issues that
complicated these efforts. A few examples of these complicating issues listed by Baker included runaways, victims of sexual violence, students with sexual identity concerns, students at risk of committing suicide, and victims of bullying.

Most of the issues that face youth today are not new, but these issues have become more difficult to manage because they have become more complicated by the increasingly diverse student populations in the schools (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Gainor & Constantine, 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001). Gainor and Constantine reported the challenges that school counselors faced in meeting the needs of the growing diversity of student populations in large urban cities across the United States. Paisley and McMahon did not limit their discussion of diversity to urban cities but recognized that these increases in diversity reflect the changing demographics of our society as a whole. They added that diversity issues were even more convoluted as they extended beyond race and ethnicity to include socioeconomic differences and students with disabilities.

Professional School Counselor Competencies

In spite of the increasing diversity of student groups and their counseling needs, school counselors are frequently the only mental health professionals available to assist struggling students (Barret & Schmidt, 1986). School counselors remained the best situated to help these students with their difficulties as they seek paths of healthy development; however, school counselors’ unique training and skills may not be enough to support today’s students (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997). Borders (1991a) commented that it was impossible for school counselors to demonstrate mastery of all the necessary
counseling skills and student issues prior to graduation from their master’s degree programs. Additionally, the demanding, constantly changing roles that school counselors find themselves in have often prevented them from mastering the skills, knowledge, and resources needed when dealing with difficult students and their issues (Borders, 1991a). Yet professional and ethical standards established for professional school counselors require them to treat students as unique individuals while understanding their diverse cultural backgrounds (ASCA, 2004). The changing, complex needs of today’s students make it increasingly difficult for school counselors to meet these professional and ethical standards. A considerable gap has been revealed between the complex needs of today’s students and the basic counseling competencies of new-entrant school counselors (Sutton & Page, 1994). Ironically, the demand for new-entrant professional school counselors continues to rise given the current shortage of qualified school counselors (Portman, 2002), thereby increasing the number of students and school counselors who are exposed to this gap.

Many elementary and junior high/middle school counselors are isolated from other counseling professionals in their day-to-day counseling activities in contrast to many mental health counseling professionals who work daily in settings with other counselors on-site. The effects of isolation provide another factor reported by many school counselors in their positions that impact the gap between student needs and counselor competencies (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Peace, 1995; Sutton & Page, 1994).

Isolated school counselors rarely enjoy the benefits of collegiality that exist in other professional counseling work settings. As a result, it is not unusual for school
counselors to report feeling alone and without support while managing difficult situations (Crutchfield et al., 1997). This is especially true at the elementary level where school counselors are often responsible for more than one building within a district, traveling between buildings and increasing feelings of isolation (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Sutton & Page, 1994; VanZandt & Perry, 1992). This isolation is particularly challenging for new-entrant professional school counselors who are often asked to make the transition from their training experiences to assuming full responsibilities for comprehensive school counseling programs (Peace, 1995). The impact of this isolation combined with the rising complexity of students’ needs puts the welfare of these students at risk, particularly if the professional school counselors serving these students are not prepared to meet their needs.

Professional School Counselor Supervision

The School Counseling Task Force (SCTF) of the American Association for Counseling and Development (AACC [now ACA], 1989) recognized that supervision should be utilized to address the rising complexity of students’ needs. However, this task force reported that school counselor supervision was lacking at best and non-existent at worst. As a result of the recommendations of the task force, AACC called for state level ACES branches to conduct surveys of school counselor supervision. This call has served as the impetus for more recent studies of school counselor supervision. Following the AACC task force recommendations, attention to the critical issue of school counselor supervision has increased with the intent of improving the credibility of the school
counseling profession and the services received by students, parents, and teachers in schools (Agnew et al., 2000; Barret & Schmidt, 1986; Henderson & Lampe, 1992).

*Types of Professional School Counselor Supervision*

Before the AACD task force made its recommendations, Barret and Schmidt (1986) had identified supervision of professional school counselors as an overlooked professional issue and reported the lack of standard expectations for school counselor supervision as a critical issue. They noted that the available literature on school counseling supervision provided little agreement on a definition and description of supervision. To help future investigators conceptualize the process of school counselor supervision, they proposed dividing school counselor supervision into three distinct types: (1) administrative, (2) clinical, and (3) developmental.

*Administrative Supervision*

Administrative supervision activities are most often provided by school administrators focusing on evaluation of counselors’ work ethics, including areas such as systemic support, use of time, attendance, and quality of the relationships established with students, parents, and staff (Barret & Schmidt, 1986). This type of supervision provides an evaluation of skills and behaviors that would be appropriate to consider for most professional positions in schools rather than designed to evaluate the unique professional skills of school counselors. Although administrative supervisors evaluate how well school counselors perform their work, in practice most administrative supervision is provided by
supervisors who have limited knowledge about the specific roles and responsibilities of school counselors (Barret & Schmidt, 1986; Studer, 2005).

In a national survey of 256 school counselors, 95% indicated that they were assigned an administrative supervisor (Page et al., 2001). These supervisors were most frequently reported to be a principal (50%), guidance director (13%), or assistant principal (10%). Although school administrators provide professional school counselors with administrative supervision, they are often not aware of the clinical functions of school counselors (Henderson, 1994). Without a clear understanding of the school counselor's role in a school, administrators (often unwittingly) asked school counselors to perform activities which school counselors viewed as unethical, such as asking school counselors to share the details of counseling sessions with students (Paisley & Borders, 1995).

Herlihy et al. (2002) identified another area of ethical concern when professional school counselors were provided administrative supervision. They described that there is potential conflict in the form of dual relationships when administrators who provide administrative supervision also provide clinical supervision. Similar to Bernard and Goodyear (2004), these authors suggested that dual relationships should be avoided, and they commented that it is preferable to split administrative and clinical supervision between two supervisors. Herlihy et al. concluded that providing administrators with information about school counselors' supervision needs is crucial. Several authors have published in school administrator literature to inform administrators of professional school counseling roles and needs for supervision (e.g., Coy, 1999; Crutchfield & Hipps,

The Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (2000) provided school administrators with a practical description of professional school counselor roles and responsibilities to better inform the practice of administrative supervision. The Missouri authors presented a detailed evaluation process that administrators could use that paired first and second year school counselors with mentors and required more experienced school counselors to complete professional development plans. The mentors assigned to the new-entrant school counselors served vital, yet distinct roles from the school administrators who provided administrative supervision and conducted school counselor evaluations.

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision is a type of supervision provided in mental health settings by experienced and licensed counseling peers with a focus on the delivery of direct therapeutic services (Barret & Schmidt, 1986). Clinical supervision is often used interchangeably with counseling supervision in the literature (Roberts & Borders, 1994). As it relates to school counseling, clinical supervision focuses specifically on individual and group counseling that school counselors provide to students rather than the other multiple roles and responsibilities of school counselors. Clinical supervision requires that school counselor supervisors have more detailed knowledge about theories and techniques used by counselors in clinical practice for effective delivery of this type of supervision.
Scoring rubrics designed to facilitate clinical supervision of school counselor supervisees have been considered as a means of providing school counselors supervisors with such knowledge (Hanna & Smith, 1998). Rubrics assist supervisors as they evaluate supervisees' performance in positive, active, more objective ways, leading to more effective supervision outcomes for both supervisors and supervisees. Steps used to create and develop rubrics have been included in the literature to guide supervisors as they score clinical performance in supervision (Hanna & Smith, 1998).

Henderson and Lampe (1992) observed in a study of clinical supervision in a Texas school district in San Antonio that most counselors described the process of supervision as "professionally invigorating" (p. 156). However, they also noted that some school counselors in the district were not used to having clinical supervision and resisted the notion of others observing their work so closely.

Although there are instances of professional school counseling supervision described in the literature (e.g., Hanna & Smith, 1998; Henderson & Lampe, 1992), school counselors continue to receive little or no regular clinical supervision, unlike their peers in agency or private practice settings (Crutchfield et al., 1997; Henderson & Lamp, 1992, Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sutton & Page, 1994). Crutchfield et al. noted that 57% of professional school counselors who completed their survey (N = 256) desired but were not receiving clinical supervision. Those who were receiving supervision indicated that it was administrative in nature and provided most often by the building principal. Counselors preferred that clinical supervision be delivered by another school counselor who had specific training in supervision. Similarly, Sutton and Page reported that 63% of the school counselors responding to their survey (N = 493) desired
clinical supervision while only 20% ($N = 62$) reported that they were receiving such supervision.

Herlihy et al. (2002) provided several reasons why clinical supervision might remain a neglected issue in professional school counseling practice. They observed that there is a general perception in the field of counseling that suggests school counselors do not have the same level of need for clinical supervision as counselors working in mental health settings. Perhaps this was because the roles of school counselors involved more than a clinical focus for which clinical supervision was not seen as necessary.

Another reason Herlihy et al. (2002) posited for the neglect of school counselor clinical supervision was that while some school counselors report feeling a need for this type of supervision, others do not express the same need. In their national survey, Page et al. (2001) found that 33% of the school counselors surveyed ($N = 256$) reported that they had no need for clinical supervision. These findings were similar to a study of Maine counselors where 37% of the respondents ($N = 493$) indicated that they had no need for clinical supervision (Sutton & Page, 1994). Herlihy et al. cited the poorly defined roles of school counselors combined with an unclear professional identity as responsible for the lack of significance that some school counselors placed on receiving clinical supervision.

A final factor described by Herlihy et al. (2002) for the limited practice of clinical supervision in school counseling was that unless a counselor was pursuing professional state licensure as a counselor, post-master’s degree supervision was not mandated. Most school counselors practice under teaching certification endorsements or school counseling licenses, neither of which typically required post-masters’ supervision experiences. Herlihy et al. explained that only those professional school counselors who sought
licenses as professional counselors have been required to complete state licensing requirements that range between 2,000 to 3,000 clock hours of post-degree supervised experiences, depending on the state in which licensure is sought. The profession of counseling has been silent as to the reason that supervision is required for those new-entrant counselors who seek a post-graduate professional license but not for those who seek a post-graduate school counseling endorsement on a teaching certificate or a license as a professional school counselor.

Paisley and McMahon (2001) added a few more reasons that might be responsible for the minimal emphasis placed on clinical supervision of professional school counselors. They listed school district funding shortages, concern about the time that clinical supervision might take away from direct services, and a limited understanding of the benefits provided by clinical supervision.

*Developmental Supervision*

Developmental supervision is described as concerned with counselors’ professional development activities and program development (Barret & Schmidt, 1986). These models address behavioral, affective, and cognitive changes that take place in both supervisors and supervisees across time, including the reasons for these changes as well as how developmental growth can be facilitated (Studer, 2006). Directors of guidance programs who are well versed in professional development activities and guidance and counseling program development were reported to most effectively provide this form of supervision rather than building administrators or licensed counseling peers (Barret & Schmidt, 1986). The nature of this type of supervision includes working with school
counselors on the effective development of all domains that are appropriate in their roles and responsibilities as school counselors.

Examples of developmental supervision in professional school counseling literature include Studer’s (2006) description of IDM, a developmental model created by Stoltenberg et al. (1998), and the Littrel et al. (1979) Developmental Model as applied to professional school counseling supervision by Protivnak (2003). IDM discusses four levels of development (orientation, transformation, professional direction, and integrated) in the context of three focus areas (self- and other awareness, motivation, and autonomy), and although it has not been specifically developed for professional school counselors, it has been used to help school counselors consider developmental issues and concerns that they experience (Studer, 2006). The four stage developmental model presented by Littrel et al. is described in detail in the forthcoming section of this chapter that considers supervision models that have been applied to school counseling practice.

*Ethical and Legal Issues in Professional School Counselor Supervision*

Many investigators conducting recent research on the supervision of professional school counselors have embraced the three areas described by Barret and Schmidt (1986) as the standard for describing post-master’s degree school counselor supervision (e.g., Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Crutchfield & Hipps, 1998; Henderson, 1994; Henderson & Lampe, 1992; Herlihy et al., 2002; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Page et al., 2001; Portman, 2002; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Sutton & Page, 1994). However, three challenges in the area of ethical and legal issues have been identified in the literature impacting school counselor supervision: (1) although several professional counseling organizations include
discussion of ethical guidelines and standards for the practice of supervision, not all professional organizations include similar guidelines and standards; (2) many professional school counselors receive no post-graduate supervision during their practice; and (3) professional school counseling supervisors often receive minimal training in the practice of supervision.

Professional Organization Guidelines

Professional school counselors who are Nationally Certified Counselors (NCCs) and/or members of the ACA and provide supervision without training risk ethical violations established by these organizations if they are by providing supervision outside of their training and expertise (ACA, 2005; NBCC, 2002). The ethical guidelines and standards for ACES (1993) and the standards for counseling supervisors (ACES, 1990) also indicate that supervisors must receive training and knowledge in several prescribed areas before providing supervision. Areas include ethical, legal, and regulatory aspects of the profession; personal and professional nature of the supervisory relationship; supervision methods and techniques; counselor developmental process; case conceptualization and management; assessment and evaluation; oral and written reporting; evaluation of counseling performance; and research in counseling and counselor supervision (ACES, 1990).

Other than in the ethics training in their school counselor preparation programs, professional school counselors who chose not to affiliate with these professional organizations would likely have little knowledge of ethical guidelines and standards of practice not to mention the risks involved in failing to observe them. Participation in
professional organizations boosts members' knowledge of ethical and legal aspects that in turn impact supervision (Roberts & Morotti, 2001). However, not all professional organizations have created ethical guidelines and standards of practice that address supervision. Those professional school counselors who limit their affiliation to ASCA, state, and/or local level counseling associations may miss the opportunity to be informed about ethical standards of supervision practice. The majority of professional school counselors who are ASCA members would benefit by the inclusion of ethical supervision practice in ASCA’s Ethical Standards for School Counselors. As the premiere professional organization serving school counselors, ASCA is well positioned to create and communicate expectations and guidelines for supervision of professional school counselors.

It is possible, however, that different codes of ethics provided by different professional organizations within the counseling and supervision fields could cause confusion among professionals (Remley & Herlihy, 2001). Creation of a single, unifying code of ethics and standards of practice for counselors in all counseling arenas could reduce the confusion created by multiple codes and standards. A unified code of ethics that requires supervision training for any counselor providing supervision might positively impact and encourage the legal and ethical practice of supervision in the field of school counseling so that the welfare of those served by school counselors is protected.

**Post-Degree Professional School Counseling Supervision**

Researchers conducting surveys of counselors’ supervision experiences found that about half of the school counselors they surveyed were not receiving any post-degree
supervision (e.g., Borders & Usher, 1992; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Usher & Borders, 1993). Portman (2002) reported similar results in a qualitative study of early-entrant school counselors who described veteran school counselors as supportive and extremely helpful even though they were not necessarily providing formal supervision. Portman also noted that many of these professional school counselors, who entered the profession before completing their school counselor degrees, confused supervision with evaluation. This confusion was reflected in much of the recent professional school counselor supervision literature. Given the difficulty that it poses for both supervisors and supervisees, Bernard and Goodyear (2004) devoted an entire chapter to the topic of evaluation in their textbook on supervision. Borders (1991a) differentiated between the processes of supervision and evaluation in hopes that professional school counselors might benefit from both activities. Supervision was defined in her study as those activities designed to promote professional development, and evaluation was described as a process that served to collect data to determine worth or value when making decisions.

Roberts and Borders (1994) stated that 29% of their school counselor respondents (N = 168) to their state survey in North Carolina believed that the two activities were similar while 54% (N = 91) thought the two activities were dissimilar. Although Roberts and Borders made a strong case to differentiate these terms, they continue to be used interchangeably in practice by school administrators who were most often conducting evaluation activities and administrative oversight of school counselors in effort to make administrative decisions under the guise of supervision when in reality no supervision was being provided (Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Bunch, 2002; Crutchfield et al., 1997;
Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Portman, 2002; Synatschk, 2002; Tucker et al., 1998).

To understand the effects on the practice of school counseling without supervision, Wiggins (1993) conducted a longitudinal study of school counselor effectiveness. He found that 28% of the experienced counselors in his study who rated low in effectiveness 10 years earlier were again rated low in effectiveness 10 years later. Wiggins concluded that counselors generally remained at the same level of effectiveness over time but noted that if there was a change, it was generally in a downward direction. When discussing this study, Henderson (1994) suggested that clinical supervision might have helped these counselors improve the quality of their effectiveness.

*Minimal Training of Professional School Counseling Supervisors*

Authors informing the practice of supervision for school counselors have documented that on-site supervision was most often provided by school personnel (i.e., administrators and/or other school counselors) who were minimally trained in school counselor supervision (Henderson, 1994; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Studer, 2005). This reality continues to be considered one of school counseling's "carefully guarded professional secrets" (Studer, p. 353).

As discussed earlier in the section on administrative supervision, principals often provide administrative supervision having received little to no training in school counseling or school counselor supervision (Crutchfield & Hipps, 1998; Roberts & Borders, 1994). In their discussion of school counselors as supervisors, Nelson and Johnson (1999) noted that most school counselors provided supervision to interns without
any formal training in supervision in spite of the ethical guidelines and standards of practice established by different professional organizations. One explanation for this practice is that supervisor development and training has been limited to doctoral rather than master’s level programs as reflected by the training standards (2001) of the Council for the Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). Since most school counselors are practicing at the master’s level, they lack the training necessary to provide adequate supervision (Borders et al., 1995; Henderson & Lampe, 1992; Schmidt, 1990; VanZandt & Perry, 1992).

One of the difficulties in implementing supervision for school counselors involves a lack of accessible supervision training for practicing school counselors serving in supervisory roles (Guest & Dooley, 1999; Harris, 1994; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Roberts & Morotti, 2001; Worthen & McNeill, 1996). There are supervision training programs described in the literature such as the structured approach to supervisee assessment and evaluation that identifies guidelines for school counselors who provide supervision (Harris, 1994). This program presents the following eight guidelines that school counseling supervisors could use to facilitate the practice of effective supervision:

1. establishing evaluation criteria and developing a written contract for supervision;
2. identifying and sharing supervisee strengths and weaknesses;
3. using constructive feedback techniques during evaluations;
4. utilizing specific, behavioral, observable feedback when addressing counseling skills and techniques;
5. using video and audio tapes to provide some of this feedback;
6. employing multiple measures to determine counseling skill development;
7. maintaining a collection of work samples for summative evaluation;
8. using a developmental approach which focuses both on
growth toward goals and learning readiness of the supervisee. However, training in the use of such supervision programs is not readily accessible to practicing school counselors.

_However_ training in the use of such supervision programs is not readily accessible to practicing school counselors.

**Models of Supervision Applied to Professional School Counseling**

Less attention has been given to supervision models than counseling models in professional school counseling literature (Baker et al., 2002). Studies focusing on post-degree supervision of professional school counselors documented the underutilized practice of school counselor supervision in schools and included recommendations for the practice and delivery of supervision for school counseling professionals who have completed their formal educational training. Samples of these recommendations include peer supervision (Agnew et al., 2001; Borders, 1991b; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997), peer consultation (Benshoff & Paisley, 1996), group supervision (Crutchfield et al., 1997; Gainor & Constantine, 2002), and clinical supervision (Henderson & Lampe, 1992; Sutton & Page, 1994). Several authors have focused their work specifically on theories, models, and modalities of supervision that attempt to address the practice of supervision for professional school counselors (Borders, 1989; Getz 1999; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Page et al., 2001; Peace, 1995; Protivnak, 2003).

This section details five approaches to supervision that have received attention in the literature when applying supervision to the practice of professional school counseling: (1) The Littrel et al. Developmental Model (1979), (2) The Discrimination Model developed by Bernard (1979), (3) peer group supervision, (4) use of technology to facilitate supervision, and (5) mentoring.
Developmental supervision models (as opposed to supervision models based on counseling theories or approaches) have been particularly useful with school counselors as they engage in the learning process and move from novices to more experienced experts. Consideration of skill levels for supervisees was crucial when providing supervision (Hart, 1994). A supervision approach that focuses on stages of developmental growth can create opportunities for supervisors to apply appropriate prescriptive interventions based on counselors' levels of development in the profession (Borders, 1989).

The four-stage supervision model reported by Littrel et al. (1979) to describe counselor development included the following four developmental stages for supervisees: (1) dependence, (2) pseudo-dependence, (3) interdependence, and (4) independence. Protivnak (2003) used the Littrel et al. model to describe school counselor development by discussing supervision modalities that were appropriate for school counselors at each developmental stage. This model recognizes that supervision needs of professional school counselors changes as these counselors mature as professionals (Protivnak, 2003). Supervision interventions are more effective when they take into account these changing developmental needs of school counselors.

At the dependence level a model called Structured Supervision was identified as a good fit. This person, issue, and behavior centered model provides direction for counselors as they find themselves dependent on the supervisor in trying to determine which tasks should receive priority. Group supervision focusing on positive skill
development was also found to be effective at this beginning developmental level. Concrete feedback for school counselors at this level was determined to be most effective when providing feedback at this stage. Protivnak (2003) also described this first stage as an orientation in which supervisors laid the foundation for supervision with supervisees by establishing relationships, clarifying roles and processes of supervision, and establishing clear parameters for responsibilities in the supervisory relationships. An integration model of supervision proposed by Nelson and Johnson (1999) was identified as an effective means to aid with this orientation process because the model encouraged participants to agree on supervisor and supervisee responsibilities, one of the keys to successful supervision experiences. School counselors also identified the importance of learning specific skills in this supervisory stage of dependence (Roberts & Borders, 1994; Ushers & Borders, 1993).

The second stage of supervision using the Littrel et al. (1979) developmental model for supervision focuses on the struggle between dependence and autonomy in which school counselors recognize their weaknesses and seek to correct them. Appropriate modalities identified by Protivnak (2003) at this stage include group supervision via e-mail in an effort to foster more independence; the clinical supervision program described by Agnew et al. (2000) that increased professional development, peer support, and skill growth; and a program described by Henderson and Lampe (1992) based on Glickman’s Cycle of Assistance (1990) that included five supervision conferences for school counselors. These conferences, while highly structured, provided professional school counselors the opportunity to define the areas in which they need
support using pre-observation, observation, data analysis, post-observation, and analysis of post-observation conferences.

Protivnak (2003) characterized the third developmental stage of the Littrel et al. (1979) model as the stage in which school counselors prefer to collaborate with supervisors, drawing on the expertise of supervisors in the form of consultation. Peer group supervision was the most commonly discussed supervision modality in the school counselor supervision literature (Crutchfield et al., 1997; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Sutton & Page, 1994; Borders, 1991). This form of supervision utilized peers and a trained supervisor to provide professional support for each other as school counselors and to increase counseling and consultation skills. Crutchfield et al. (1997) commented that school counselors expressed a desire and need for trained supervisors to lead them in structured peer group supervision as a means of developing their professional identity and growth. The benefits of structured peer group supervision for supervisees reported by Starling and Baker (2000) in their qualitative study included clarifying goals, increasing confidence, and enhancing the supervision process with feedback from peers. The mentoring program detailed by VanZandt and Perry (1992) was also seen as effective for school counselors in the third stage of development because it allowed school counselors freedom to act and respond independently with consultation services made available as needed through assigned mentors.

School counselors in the final stage of the Littrell et al. (1979) developmental model were described as able to work independently without the direction of other school counselors. Self-supervision was identified as an indicator of school counselors in this
stage of development (Protivnak, 2003). However, self-supervision does not provide accountability that influences school counselors to improve their skills (Borders, 1991a).

The evaluation tool described by Bunch (2002) used by school administrators in the state of Missouri to evaluate school counselors was recommended for use during this final stage (Protivnak, 2003). This tool allows for supervised self-evaluation and reflection for professional development activities appropriate for school counselors who balance independence with accountability.

*Discrimination Model*

The discrimination model uses supervisory roles of teacher, consultant, and counselor to focus on intervention, conceptualization, ethics, and personalization skills, in effort to provide supervision for counselors (Bernard, 1979). Based on their national survey of school counselor supervision, Page et al. (2001) concluded that the discrimination model made the best conceptual fit with the goals of supervision identified by the school counselors who responded to their survey. Two instances of using the discrimination model to inform the practice of school counselor supervision can be found in the literature. In the first instance, the discrimination model has been blended with the Littrel et al. developmental model to provide supervision for school counselors that addresses the stages of supervision, the roles of the supervisor, and the various skills and needs of supervisees (Nelson & Johnson, 1999).

The second instance documents use of the School Counseling Supervision Model (SCSM) as an extension of the discrimination model applied specifically to the practice of school counselor supervision in which the supervisor roles (e.g., consultant, counselor,
and teacher) and the focus of supervision (e.g., intervention, conceptualization, and personalization) as described in the discrimination model are expanded to include the activities practiced by professional school counselors. These four activities include (1) large group intervention; (2) counseling and consultation; (3) individual and group advisement; and (4) planning, coordination, and evaluation (Luke & Bernard, 2006).

Most recently, the discrimination model has been applied by Murphy and Kaffenberger (2007) to structure the supervision training of professional school counselors using the ASCA (2005) National Model. This approach uses the four components of the ASCA National Model (foundation, delivery system, management system, and accountability) to inform supervisors of the areas in which they should provide supervision for school counseling interns.

*Peer Group Supervision*

Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR) is another supervision modality that was utilized in a suburban Virginia school system described as a peer group clinical supervision program (Kagan & Kagan, 1997). This method requires professional school counselors to videotape their sessions and review these tapes with their peers. This process involves playback of these videotapes followed by stopping the tape at critical moments in counseling in an effort to ask about conceptualization and process issues. Unfortunately, the effectiveness of the use of this method with school counselors was not included in this discussion as it was only one component of the program being evaluated by Agnew et al. (2000).
Crutchfield et al. (1997) reported some of the benefits of supervision in their description of peer group supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors. They found that supervised school counselors reported an increase in listening and consultation skills as well as improvements in case conceptualization and self-assessment skills. School counselors in this study stated that an additional benefit of supervision included networking opportunities with other professionals in the field that helped provide support and reduced feelings of isolation.

Use of Technology to Facilitate Supervision

Computer technology has also been used for the purpose of providing school counselor peer group supervision and training (Van Horn & Myrick, 2001). This tool was particularly helpful in peer group supervision because it allowed consistent contact with others via e-mails, bulletin boards, and/or instant messaging. The supervision provided using the internet created opportunities for school counselors to work in small groups and to support and guide other school counselors from different schools as they efficiently conferred with one another.

The use of computer technology in supervision holds encouraging potential for isolated school counselors who serve as the only school counselor in their building and/or district (Portman, 2002). New professional school counselors communicated openness to using this innovative approach to receive supervision in a qualitative study (Portman). Inadequate computer systems and software programs available to school counselors, as well as inadequate technology skills of professional school counselors were reported as limitations when using this mode of supervision (Paisley & McMahon, 2001).
Mentoring

Supervision and mentoring are similar interventions in which those serving as supervisors or mentors share professional support via relationships to supervisees or mentees (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004; Jackson et al., 2002; Peace, 1995; Portman, 2002; VanZandt & Perry, 1992). However, these interventions are not as similar as they appear because supervisors bear more responsibility for the services they provide to supervisees than mentors do for the services they provide to mentees. Although mentoring has shown positive results in the induction of new-entrant school counselors into the profession, it should not be confused with or take the place of supervision for new-entrant school counselors. Supervision, unlike mentoring, seeks to insure the quality of services provided to those served in the school community.

A criticism of studies that describe mentoring programs for new-entrant professional school counselors is that they do not differentiate between mentoring and supervision interventions used with new-entrant school counselors (Jackson et al., 2002). Although an acute need for positive mentors for counselors was described in the literature (Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003), this intervention should not be used as a substitute for supervision. Supervision provides new-entrant counselors with experienced professional school counselor supervisors who share responsibility for and have a vested interest in the outcomes of the services delivered by these counselors.
Supervision of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors

Supervision has been shown to provide the support needed by school counselors to bridge the gap between students’ complex needs requiring advanced skills and the basic counseling competencies held by new-entrant school counselors (Herlihy et al., 2002; Sutton & Page, 1994). Supervision has also benefited new-entrant school counselors in the following ways: (1) supervision promotes opportunities for professional growth and development for school counselors at all levels of experience that can continue throughout their professional lives (Borders, 1991a; Borders & Usher, 1992; Herlihy et al.; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 1993); (2) supervision provides opportunities for ongoing consultation regarding complex issues with diverse student populations that may or may not involve legal and ethical concerns (Herlihy et al.); (3) supervision offers new professionals support to guard against feelings of isolation (Agnew et al., 2000; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Herlihy et al.; Matthes, 1992); (4) supervision improves the quality of school counselors’ performance by providing them with enhanced effectiveness, accountability, improved counseling skills, professional development, and confidence in their roles as school counselors (Agnew et al.; Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Borders 1991b; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Herlihy et al.); and (5) supervisory experiences play a central role in facilitating the acquisition of counseling skills and professional counselor identity (Worthen & McNeill, 1996).

Induction of new professionals into the school counseling profession is a primary responsibility of new-entrant school counselor supervisors (Portman, 2002). The availability of support for new-entrant professional school counselors during their
induction into the profession impacts both their professional identities and socialization into the profession (Matthes, 1992). Those new-entrant school counselors who were isolated from other school counselors during their induction in the profession most often used teachers and administrators as their reference groups when forming their professional identities. In contrast, school counselors who worked in settings with at least one other school counselor looked to the profession for leadership when forming their professional identities.

Need for supervision of new-entrant school counselors is not limited to induction issues for those who are isolated. Professional school counselors with fewer years of experience indicated more need for professional development support when helping students regarding college admission counseling than did school counselors with more years of experience (Matthay, 1992). Without support, new-entrant school counselors were struggling with students' college application needs, often wasting precious energy and resources while attempting to learn the process of college admissions counseling. Access to school counseling supervisors might have provided professional school counselors with fewer years of experience the support needed to efficiently learn the skills in this and many other school counseling areas.

Professional Organization Statements and Positions on Supervision

Authors of the ASCA (2005) National Model included discussion of accountability and professional standards that could be used to evaluate professional school counselors, but, as discussed earlier, evaluation and supervision are not synonymous activities. While these professional standards are very helpful in assisting
administrative supervisors gather data with which to make administrative decisions, a discussion has not been included in the standards on how clinical or developmental supervision could enhance professional development. As comprehensive guidance and counseling programs continue to gain momentum in the profession of school counseling, ASCA has not included a discussion of professional school counselor supervision activities. Including supervision into the ASCA National Model could enhance the supervision process and strengthen programs (Murphy & Kaffenberger, 2007). Most of the school counselor supervision literature focuses instead on a variety of roles assumed by school counselors which fit into the types of supervision first described by Barret and Schmidt (1986) with most of the emphasis placed on administrative supervision, omitting clinical and developmental supervision.

As the most recognized national professional organization for professional school counselors in the United States, ASCA is best situated to make recommendation to address the many unmet supervision needs and inadequate experiences of school counselor supervision for school counselors. However, to date, ASCA does not include any recommendations regarding supervision in its role statement or ethical standards for professional school counselors (ASCA, 2004; Sutton & Page, 1994). ASCA’s recently published national model for comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools (ASCA, 2005) also fails to address recommendations that inform the practice of supervision.

Other avenues of support for provision of supervision to affect professional school counselors come from state legislation, the National Board of Certified Counselors (NBCC), and CACREP. As stated earlier, many states have legislated that in order for
counselors to become licensed professionals, they must complete a prescribed number of post-master's degree supervised contact hours with clients. This legislated requirement for supervision has served to promote supervisees’ development of skills and knowledge and protect the welfare of those served by supervisees (Cobia & Boes, 2000). The impact of such legislation has been limited because not all professional school counselors seek professional counseling licenses; thus, not all school counselors have been included in the legislated mandates for licensed counselors to receive supervision (Borders, Cashwell, & Rotter, 1995).

NBCC (2002) has created the Approved Clinical Supervisor (ACS), a special certification designed for counselors to demonstrate their expertise in supervision. School counselors who wish to receive adequate clinical supervision might seek out professionals who have ACS certification. However, the availability of those with ACS certifications has had a limited impact on the profession of school counseling. The following three realities may explain this in part: (1) school counselors are not mandated by their profession to receive clinical supervision, (2) professional school counselors report not having time to seek clinical supervision from specially certified supervisors outside the school building (Herlihy et al., 2002), and (3) supervisors with the ACS credential may or may not know anything about school counselor supervision.

School counselors graduating from higher education institutions that were CACREP accredited at the time of graduation have completed supervised practica that included clinical instruction and 600-hour minimum internship experiences (CACREP, 2001). Graduates of CACREP programs have had some exposure to clinical supervision. This exposure was most likely the reason that some school counselors reported seeking
clinical supervision from counselor educators of their graduate programs in an effort to meet their desire for continued clinical supervision support (Portman, 2002). It seemed that these school counselors understood the value of clinical supervision. It is likely that not all professional school counselors have been exposed to appropriate clinical supervision through internships that meet CACREP standards because some graduated from programs not accredited by CACREP and not meeting CACREP standards for supervision.

Chapter Summary

In spite of the limited examples of practicing professional school counselor supervision in the literature, it is apparent that supervision needs for school counselors continue to go unmet and supervision is often underutilized in the practice of professional school counseling. Supervision needs included receiving clinical and developmental supervision in addition to the administrative supervision that professional school counselors reported receiving (Agnew et al., 2000; Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Crutchfield et al., 1997); finding time when they could be supervised (Herlihy et al. 2002); determining the focus of the counseling program (Paisley & McMahon, 2001); creating a program that was culturally responsive to the diverse needs of the students (Paisley & McMahon); detecting clinical performance deficiencies (Herlihy et al., 2002); pursuing professional development that takes into account the school counselors’ developmental level, development of skills, ability to conceptualize cases, development of a professional identity, and increase of knowledge (Bunch, 2002; Crutchfield & Borders, 1997; Henderson, 1994; Matthes, 1992; Nelson & Johnson, 1999; Page et al., 2001; Portman,
Communication of Professional School Counseling Supervision Practices

The researchers of professional school counselor supervision who have reported clinical and developmental supervision needs of school counselors will have minimal impact on practice without adequate communication to the providers of supervision. Currently, the supervision needs of professional school counselors continue to go unmet as much of what passes for supervision for the majority of school counselors remains administrative in nature (Agnew et al., 2000; Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Crutchfield et al., 2002; Protivnak, 2003; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Sumerel & Borders, 1996; VanZandt & Perry, 1992); understanding state and national licensing requirements (Roberts & Borders, 1994); avoiding burnout (Crutchfield & Borders, 1997); and receiving support and encouragement in their work as professional school counselors (Sutton & Page, 1994).

Sharing these needs with administrators who are providing school counselor supervision is critical. Fitch, Newby, Ballestero, and Marshall (2001) recommended six activities that counselor educators should teach future school counselors to employ with their school administrators in effort to help them understand school counselors’ roles and needs for supervision. Examples of these strategies included discussing these needs during the job interview, publishing newsletters that clearly described the role of school counselors, assertively communicating their needs, requesting educational leadership faculty at local universities trained in counseling to consult with school administrators, and sharing appropriate research with school administrators that inform them of their needs as school counselors.
1997; Herlihy et al., 2002; Matthes, 1992; Page et al., 2001; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Sutton & Page, 1994).

The need for communication is not limited to school administrators serving as supervisors. Professional school counselors who are serving as supervisors could also benefit from a more detailed understanding of the supervision needs of those in their own profession. There is little research that differentiates for supervisors the supervision needs of pre-service school counselors who are receiving on-site supervision during their internship and new-entrant school counselor who may seek supervision. It should not be assumed that the experiences of practicing school counselors who serve as supervisors are sufficient to inform them about the process of supervision or the needs of their supervisees.

Herlihy et al. (2002) recognized that professional school counselor supervision may consist of a potentially damaging cycle that can lead to inadequate clinical supervision. If school counseling interns are placed in schools under the watch of on-site supervisors who have had little to no training in supervision, they could be destined to receive inadequate supervision which might prevent them from developing their highest potential as professional school counselors. In turn, as these students become future supervisors of professional school counselors, they may find themselves ordained to repeat this unproductive cycle as they provide supervision.

Need for Additional Research

Although much has been written about supervision in the counseling profession, there remains a paucity of research in professional school counseling literature that
focuses on the practice of supervision when used as an intervention to support professional school counselors and their activities. Several researchers have suggested that those developing supervision practices and modalities for school counselors should examine the supervision experiences and subjective needs of professional school counselors (Protivnak, 2003; Peace, 1995; Sutton & Page, 1994; Usher & Borders, 1993). However, to date, school counseling supervision literature has depended largely on descriptions of supervision experiences and perceived needs of counselors without differentiation between their counseling settings to inform the work of those developing supervision and practices for school counselors (Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Borders, 1989; Borders, 1991b; Borders et al., 1995; Borders & Usher, 1992; Guest & Dooley, 1999; Ronnestad & Skovholt, 1993; Skovholt & Ronnestad, 2003; Sumerel & Borders, 1996; Usher & Borders, 1993; Worthen & McNeill, 1996).

This study sought to document the supervision experiences and perceived needs of new-entrant professional school counselors. Such an understanding could encourage the development of practices and programs that are relevant to the unique needs of new-entrant school counselors that will ultimately ensure the welfare of those served by these new professionals (Agnew et al., 2000; Barret & Schmidt, 1986; Henderson & Lampe, 1992).
CHAPTER III

METHOD

Chapter Overview

This chapter begins by providing the rationale for phenomenology as the qualitative research design that was used to address the research questions of this study. A section follows this discussion which provides details of the data collection procedures used. This section includes the summary of pilot research that was conducted to inform the usefulness of the guiding interview questions used in this study. The section on data collection procedures continues with a description of the individuals who were selected for participation in this study. The final section of this chapter includes an overview of the steps that were used for phenomenological data analysis once the data were collected. This section includes a summary of how Transana (Version 2.12), a software program used to assist with qualitative data analysis designed by Fassnacht and Woods (2006), was used to facilitate the data analysis process.

Research Design

Researchers operating from a positivist paradigm assert that an objective reality exists and can best be studied and understood using a variety of quantitative methods (e.g., experiments, surveys, and correlation studies). In contrast, researchers operating from a post-positivist paradigm agree that an objective reality exists; however, this
paradigm asserts that reality can never be fully comprehended, only approximated as it is
difficult to separate the subjectivity imposed by the knower on the known (Hatch, 2002).
Phenomenological inquiry provides a good fit for a post-positivist framework in which
researchers see themselves as data collection instruments who attempt to maintain an
objective posture while collecting data in ways to arrive at an understanding of the
meaning or essence of a phenomenon under investigation (Hatch, 2002).

Husserl (1962) used phenomenology as a term to describe an individual’s
subjective descriptions of objects and experiences. These descriptions are critical to
understanding the nature of reality as each individual attempts to make sense of the
world. A phenomenological approach contends that knowledge of reality is shaped
through the subjective meaning that each individual assigns to his or her experiences or
beliefs about these experiences. Edie (1987) describes this approach by stating:

Concepts are not things or substances or forces at all; they are rather meaning or
structures forged by the mind in its experiences of things. “In itself” the world is
neither true nor false, nor is it meaningful or valuable, it takes on meaning only in
relation to a mind which orders and relates its parts, which thus institutes objects
of thought and, by thinking the world, introduces into it the relationship of
knowledge of possible truth and falsity. (p. 4)

Phenomenological inquiry often begins with a single focus that the investigator
tries to understand about a lived experience through the described perspectives of those
living the phenomenon under investigation (Hatch, 2002). However, awareness of a
phenomenon is insufficient for the purpose of research; it must be described, explicated,
and interpreted (Osborne, 1990). An essence or core meaning of the single focus under
investigation emerges as the commonly experienced phenomenon is described,
explicated, and interpreted. Pursuit of this essence is the subject matter of phenomenological inquiry (Kraus, 1996).

Since the research questions of this study were devised to gather data about the essence and core meaning of supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant school counselors as they talked about their beliefs about their supervisory experiences, phenomenological inquiry was selected as the qualitative design best equipped to answer these research questions. Close examination and interpretation of data generated a unified meaning of supervision as experienced by 15 new-entrant school counselors as well as their perceived needs when describing their beliefs of their supervision experiences. As participants reported on their lived supervision experiences and perceived needs, a single, unifying essence or meaning of these experiences and beliefs was expected to emerge from the data.

Data Collection

There are a variety of ways to collect data when using a phenomenological approach to research. Semi-structured interviewing has served as a primary means of using phenomenological inquiry to collect data in several qualitative research projects in the counseling field (Agnew et al., 2000; Amatea & Clark, 2005; Kraus, 1996; Magnusen et al., 2000; Portman, 2002, Starling & Baker, 2000; Worthen & McNeill, 1996). Unlike quantitative studies in which the questions are often designed as closed-ended questions before the interview, questions planned for qualitative interviews are open-ended in design (Hatch, 2002). Semi-structured interviews invite participants to be partners in the research process rather than subjects to be tested or examined (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).
Semi-structured interviews can also be viewed as extensions of ordinary conversations; as such, investigators need to listen to each comment shared during the interview in order to determine the next question that will be asked (Rubin & Rubin, 2005).

In qualitative studies interviewers often have questions in mind that they hope to ask; however, many of the questions are often created during the interview in response to the information shared by the participant. This process facilitates rapport between investigators and participants that is needed to encourage participants to share what is on their minds. In this manner, participants become more comfortable with the interview process and enter into a conversation as opposed to reciting responses to a series of interview questions.

Participants in this study had the opportunity to impact the direction of the semi-structured interview by changing the subject, guiding the pace, and/or indicating that the interviewer was asking the wrong questions. This process was consistent with typical practices when using a phenomenological approach to conduct semi-structured interviews (Rubin & Rubin, 2005). The research questions of this proposal easily translated into questions that were used during each interview, asking participants to describe their supervision experiences and perceived needs. The guiding questions are listed in the initial semi-structured question guide provided in Appendix B.

**Pilot Study**

A pilot study was conducted to test the effectiveness of the guiding questions developed to examine the supervision experiences and needs of new-entrant school counselors (Bultsma, 2006). Five new-entrant school counselors from public elementary
(N = 2), middle/junior high (N = 1), and high schools (N = 2) located in a Midwestern state participated in this pilot study. Consistent with the definition of a new-entrant school counselor noted in Chapter I, participants of the pilot study were selected based on the criterion that they were in their first three years of post-master's employment as school counselors. The pilot study was based on a convenience sample. The investigator, a former professional school counselor, knew six new entrant school counselors and invited them to participate in the pilot study. Five of the six agreed to participate.

The results of this pilot study, which sought to examine the helpfulness of the semi-structured interview question guide, demonstrated that building principals most often provide school counseling supervision in the form of administrative supervision. Supervision experiences were also reported to be lacking. These results also indicated that supervision is highly dependent on communication, and that it was often confused with the process of evaluation.

In terms of the supervision needs of new-entrant school counselors, the results of this study suggested that new-entrant school counselors need support in their new roles. Four themes emerged from the data and each of these was a variation of the new-entrant school counselors' perceived need for support as new professionals (Bultsma, 2006). These themes relating to the need for support included (1) good relationships with supervisors; (2) help coming up with ideas, answering questions, or implementing a guidance and counseling program; (3) principals not understanding the role of the school counselor; and (4) accountability.

The pilot study afforded the investigator the opportunity to reflect on the data generated from the initial semi-structured interview question guide (Appendix B). It was
determined that asking participants to describe their supervision experiences up to this point in their development and training as professional school counselors was too broad and resulted in many questions from participants about what was meant by the question. As a result, the question guide was revised (see Appendix C) to include more specific questions about supervision experiences and perceived needs.

Participants

Since phenomenological inquiry requires participants to describe their everyday lived experiences of the phenomenon being studied, it was crucial that participants in this study were carefully selected to ensure that they had experienced the phenomenon being investigated. In attempt to understand the supervision experiences of professional school counselors at all three school levels (e.g., elementary, middle/junior high, and high/senior high), 15 new-entrant school counselors from public schools in a Midwestern state were sought to participate in this study (five school counselors from each level). Those who had a master’s degree in some other aspect of counseling (e.g., community counseling) and came back to get their school counseling credentials to become professional school counselors did not qualify as participants for this study. Although these individuals are new to the field of school counseling, it was anticipated that their previous professional counseling experiences would produce different experiences and perceived needs of supervision when compared to those who were new-entrant professionals in counseling field.

A criterion sampling method was used to select the participants of this study. The investigator identified potential participants with the help of professional acquaintances
who knew school counselors who were working in their first three years of employment as professional school counselors. Additional criteria used to identify potential participants included that participants needed to have a master's degree in school counseling and an endorsement or license as a professional school counselor. Those new school counselors who worked in the field as professional counselors in other settings and returned for training as professional school counselors were not included as participants in this study. It was anticipated that previous counseling experiences might impact current supervision experiences and perceived needs in their new role as professional school counselors.

The investigator contacted potential participants by phone and recruited them for this study using the script provided in Appendix D. From the criterion sample 18 new-entrant professional school counselors were identified and invited to participate. Of the 18 potential participants contacted, 3 did not meet the criteria of the study. One of them had a master's degree in community counseling, another had been employed as school counselor longer than four years, and a third was not endorsed or licensed as a professional school counselor.

All 15 new-entrant professional school counselors who met the criterion for participation in this study agreed to participate. Before their participation began, all 15 of these potential participants were asked to read and sign the consent document (Appendix E). Participants also completed a form (Appendix F) used to document that they met the criterion for participation. This form documented participants' credentials (e.g., endorsed or licensed as a professional school counselor) and demographic information including gender, age, race/ethnicity, full or part time employment status, and school level (e.g.,
elementary, junior/middle, or senior/high). A summary of this information can be found in Table 1. Note that all names provided for participants are pseudonyms.

In sum, 13 of the participants were female and 2 were male. They ranged in age from 26 to 50 years, and the average age of the participants was 39.7 years. In terms of race/ethnicity, 13 participants identified themselves as Caucasian, 1 described herself as Caucasian/Hispanic, and 1 described herself as Hispanic. Years in the school counseling profession ranged from half of one year to three years with an average of 1.6 years. The levels of students that each new-entrant professional school counselor worked with were described by the participants as follows: three worked with elementary students (grades K-5), three worked with middle school students (grades 6-8), one worked with students in elementary and middle school settings (grades K-8), four worked in a traditional high school setting (grades 9-12), one worked at a high school freshmen campus (grade 9), one worked in a setting with middle and high school students (grades 7-12), and one worked with all three levels of students (grades K-12). The number of participants employed as full time counselors was 11. The other four participants worked part time (two worked 50% and two worked 80%). The caseloads of the school counselors averaged 405 students. Caseload of students ranged from 130 assigned to 1,100 students.

The credentials of the participants included eight who were trained and certified as teachers with a school counseling endorsement included on their teaching certificates and seven who were licensed as school counselors and not trained as teachers. Additionally, seven of the participants possessed the LLPC credential. Five of the professional school counselors who participated in this study described their counseling program as following a comprehensive guidance and counseling model as encouraged
## Table 1

**Demographic Information for Participants**

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Race/Ethnicity</th>
<th>Years in profession</th>
<th>Grade level</th>
<th>Employment status as school counselor</th>
<th>Caseload</th>
<th>License/Certification</th>
<th>Follow comprehensive guidance</th>
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<td>Jillian</td>
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<td>Full time</td>
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<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
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<td>2.5</td>
<td>6-8</td>
<td>Full time</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
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<td>26</td>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Olivia</td>
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<td>32</td>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>9-12</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>280</td>
<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>7-12</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>130</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Caucasian/Hispanic</td>
<td>.5</td>
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<td>251</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Part time</td>
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<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
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<tr>
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<td>6-8</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>ESC</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anne</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>K-12</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>154</td>
<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Robert</td>
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<tr>
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<td>Tami</td>
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<td>Caucasian</td>
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<td>K-5</td>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>1100</td>
<td>SCL, LLPC</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*ESC = Endorsed as a School Counselor on a Teaching Certificate; SCL = School Counselor License; LLPC = Limited License Professional Counselor*
by professional school counselor associations (e.g., ASCA). Ten of the participants indicated that their programs did not follow a comprehensive guidance and counseling model.

Phenomenological Analysis

In phenomenology, the process of analysis begins with in-depth knowledge gained by reflecting on one's own lived experiences of the phenomena (Morse, 1994). These initial reflections are used to dialogue on the topic with others to create experiential descriptions that when audio-recorded and transcribed can be used to identify descriptive words and search for phrases that add to the understanding of the experience under investigation (Morse, 1994). The principal means of analysis within the phenomenological tradition involves a process of conducting thematic analyses during which common structures of a particular experience are formed to provide the investigator with an understanding of the world (van Manen, 1990).

Although the lived supervision experiences of the investigator as a new-entrant professional school counselor were described briefly in the Limitations section of Chapter I for this project, elaboration on these experiences is appropriate because it demonstrates reflection of the investigator's lived experiences that is characteristic of phenomenological analysis. During this investigator's first three years as a new-entrant professional counselor, he experienced a lack of supervision that made entry into the profession more challenging than he speculated that it might have otherwise been with guidance from a knowledgeable and experienced supervisor. The supervision experiences of this investigator's first three years as a new-entrant professional school counselor were
found to pale in comparison to the quality of this investigator’s supervision experiences received during practicum and internship as well as those received to maintain the LLPC credential. Reflection on the comparison of these experiences led this investigator to the research questions and semi-structured interview guide that were used in this study to engage new school counseling professionals in discourse about their experiences with supervision as new professionals.

All interviews were face-to-face and took place in the school offices of each participant. The length of the average interview was 42 minutes. They ranged in length from 27 minutes to 53 minutes. Once each semi-structured interview was completed, the investigator listened to each recording. These audio-recordings were then transcribed by a professional transcriber who signed a confidentiality agreement (Appendix G). All identifying information was omitted from the transcripts and replaced by pseudonyms (e.g., names of supervisors). Following the transcription of each interview, the investigator listened to the recordings again as all transcripts were checked for accuracy. A second reading followed this initial review during which time the investigator bracketed initial reactions to the data in the margins of the transcripts. These bracketed notes included assumptions, preconceptions, and preliminary interpretations of the interview transcript. Examples of these notes that were written in the margin included results that were consistent with the pilot study, similar experiences that the investigator recalled experiencing as a new professional, descriptions that the investigator thought provided the need for this study, descriptions that preferred status quo when no supervision was provided, and descriptions that minimized the need for supervision as a new professional.
When all 15 interviews were completed and reviewed, the investigator wrote summaries that reflected the main ideas identified in each participant's interview. These summaries are included in Appendix H. The investigator then scheduled a final meeting with each participant that lasted less than one-half hour during which each participant read the summary of only her or his interview. This process is referred to as member checking and gave participants opportunities to react to the investigator's tentative findings (Hatch, 2002). Member checking provided another way to establish the trustworthiness of the data by allowing each participant to verify the accuracy of the described phenomena before analyses began. This process reinforced the emphasis in phenomenology on the importance of understanding the meaning of the lived experiences as they were shared by the participants. These member checking meetings were not audio-recorded; participants were simply directed to correct any summary statements that misrepresented their comments or experiences. The written responses to these summary statements are included in Appendix I.

Ten participants indicated that no clarification or elaboration needed to be added to their summaries. Grace included a minor clarification to the summary concerning her use of confidentiality and the phrase “bouncing off ideas.” This clarification was included as an addendum in her transcript. The statements made by Danielle and Olivia were also added to their transcripts since they reported a pending change in their supervision experiences compared to the experiences that they described at the time that their initial interviews were conducted. When Danielle and Olivia were asked to review their summaries they had both arranged to participate in group supervision in the coming year to fulfill the expectation that professionals with the LLPC degree receive supervision;
however, neither participant was interviewed to explore the nature of these experiences since they had not yet begun participation in their group supervision at the time of this writing. The more substantial additions provided by Margie and Jillian were also included as appendices in the transcripts of each. The comments shared by Margie provided specific clarifications within specific paragraphs of her summary, and the comments made by Jillian reflected elaborations on her original comments that were included in her summary.

Following the addition of these appendices to the transcripts, attention was shifted back to the process of inductive analysis. Inductive analysis allows researchers the opportunity to search for patterns of meaning in data by moving from a focus on specific content to forming broader statements about the phenomena under investigation (Hatch, 2002). Morse (1994) described inductive analysis by commenting that it “sensitizes the investigator by providing new insights, increasing the level of abstraction, and moving the descriptions away from the particular to a more universal sphere” (p. 36). This universal sphere repositions the particular experiences of the phenomena into a description that any person experiencing the phenomena might identify (Morse, 1994).

Inductive analysis was used in this phenomenological study to identify the common themes or threads among participants’ descriptions of their supervision experiences as new professionals in effort to determine as accurately as possible what constitutes a universal meaning or essence of supervision experiences described by the new-entrant school counselor participants. It was anticipated that these analyses would yield a deeper understanding of the shared meaning and essence of the supervision experiences and needs of the 15 participants. These understandings are discussed in the
Results and Discussion chapters of this study. The following steps and procedures outlined by Hatch (2002) were utilized to guide the process of inductive analysis:

1. The data were read to identify frames of analysis or units of meaning;
2. Domains were created based on semantic relationships discovered within these meaning units;
3. Salient domains were identified and assigned codes;
4. Data were reread, salient domains refined and records were kept that demonstrated where relationships were found in the data;
5. Decisions were made to determine whether domains were supported by the data and data were searched for examples that did not fit with or ran counter to the relationships found in the domains;
6. Analysis within domains was completed;
7. Themes across domains were sought;
8. A master outline was created that expressed relationships within and among domains; and
9. Data excerpts were selected to support elements of the outline.

Using Software for Qualitative Data Analysis

Since Transana, a qualitative data analysis software program, was used to facilitate the process of data analysis of this project, a brief discussion of the application of computer software when conducting qualitative data analysis is provided. It is followed by a brief description of Transana, including the rationale for selecting Transana as the software program used in this study.
Powerful software programs (e.g., SAS and SPSS) have eased the process of understanding data in the field of quantitative research by computerizing the difficult process of statistical analysis. Exploring the utility of computers in qualitative research, Weitzman (2003) listed 14 uses of computers in qualitative data analysis:

1. Making notes in the field;
2. Writing up or transcribing field notes or interviews;
3. Editing, correcting or extending field notes;
4. Coding by attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval;
5. Storing text in an organized database;
6. Searching for and retrieving relevant segments of text and making them available for inspection;
7. Data linking text by connecting relevant data segments to each other, forming categories, clusters;
8. Memoing by writing reflective commentaries on some aspect of the data for later analysis;
9. Content analysis that allows counting frequencies, sequences, or locations of words and phrases;
10. Data display that allows for placing selected or reduced data in a condensed, organized form for inspection;
11. Conclusion drawing and verification that aides in the interpretation of displayed data and testing or confirming findings;
12. Theory building that is facilitated through the development of systematic, conceptually coherent explanations of findings; 

13. Creating diagrams that depict findings or theories; and 

14. Writing final reports 

In spite of this list which demonstrates how qualitative investigators can use computers and software as helpful tools to assist with qualitative data analysis, there is an ongoing debate in the field of qualitative analysis in terms of the appropriateness of using computers and software to analyze data. Those who resist the use of computers for qualitative data analysis argue that computers are often associated with modernist, empiricist, and positivist perspectives that rely on quantification in sharp contrast to the qualitative tradition (Willis & Jost, 1999). When countering these limitations of qualitative data analysis software, Rubin and Rubin (2005) commented that software programs used to facilitate the process of data analysis do not analyze the data or build theory, replacing the thoughtful analysis provided by the investigator. 

Transana was selected as the software program to assist with the data analysis process of this phenomenological study because of its user-friendly design and its ability to manage large volume of data that resulted from 15 audio files and transcribed interviews. In this study Transana facilitated the data analysis process in 8 of the 14 ways identified by Weitzman (2003) as follows: (1) writing up or transcribing interviews; (2) coding by attaching key words or tags to segments of text to permit later retrieval; (3) storing text in an organized database; (4) searching for and retrieving relevant segments of text and making them available for inspection; (5) data linking text by connecting relevant data segments to each other, forming categories, clusters; (6) content
analysis that allows counting frequencies, sequences, or locations of words and phrases; (7) data display that allows for placing selected or reduced data in a condensed, organized form for inspection; and (8) writing the final report.

In general, Transana provided a way to insert a transcript, review audio clips, and link places in the transcript to frames in the audio track. Transana allowed the actual audio clip to be linked to a specific section of the transcript so that when specific segments of the transcript were saved for later review, the audio clip associated with that segment played back. Transana also provided tools for identifying and organizing analytically interesting portions of audio files, as well as for attaching keywords to those audio clips. It provided a mechanism for searching for portions of analytically interesting audio and transcript clips by keyword and by combinations of keywords (Fassnacht & Woods, 2006). Details that describe the specific ways in which Transana was used during analysis will be provided in the next section describing the data analysis process.

Inductive Data Analysis

Following the revisions of the transcripts that resulted from the member checking process as described in the earlier phenomenological analysis section of this chapter, the investigator uploaded each of the 15 transcripts and 15 audio files into Transana. The investigator then used Transana to facilitate inductive analysis as described by Hatch (2002) using the nine steps listed in the previous section.
Identifying Frames of Analysis/Units of Meaning

The first step described by Hatch (2002) in which data were read to identify frames of analysis or units of meaning was applied by this investigator using the clip identification function in Transana to identify initial frames of analysis or units of meaning within specific clips from the transcripts. As each transcript was read, individual clips were identified that contained a unit of meaning or piece of information used to describe supervision experiences or perceived supervision needs as reported by the participants. Each of these units of meaning or clips was stored in the Transana database and this collection of clips formed the frames of analysis used to answer the research questions of this study (i.e., what are the supervision experiences reported by new-entrant professional school counselors, and what do new-entrant professional school counselors describe that they need from supervision experiences?). The total number of frames of analysis or units of meaning included in the database was 307; all 15 of the participants contributed to this clip collection.

Identifying Domains

The second step in the process of inductive analysis as recommended by Hatch (2002) is to create domains based on semantic relationships within each of the units of meaning or clips. To identify semantic relationships the investigator used Transana to assign one or more keywords to each of the clips or units of meaning found within each clip. The clips identified from participants’ transcripts were then organized and stored in Transana’s database according to the keyword(s) that were assigned to each clip. After
this step was complete, 117 initial domains or keywords had been identified within which each of the 307 clips was organized. For example, the investigator identified 15 different domains (e.g., presenting cases, supervising groups, observing, role playing, and watching videos) that included 31 clips from 10 participants in what would later become established as the supervision activities theme.

**Identifying Salient Domains and Assigning Codes**

The third step in inductive analysis described by Hatch (2002) indicated that salient domains should next be identified and assigned codes. In this step the investigator reread all of the clips after they were organized and stored in each of the 117 domains or keywords to identify whether these initial domains captured the lived supervision experiences and perceived supervisory needs that were being described by participants. During this step of the data analysis process, the investigator observed that the clip collections assigned to the various keywords did not differentiate whether the clips applied to participants’ descriptions of their internships, practica, or new-entrant supervision experiences. The investigator was able to use Transana to identify which supervision experiences that the participants were referring to in their descriptions. Using the Boolean search feature of Transana, the investigator was able to limit the collection of clips that were assigned to each domain to those identified as descriptions of new-entrant supervision experiences and perceived needs. This step reduced the number of units of meaning in the collection of clips from 307 to 236. This change in the number of units of meaning or clips reduced the number of domains or keywords that were initially identified because some of the domains or keywords were no longer supported when the
clips that described supervision experiences received during participants' training were not included in the database. When applying this limitation, about half of the salient domains were no longer supported by the data used by participants to describe the phenomenon of new-entrant school counselor supervision experiences and beliefs about the perceived needs of the participants. These domains or keywords were removed from the database further reducing the number of salient domains that were identified.

Refining Domains

As the transcripts were reread and the salient domains or keywords were refined, records were kept that demonstrated where relationships were found in the data as prescribed in the fourth step described by Hatch (2002). The investigator used Transana to review the revised list of salient domains or keywords that were supported by the units of meaning or clips describing only those supervision experiences and perceived supervisory needs that applied to their experiences as new-entrant professional school counselors. After reviewing this list, domains or keywords were refined by combining similar domains and keywords.

For example, the investigator regrouped the keywords of constant dialogue, asking questions, advice giving, debriefing, directing, giving feedback, and providing a second opinion under one keyword called communication. All clips associated with these keywords were automatically assigned to the newly created communication keyword or domain. This process further reduced the number of salient domains or keywords that were identified as described in the preceding section. After this step was completed the final list reduced to 36 salient domains or keywords from the 177 domains or keywords
that were initially identified. Each of these salient domains is described in detail in the discussion of the results in Chapter IV.

*Searching the Data for Examples That Ran Counter to the Relationships Identified Within Domains*

Using the fifth step identified by Hatch (2002) during inductive analysis, the investigator made decisions to determine whether domains were supported by the data and data were searched for examples that did not fit with or ran counter to the relationships found within the domains. During this fifth step of data analysis, a variety of demographic factors were considered within each of the keywords that impacted the description of supervision experiences and needs as they related to new-entrant professional school counselors. It was anticipated that the various demographic variables might create conflicting accounts of supervision experiences from one participant to another. These demographic factors included each of the nine variables summarized in Table 1: (1) gender (i.e., male or female); (2) age (i.e., 20s, 30s, 40s, or 50s); (3) race/ethnicity (i.e., Caucasian, Hispanic, Caucasian/Hispanic); (4) years in profession (i.e., one year or less, two years or less but more than one year, or three years or less but more than two years); (5) school level (i.e., K-5, 6-8, 9-12, K-8, 7-12, or K-12); (6) employment status as a school counselor (i.e., full time or part time); (7) caseload (i.e., under 250, 251-400, 401-800, or over 800); (8) credentials (i.e., licensed as a professional school counselor, endorsed as a professional school counselor, or LLPC); and (9) implementation of a comprehensive guidance and counseling program (i.e., yes or no).
In the Transana software program the investigator assigned the applicable demographic variables to each participant’s transcript. As a result, each clip that was selected from the transcript maintained the demographic variables that were assigned to the transcript before the clip was selected. For example, the transcript that included comments from Jillian was programmed to identify any clips taken from the transcript as (1) gender: female, (2) age: 40s, (3) race/ethnicity: Caucasian, (4) years in profession: two years or less but more than one, (5) school level: 9, (6) employment status as a school counselor: full time, (7) caseload: 251-400, (8) credential: school counselor license and LLPC, and (9) comprehensive guidance and counseling: no.

For clips that ran counter to the relationships identified within each keyword, the demographic variables of the clips were reviewed to determine whether they accounted for the observed differences in the reported experiences. This differentiation helped the investigator determine whether domains were supported by the data as examples were identified that did not fit with or ran counter to the relationships found within the domains. Any of the variables that accounted for observed differences (e.g., differences in the report of supervision activities among professional school counselors with varying credentials) are described in Chapter IV.

*Complete Analysis Within Domains*

Step six of inductive analysis as recommended by Hatch (2002) involved finishing analysis within the salient domains or keywords. The investigator completed this step by printing out a summary of all clips within each of the keywords from the Transana database and reviewing their organization. The investigator read through all clips that
were assigned to each keyword, deciding whether or not the clip fit within the domain. No clips were deleted; however, several sections of clips were removed and notes were made in the margin when these sections were deleted as part of the bracketing process described earlier in this chapter.

Consistent with phenomenological data analysis, identification of the clips (frames of analysis or units of meaning) and keywords (salient domains within these frames or units) remained tentative throughout the data analysis process (Hatch, 2002). This tentative approach was intended to allow for the discovery and creation of additional units of meaning or domains that emerged from the participants’ descriptions of their supervision experiences as the investigator continued to be immersed in the data with continued review and rereading the transcripts and clips. However, during this reading of the transcripts no other units of meaning or domains were discovered, and it was determined that the process of assigning clips to each keyword from the various transcripts of participants was complete.

Search for Themes Across Domains

Attention next shifted to the seventh step of identifying themes across the salient domains or keywords. The goal of this step was to ask what all of this means (Hatch, 2002) by identifying the prevalent themes discovered in the descriptions of these 15 professional school counselors’ supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs as new professionals. Using the salient domains stored in the Transana database as keywords, the investigator was able to group these keywords into 11 relevant themes that emerged across the salient domains of the participants’ descriptions. The following six
themes or keyword groups were identified by the researcher based on participants’
descriptions of the phenomena of their experiences with supervision: (1) supervisor
credentials, (2) disadvantages, (3) advantages, (4) quality, (5) activities, and (6) structure.
The following three themes or keyword groups were identified in participants’
descriptions of their perceived supervision needs: (1) support, (2) unmet supervision
needs, and (3) met supervision needs. A summary of these 11 themes is ranked in Table 2
from most participants represented in the clip collections for each theme to the least.
Where the number of participants represented in the clip collections was the same, the
theme with more clips in the collection was ranked ahead of the theme with fewer clips.
The number of units of meaning (clips) and salient domains (keywords) associated within
each of these 11 themes (keyword groups) is also summarized in Table 2.

As reported in Table 2, the supervisor credentials theme had the most participants
assigned to it, with 15 who contributed 64 units of meaning in 6 domains. The themes
describing disadvantages and advantages of supervision included 13 participants who
contributed 42 units of meaning in 6 domains and 12 participants with 47 units of
meaning in 5 domains respectively. The theme that described the quality of supervision
experiences had 9 participants who contributed 34 units of meaning in 2 domains. The
activities theme included 8 participants who contributed 24 units of meaning in 2
domains. The theme identifying the structure of supervision had the lowest number of
participants in the clip collect, with 5 participants contributing 28 units of meaning in 1
domain. The highest number of participants identified in descriptions of participants’
perceived supervision needs was found in the theme of support in which 97 clips were
contributed from 14 participants in 6 domains. The theme describing unmet supervision
needs for participants included 27 clips from 11 participants, and the met supervision needs theme had 23 clips contributed by 9 participants. Each of these themes is described in the Results section of this study in Chapter IV.

During this stage of data analysis the investigator also observed that two themes emerged from participants' descriptions of both their experiences and reports of their perceived needs: (1) supervision type, and (2) focus of supervision. For example, as participants described advantages of supervision, it was noted that these descriptions could be grouped by the supervision type as well as the focus of supervision. This was observed in the case of all the salient domains that had been identified within each of the other themes. As a result the clip collections of these domains are rather large. The focus of supervision keyword group included 91 clips from 14 participants in 3 domains, and the supervision types included 78 clips from 14 participants in 3 domains. This information is summarized in Table 2 and described in more detail in Chapter IV.

Create a Master Outline and Select Data Excerpts

Next, a master outline was created that illustrated the relationships within and among domains to complete the eighth step recommended by Hatch (2002). Transana provided the organization for this outline in its database. This outline formed the organization for the report of the results. As the final step in data analysis suggested by Hatch recommends, data excerpts were then selected to support the elements of this outline from the clips that were organized and stored in Transana. A report of these clips is also included as the results of this study are described in Chapter IV.
Table 2

Summary of Themes, Units of Meaning, and Domains

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (Keyword Groups)</th>
<th>Number of units of meaning (Clips)</th>
<th>Number of participants represented in the clip collection</th>
<th>Number of salient domains (Keywords)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision experiences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervisor credential</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perceived supervision needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet needs</td>
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<td>11</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met needs</td>
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<td>9</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supervision types</td>
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<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus of supervision</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Units of meaning and domains identified within each of these themes are ranked in order from most to least participants represented in each clip collection.
Chapter Summary

This chapter provided a description of the research design used to investigate the supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs of 15 new entrant professional school counselors. Rationale was provided for the phenomenological approach, and the data collection process was also described along with a description of the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors who participated in this study. This chapter also included a report of a study conducted by this investigator to pilot the interview questions included in the semi-structured interview guide. Finally, the process of phenomenological data analysis that was used in this study was described in detail. Since the investigator used a qualitative software program to analyze the data, this description included a discussion of the use of software when analyzing qualitative data. A report of these results is included in the following chapter.
CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

The results in this chapter suggest that, although some of the 15 participants of this study described their lived supervision experiences as new-entrant professional school counselor positively, the combined descriptions demonstrate that supervision experiences of new-entrant professional school counselors are lacking and in several cases non-existent. While these results are consistent with what several researchers have documented in terms of the realities of post-master's professional school counselor supervision (e.g., Barret & Schmidt, 1986; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Henderson & Lamp, 1992; Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Sutton & Page, 1994), they are unique in that they focus specifically on the supervision experiences of new-entrant professional school counselors. The results in this chapter document the phenomenon of the lived supervision experiences for 15 new-entrant professional school counselors as well as their perceived needs as they described their beliefs about their supervisory experiences.

Chapter Overview

The overview of this chapter is organized into three sections. The first two sections of this report provide answers to the research questions that were posed in this study. The first section describes supervision experiences reported by new-entrant school
counselors, and the second section reports perceived supervision needs described by new-entrant professional school counselors.Descriptions of two themes that were constructed across the units of meaning and salient domains for both areas (i.e., supervision types and focus of supervision) are described in a third section of this chapter. In each of these three sections of the chapter, the units of meaning that were identified in each area are discussed along with a summary of the domains that emerged to form the common themes identified in each section. Excerpts from the data used to provide support for the salient domains and themes are reported in each section.

Differences in demographic variables are also explored when examples that ran counter to the relationships were identified within the salient domains. Implications and limitations of these results for the practice of supervising new-entrant professional school counselors are considered following this report of the results in the discussion section (Chapter V) of this study.

Report of Supervision Experiences

When considering the supervision experiences reported by the participants in this study, six themes emerged from the data as descriptions of the phenomenon of supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors. The following list is ranked in order of the themes from the highest number of participants identified in the clip collection of each to the least: (1) supervisor credentials, (2) disadvantages of receiving supervision, (3) advantages of receiving supervision, (4) quality of the supervision experiences received, (5) supervision activities, and (6) structure of supervision. The quality of the supervision experiences received and supervision activities themes include
the same number of participants who contributed to the clip collections. Since the quality of supervision theme included more clips in the collection than the supervision activities theme, it was ranked higher. These themes are listed in Table 3 along with a summary of the number of clips identified in each theme and a report of the number of participants represented in the clip collection of each theme. This summary is found in the rows labeled “Total” for each theme.

Descriptions of each domain found within each theme are also reported in the sections of this chapter that follow as they relate to describing the phenomenological supervision experiences for the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors in this study. The domains that were identified within each theme are also reported in rank order according to the number of participants included in each of the clip collections for each domain from the most to the least number of participants. Each section that follows also includes a report of the number of clips assigned to each of the domains. These results are summarized in Table 3.

Credentials of Supervisors

When describing their supervision experiences, all 15 of the participants described the credentials of their supervisors who were providing them with supervision. Describing supervisors’ credentials contained 64 clips, and this was the greatest number of clips of any identified in the other themes. Six domains emerged from the participants’ experiences. A list of these domains follows in rank order from the most participants represented in each of the clip collections to the least as reported in Table 3: (1) no supervisor, (2) LPC, (3) principal, (4) school counselor license/endorsement, (5) social
Table 3

Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified in Participants’ Descriptions of Supervision Experiences

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (Keyword groups)</th>
<th>Salient domains (Keywords) identified within each theme</th>
<th>Number of units of meaning (Clips)</th>
<th>Number of participants represented in the clip collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Credentials of supervisors</td>
<td>No supervisor</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>LPC</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>School counselor</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>license/endorsement</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Social worker</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>64</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>Autonomy conflict</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Time</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Poor supervision</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Dual roles</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No value</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advantages</td>
<td>Improve skills</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Learning the job</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish credibility</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>47</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality</td>
<td>Deficient</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>34</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Role confusion</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>24</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>As Needed</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Units of meaning and domains identified within each of these themes are ranked in order from most to least participants represented in each clip collection.
worker, and (6) teacher. Two of the participants described that they had more than one supervisor (i.e., Pamela indicated that she was supervised by an LPC, an endorsed school counselor, and a teacher; and Carol indicated that she was supervised by an LPC and a social worker), and two participants described that their supervisor had multiple credentials (i.e., Danielle indicated that her supervisor was both a principal and an endorsed school counselor, and Grace reported that her supervisor was an LPC, a principal, and an endorsed school counselor). These circumstances explain why clips from these four participants appear in more than one domain.

No Supervisor

The first domain in this theme includes 14 clips from six different participants who report that they were not currently receiving supervision from any individual in particular. Although the clips in this collection describe how these professionals sought to fill the void of supervision experiences by networking with a variety of individuals, the six participants in this collection did not consider their experiences to be supervision.

Three of the participants (i.e., Olivia, Tami, and Anne) directly stated that they were not receiving supervision in their work as new school counselors. Olivia said, “I’m not receiving supervision,” and similarly Tami commented, “I do not have any supervision here.” Anne reported, “I wouldn’t say I’m having any supervision whatsoever.” Two of the participants (i.e., Natasha and Robert) reported that they were not “really” getting supervision. Natasha said, “I did not really have supervision,” and similarly Robert reported, “I didn’t really have any supervision.” Both Natasha and Robert recognized that the supervision experiences they described were not “really”
supervision. However, it was noted that in the absence of supervision, all six of the new professionals represented in this section reported seeking support that they might have otherwise had if they were receiving supervision. Participants sought support from administrators (e.g., principals and/or superintendents), previous supervisors, counseling colleagues, and retired educational professionals (e.g., school counselor or teacher).

Olivia and Tami commented that they received support from their principals. Tami indicated that she worked well together with her administrators. She said, “The principal and vice-principal are exceptionally supportive... they’re wonderful, absolutely wonderful.” Olivia also shared that she would sometimes “go to our principal to discuss issues.” Natasha also received support from her principal but also described support from her superintendent and previous supervisors as indicated in her following comment: “I basically either went to my principal, to my superintendent, or to previous supervisors not here in school.”

Robert indicated that school counselors within the district were available to him at district school counselor meetings for supervision or guidance. Olivia also mentioned the support of school counseling peers when she indicated that “the other counselor and I bounce ideas off each other.” This opportunity to collaborate with a school counseling colleague offered Olivia and Robert support in their work as new professionals.

Elaine and Anne reported that a retired educational professional had been assigned to them to provide them with support in their new roles. Elaine’s district contracted with the outgoing counselor for up to 20 days of training. She commented, “I took advantage of that my using 10 days in the fall to assist with just basically what all my responsibilities were, to help me get through the initial distribution schedules and the open house and
explain where some of the paperwork was kept, those types of things." As the only school counselor in her district, Anne reported, "So, they assigned me a supervisor who could say, 'We usually use this printer to do the program.'" While Anne reported that this person was able to help her understand how some of the "technical" aspects of the job went, she did not find it helpful in providing the supervision that she needed.

Anne is unique in that she described that she had received supervision during her first year as a new school counselor from a school counselor, but she was no longer receiving supervision when she was interviewed for this study because she took a new school counseling position in another school district. Since she was able to describe experiences as a new professional, her descriptions of supervision experiences are included with the nine participants who described they were currently receiving supervision.

Although five of the participants (i.e., Olivia, Natasha, Robert, Elaine, and Tami) reported not receiving supervision as new professionals, their efforts to fill the void of supervision along with their beliefs about supervision constituted their lived supervision experiences as they made their best attempt at getting their supervision needs met as new professionals in the absence of formal supervision experiences. These five participants were able to describe their beliefs about supervision advantages and disadvantages as they reflected on their practice as new professionals based on their understanding of the supervisory process that they experienced during their training. Since these participants' descriptions of their lived supervision experiences are unique in comparison to the other 10 participants who reported receiving supervision as new professionals, their descriptions were included at the end of each excerpt collection in the following sections.
When considering demographic differences, it was noted that two of these six participants (i.e., Olivia and Anne), who reported not currently receiving supervision, had LLPC credentials. Although professional school counselors are not required to hold an LLPC or LPC, the professional standard is that those with an LLPC are required by law to be supervised by an LPC until they fulfill the requirements necessary to become LPCs. School counselors who are LLPCs do not have to be supervised by a school counselor. There were no other observable demographic differences between variables in this domain.

LPC

Of the seven participants who held the LLPC credential, four of them (i.e., Jillian, Lena, Pamela, and Carol) indicated that they were currently receiving supervision from an LPC. The LPCs providing Jillian, Pamela, and Carol with supervision were licensed/endorsed professional school counselors employed in the same office with them. Lena received supervision from an LPC outside the district who was not licensed as a professional school counselor. Excerpts from this collection of nine clips include the following:

- “And, you know, I guess talking a little bit more about that, she was named as my mentor by the school as well as she has given me supervision to work on my LPC, which is nice for me because it’s just convenient.” (Jillian)

- “I’m getting a really good experience with my supervisor because he works with the school. He is actually a consultant for a number of schools. I think he is also a parent advocate... He has a lot of knowledge about what happens in the school system... The reason I’m working on my LLPC is to give me that window. If I decide this is not where I need to be, I need to be out in a private practice or I need to be, you know, volunteering for Catholic Family Services or you know, whatever it is, that will give me the opportunity to do that without crossing any
ethical lines there.” (Lena)

- “I also have one through MSCA who has her LPC… and she was great because she had decades of experience of what’s been tried and what hasn’t been tried; but the supervisor I had in the district was a teacher. I was new to the district, so, she served as my mentor. Since she was a teacher, she was in the building, so she had on-the-spot answers for me, which is highly important to not have to wait a week until the next time you meet to ask a question.” (Pamela)

- “I have one supervisor for my LLPC purposes, and she is very good. She is somebody that I can call on when I have a question or that I need to bounce ideas off of. She has been in the district for a really long time, so she knows a lot of people and is able to help me out quite a bit.” (Carol)

When asking the other three LLPC credentialed school counselors (i.e., Danielle, Olivia, and Anne) why they were not currently receiving supervision from an LPC, all identified that it was difficult to find a qualified supervisor. Danielle’s comment illustrates this frustration that all three shared:

I have tried to find somewhere to get supervision and have been having a really hard time finding anyone that will, I mean, I don’t even know where to start. I’ve e-mailed old professors, I’ve, you know, gone through school counseling agencies and asked them where I should look for supervision; and I have no idea what to do. So, as far as anything formal, I haven’t been able to connect with that yet at all. (Danielle)

Anne added that she did not see the need for an LPC supervisor given the roles she was assigned in the school. As part of the member checking process both Danielle and Olivia had reported finding a supervisor with the LPC credential and intended to begin group supervision as reported in Appendix H. A follow-up interview had not been scheduled with either of them to explore these supervision experiences because their group supervision had not yet been scheduled at the time of this writing.
There were 13 clips from four participants who described supervisory experiences provided by a principal. It is important to note that two of these four participants (i.e., Danielle and Grace) described receiving supervision from principals who were also licensed or endorsed as professional school counselors. Also, three of the participants (i.e., Natasha, Robert, and Tami), who described that they were not receiving supervision, clarified that they did receive some guidance from principals. Since they did not consider this to be supervision, their comments were not included. The excerpts that are representative of this collection include the following:

- "I receive a lot of informal supervision from my assistant principal, who was a counselor at one point. So, I'm constantly asking her questions and kind of, you know, using her as a sounding board." (Danielle)

- "It was actually an administrator who did the supervising, who did the write-ups, you know observations to a point, because of the confidentiality...I think it would make more sense for my department head to be doing it instead of my administrator...he doesn't see the goings on in our office; but he does see how I deal with issues that rise up." (Margie)

- "Well, from a principal standpoint, supervision is more of a matter of talking to me, observing. He's been here quite a bit, which is nice. He's been a very visible principal. But a lot of supervision is just...a lot of it's surface, you know, what appears to be going on." (Jackie)

- "I do think it's important for the supervisor to actually observe you working with students, and I think sometimes that the key in counseling...I don't know...I was lucky enough to have a supervisor that kind of was able to do that." (Grace)

School Counselor License/Endorsement

Three of the participants indicated that they were receiving supervision from licensed or endorsed professional school counselors. Two other participants (i.e., Olivia
and Elaine) indicated that they received some direction from counseling peers; however, they did not consider this direction to be supervision, and their comments were not included. Excerpts from the 16 clips representative of supervision provided by licensed or endorsed professional school counselors include the following:

- "We kind of set aside like an hour a week, which ends up being more of a, you know, clinical supervision, or we talk more about cases and things like that." (Jillian)

- "We had to meet at least 2 hours every month for the whole year. And certainly we’d meet during the school...but sometimes it was hard to get her to focus.” (Pamela)

- "I kind of see my administration as kind of supervising me a little bit. I’m lucky enough to have a new building principal who came here in December who is a former guidance counselor; and it is very helpful to have somebody with a background with what I do feel like, ‘Okay, this situation is unique once again, I need to bounce it off somebody.’” (Grace)

Social Worker

Two participants reported receiving supervision from a social worker. Both of these participants worked in elementary settings. These descriptions both indicate that efforts were made to meet regularly for supervision, but that these efforts were not successful given the circumstances in the schools. These participants’ experiences are represented in the following excerpts from the eight clips that were found in this domain:

- “We started out at the beginning of the year meeting once with myself (I was the only school counselor in my building). We had one full-time social worker and then a part-time social worker. So, we tried to meet once a month. We actually pulled in another full-time social worker from another one of our buildings. So, the four of us met...we met probably 2-3 times; but then it got really busy, and we weren’t able to...we had to cancel meetings.” (Ben)

- “We tried to meet once a week for 10-15 minutes. There were weeks that we didn’t see each other at all. There were weeks that we spent a lot of time together
working on certain cases. Then, the social workers, the psychologist, and I try to do lunch once a month. We're very lunch-oriented around here. Just to talk about how things are going." (Carol)

Teacher

One participant, Pamela, reported receiving supervision from a teacher. Although Anne also indicated that she was offered support by a teacher in her district, she did not consider this support to be supervision. Similar to Anne, Pamela was in a small school district and was responsible for all elementary and middle school students (K-8) in the district. Pamela also paired the notion of supervision with mentoring. Her experience was briefly described in the following excerpt from the four clips that were included in this collection: “The supervisor I had in the district was a teacher. I was new to the district, so, she served as my mentor.”

This summary of the credentials of supervisors was consistent with the literature in the school counseling field. As described in Chapter II, this literature reported that when supervision of professional school counselors was present, it was most often provided by principals, counseling peers, and other district administrators (Agnew et al., 2000; Barret & Schmidt, 1986; Henderson & Lampe, 1992; Roberts & Borders, 1994). Of the nine participants in this study who reported currently receiving supervision as new professionals, six of them were receiving supervision from a principal or licensed/endorsed professional school counselor. Only four of these participants (i.e., Jillian, Lena, Pamela, and Carol) indicated that their supervisors had received training in supervision. These reports were limited to participants who had their LLPC credential and were receiving supervision from LPC credentialed supervisors who were required by law
to have training in supervision before providing supervision to others. Three of the other
participants reported receiving supervision from other professionals in the school setting.
Two described that a social worker provided them with supervision and one reported that
a teacher was providing supervision.

Disadvantages of Receiving Supervision

The theme of supervision disadvantages was listed as the second most frequently
identified theme from the 15 participants' descriptions of their supervisory experiences as
new professionals. All but two participants described one or more of the following six
domains that are listed by rank from most to least in terms of the number of participants
who included the domain in their descriptions of their experiences with supervision:
(1) autonomy conflict, (2) time, (3) poor supervision, (4) cost, (5) dual roles, and (6) no
value. The number of participants represented in the clip collection as well as the number
of total clips found in each domain is summarized in Table 3, and a report of the six
salient domains discovered in this theme is included in the following sections.

Autonomy Conflict

Eight participants identified the conflict between their desire for independence
and their need for guidance as a disadvantage of supervision. These eight participants
contributed 15 clips that described this conflict. One excerpt representative from each of
these participants is included as follows.
Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “Sometimes, there are things that come up just between our personalities that, you know, you have to kind of confront and kind of be able to come to a better understanding. And we have done a lit bit of that. But that’s awkward, because we work together; and she’s my supervisor.” (Jillian)

- “You only get one person’s perspective if you’re seeking supervision from only one person. I’m not sure that I like that.” (Danielle)

- “I think if the person is almost too constricting. I mean, it didn’t happen with mine; but if they’re too…I don’t want to say ‘not want to let you learn’, but, if the supervisor is not giving you the room you need to grow…they are more confining than anything else, I guess maybe because there’s not a trust there yet.” (Margie)

- “There may have been a few times that, you know, I may have disagreed with the social worker just because I’m coming from a different aspect of the classroom, whereas, you know, she’s never been in the classroom. So, we might be, not that we’d argue about it, but you know, I’d disagree; so I think that would be a disadvantage…non-congruent philosophies and approaches to the field, that could be a big disadvantage…It would be hard…so then you kind of discuss ‘well no, this is what I would do instead’; although, I don’t know, you know, if you’d be put in a position where you would have different philosophies, but I suppose it’s a possibility.” (Ben)

- “When supervising gets to be dictatorial, it can be a little rough sometimes. When it starts to be a matter of ‘this is how you need to do things,’ when it’s not necessarily a need to-do, it’s a suggested to-do; but sometimes those suggestions can be ‘you have to do it this way’ because it’s coming from a supervisor. And so I think that’s the one area that can get complicated… I think you have more independence to do things the way you want if you don’t have a supervisor, and that can be good and bad.” (Jackie)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “I loved the fact that this is ‘my program’; and, being a somewhat experienced person in education as a whole and in life as a whole, sometimes I think that, when you have a supervisor, you’re trying to please the supervisor rather than stepping out and actually using and utilizing and implementing the ideas that you have that are your personality. You know, it’s my personality, it’s my strengths, I want to go in and do these kinds of things.” (Natasha)
• “If it’s somebody who shares the same values and same philosophy, I think everything will be fine. If it’s somebody that may think that the national model is just something that somebody drew up, you may just have to kind of go with it and still kind of believe in what you believe. So, again, I guess it would depend on who is doing the supervising.” (Robert)

• “I did opt not to use her in the spring for the remaining 10 days, which were supposed to be set up for scheduling. I opted not to use her services at that time, just kind of preferred to go it alone, basically because I think she wanted me to keep doing things the way she had always done things; and I was more interested in maybe creating a more efficient process.” (Elaine)

The autonomy conflict described by participants has been documented in developmental models of supervision (e.g., Stoltenberg et al., 1998). In developmental supervision literature beginning counselors are characteristically described as dependent on the supervisor for support. As counselors gain more experience, it is common for them to resist support from supervisors as they seek autonomy. The descriptions of these eight participants demonstrate the conflict between dependence and autonomy. There were no observed differences between demographic variables that differentiated the description of this conflict among participants. Although three participants had not reported receiving supervision in their work as new professionals, they had identified an autonomy conflict as a disadvantage in the supervision process.

Time

The 11 clips identifying the time commitment required for supervision as a disadvantage were provided by seven participants. These participants described the difficulty of finding time to engage in supervision as a disadvantage. One of these participants (i.e., Anne) reported that she was not currently receiving supervision because of this issue, but she had previously received supervision as a new professional. Although
they were not assigned supervisors, Natasha and Robert reported that this issue prevented them from pursuing supervision in their work as new professionals. Aside from these reports there were no observable demographic differences among participants. The size of participants' caseloads did not seem to make a difference in participants' reports. Participants with the smallest to the largest caseloads commented on this disadvantage. Only one of the three part-time new professionals commented that it was a disadvantage. Excerpts from these 11 clips supporting this domain are as follows.

*Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.*

- “Sometimes, it’s good; and, sometimes, it’s not, just depending on how much is going on that week and how many parents are in the office and kids and what’s going on with them. So, you know, you work on it, but it doesn’t always happen just because of the timing of everything.” (Jillian)

- “The disadvantage with the more formal supervision that I haven’t yet received is obviously making time for that.” (Danielle)

- “It would be nice to have a time to have that time. Schools in general, whether you’re a teacher, social worker, counselor, principal, you are jam-packed; and fit that time in beyond the school time...it would be beneficial, but it’s also hard because you’ve got families, you’ve got outside responsibilities; and so you’d have to try to fit it into a school day; and, for me, as a part-time counselor, that school day was very important because I didn’t have much.” (Ben)

- “So, there is no time to sit down and have supervision. There is nothing all week to sit down and say, ‘Let’s just talk’. I mean, the phone is ringing off the hook. I counted one day, I said, ‘I just can’t get anything done.’ My superintendent said, ‘Well, are you being interrupted?’ I said, ‘Well, let’s count for the next 20 minutes.’ and I had 11 interruptions, either somebody coming through my door or my phone ringing...11 times in 20 minutes.” (Anne)

- “In a perfect world, it would be nice to be able to sit down, like I did in my internship, and say, ‘This is what I’m doing with this kid’ or ‘This is what I did with this kid. What do you think? Was that good? What would you add to it?’ but, with 1,100 kids on my case load, I don’t have time to do that, she doesn’t
have time to do that. I would love to be able to; but I don’t think it’s feasible, at least not until I have my head above water a little more.” (Carol)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• “This person never even had time to help me with anything, I basically got put into an office and told just do the job.” (Natasha)

• “Everybody is stretched out pretty thin time-wise, responsibility-wise; and I don’t think anybody realizes...you know you get very few people who kind of reach out and say, ‘How you doing?’ and give you an ‘adda boy’ and that kind of stuff.” (Robert)

Poor Supervision

Another domain found in the participants’ description of disadvantages of receiving supervision included poor supervision. This disadvantage was described as the result of something about the supervisor that made the supervision experience less than it might have otherwise been (e.g., no training in supervision or not current with counseling skills). In this domain 11 clips were identified from five participants, and there were no observable demographic variables that differentiated participants’ responses from one another. Representative excerpts are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

• “I think it would have been nice for my own supervisor to have some type of training...I mean, he’s evaluating me; but does he really even know what he is supposed to be doing?...it would have been nice if there were more training there.” (Margie)

• “I could see where, in some situations, I know some of the situations that my colleagues were in where their supervising counselors didn’t sound like they were receiving the best supervision, either because they’re just plain mean to them,
which I heard happened, or they just didn’t do anything, the stereotypical coffee-
cup counselor, where needs of students are being unmet; and their supervisor isn’t
doing anything about it. And so I think a huge disadvantage is if it’s a bad
supervisor...And I don’t know if supervisors always know how to be
supervisors.” (Jackie)

- “Another one would be it may be the experience of your supervisor. What I mean
by that is maybe they didn’t do such a good job as a school counselor actually. So,
you’re getting advice from them and they’re telling you things to do, when in
actuality you find out through the grapevine that people really didn’t care for the
way they did that.” (Pamela)

- “The problem being, you know, I didn’t need a supervisor to say ‘Awards Night
should start at 7:00, and the program should be blue; and you should play this
music beforehand.’ I mean, that wasn’t the kind of supervisor I needed. I needed
somebody to help me with the counseling role. So, she hasn’t been able to do that
obviously because she’s not a counselor, she’s a home economics teacher; and
she’s never done any counseling. So, they assigned me a supervisor who could
say, ‘We usually use this printer to do the program.’” (Anne)

Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.

- “A lot would depend on whether the supervisor was open and current or whether
or not the supervisor was kind of stuck in a rut and not really open to new ways of
doing things. You know, obviously, that could be a detriment if they insisted that,
you know, you do things their way or not consider doing something that maybe
would be beneficial for students or teachers just because its never been done that
way before.” (Elaine)

Cost

Only three participants indicated cost to be identified as a disadvantage of
supervision. These three participants were all LLPCs and each commented that cost was a
prohibiting factor in pursuing their supervision from an LPC. Each of these participants
mentioned cost as a factor only one time and each of these excerpts are included here as
follows.
Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “Cost is the only disadvantage that I see. I don’t see any other.” (Lena)

- “One disadvantage is going somewhere else for an hour a week or whatever, and then the cost of that as well.” (Danielle)

Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.

- “Part of what stresses me out is that I know that I’m required to obtain supervision; and I haven’t done that yet. And part of why I haven’t done that is due to cost and finding a supervisor... cost scares me. I don’t know how I’m going to pay for supervision.” (Olivia)

Dual Roles

This disadvantage refers to the difficulty of having a school counseling peer who also served in the role of a supervisor. Jillian was the only participant to describe this phenomenon, and she described it as follows:

- “You got a supervisor who is also your co-worker... They’re kind of your mentor and kind of above you in that way, but yet you’re trying to have this equal relationship working together. And, sometimes, that’s kind of awkward; and just trying to figure it all out is sometimes hard.” (Jillian)

No Value

Struggling to identify a disadvantage, one participant (i.e., Lena) could not identify any value in the supervisory process that required her as an LLPC to receive supervision from an LPC. She indicated, “The only disadvantage I can think of is... it’s frustrating to travel to do supervision and do your hour, which is required, and just feel
like you’re jumping through another hoop that’s not valuable time when you know that you do have needs.” She felt that her principal, a former school counselor, provided her with all of the support that she needed.

Advantages of Receiving Supervision

Another theme identified from 47 clips of 12 participants’ experiences of supervision as new professionals included five advantages of receiving supervision. These advantages are listed by rank from most to least in terms of the number of participants who included them in their descriptions of their supervisory experiences: (1) improve skills, (2) learning the job, (3) validation, (4) support, and (5) establish credibility. The number of participants represented in the clip collection as well as the number of total clips found in each of these advantages is summarized in Table 3.

Improve Skills

Six participants identified improved skills as an advantage of receiving supervision in 15 different clips. Each of these participants discussed that supervisors can provide the opportunity for new-entrant professional counselors to grow as a school counselor by improving their skills under the guidance of a more experienced professional. Excerpts that are representative of these clips include the following.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “The biggest advantage for me is that I have the opportunity to continue to improve my skills as a counselor.” (Margie)
• “I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision. I think just getting ideas to improve your skills, maybe you haven’t been to a certain workshop that others have been to that came up with a new technique or new idea that may work or not work, the new research that has been done. I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision.” (Ben)

• “There are things that you look at from a school perspective, a college perspective; you learn what it’s like to be a counselor and some of the things you might encounter. There’s just no way to learn every single skill and supervision helps you improve.” (Jackie)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• “I feel like without supervision my skills are never going to improve... I want to be a better counselor... supervision contributes to my growth as a counselor to help me know whether or not I am on track with the cases that I have—that feedback.” (Olivia)

• “If you are doing something that might not necessarily be to the benefit of students, it would be good to know before it becomes an ingrained practice, you know, or a habit.” (Elaine)

• “I think supervision is a wonderful thing, especially for a new counselor starting out and somebody who hasn’t been in the school. But I think somebody who has been in the school and has the classroom management skills, they need more of a group supervision to take their skills to higher levels.” (Tami)

All of these participants had one and one-half years experience or less in their new roles, with the exception of Tami who was completing her third year as a professional school counselor. Also, Olivia was the only one among this group who held the LLPC credential.

Learning the Job

The advantage of learning the job was identified by five participants in 11 clips when describing advantages of receiving supervision. As described by participants
learning the job ranged from participants understanding the politics and culture of schools specific to each school building that required them to learn the unique day to day policies and procedures to operate effectively in the job. Representative excerpts include the following.

*Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.*

- “But we also end up talking a lot about politics of the school, too, and just, you know, different things that come up between staff members and the principal and assistant principal and just dynamics like that.” (Jillian)

- “One advantage is making sure I’m doing what needs to be done, just teaching the job.” (Jackie)

- “Supervision helps you be better at what you do; it helps you learn the job because you need to know what you are doing right away.” (Grace)

- “I would say the biggest advantage is helping the new professional feel like they are competent and can learn the job. I think there’s a lot of doubt when you begin a career and it’s something that you truly don’t feel like you’ve been prepared for; and you kind of feel blind sided.” (Anne)

*Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.*

- “I don’t think we should ever get too complacent as far as getting critical and positive feedback, continuing to learn the job. I think that can only help; and, if we can start getting that when you first start, I think it can only help you become a better counselor.” (Robert)

*Validation*

Five participants described validation as an advantage of receiving supervision. Need for this validation is also characteristic of dependent, beginning counselors (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). New counselors are interested in knowing if they are “on the
right track” in their work and their dependence on others to help them figure this out is described as a normal step in their development. This clip collection included nine clips and representative excerpts are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “Well and it’s kind of neat too, because, at the same time, he validates, which I didn’t talk about before, but he like will validate my ideas, not just to validate them; but, if he really thinks that it’s something that’s constructive or something that will work, he does go through that as well, which I think is part of that supervision process.” (Margie)

- “It puts me in a place of knowing, ‘Am I on the right track?’” (Ben)

- “I think an element of supervision is important in the fact of making sure that everything’s on track, no matter how good a counselor’s intentions might be, they might be off track simply because they don’t know better.” (Jackie)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “The advantage would be that someone would validate what I’m doing or suggest ways to perform my job in a better way in order to be a credit to the counseling profession, so that whole validation is important.” (Natasha)

- “I think as a new school counselor, you’re always wondering, ‘Am I doing this right?’ You want to make sure that you’re following some of the…you know…for instance…Protective Services. When you file a CPS form, ‘Did I do this right…or is this something I need to put in?’” (Tami)

Support

Although all five domains that participants used to describe supervision could be considered support, four participants specifically described support as an advantage of
supervision when describing their experiences. There were six clips identified from participants’ transcripts and the following excerpts are representative of this domain.

*Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.*

- “Ginger and I came in around the same time, you know, we’re both fresh out of the counseling field, so we have new ideas; and you kind of have that young teacher mentality, where we want to change the world, which is, I guess, positive and negative at the same time. But to have someone who is there to support those new ideas and knows what it’s like has been really beneficial. And there’s no way to instill that in every school because it’s just luck of the draw that we had that with Stephanie.” (Danielle)

- “So having the support of a supervisor/mentor is not just about the guidance of what you’re actually going to do but just the emotional support of letting out frustrations.” (Pamela)

- “I think you really need that support person.” (Anne)

*Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.*

- “Supervisors provide support to reduce anxiety—that natural anxiety—that conscientious people feel when they are wondering whether or not they are doing the job well or heading in that direction and that would also be anxiety/stress-reducing.” (Elaine)

*Establish Credibility*

A final advantage identified in three participants’ descriptions of their supervision experiences was the way that their supervisors lent them credibility as new professionals. These new professionals felt empowered in their role since they were under the direction of more experienced professionals. There were six clips in this collection and one excerpt from each participant is included as follows.
Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- "I came to the position not knowing a lot, just whatever I learned in my classroom for the courses I took, and what I learned as a classroom teacher. And so, adding the supervision, the advantages would be just gaining credibility in the area in the field, especially if you can work with someone who has been in it for 10 years or longer, they’ve had those experiences, more than likely they’ve worked with kids who have had various issues; and they can bring what they’ve learned, what they’ve worked with, techniques they’ve used, and techniques that didn’t work.” (Ben)

- “So a supervisor with experience in the area can do those kinds of things for you. And a supervisor can also introduce you to people, you know, get you to know people in the community so that the community accepts you faster. I went to PTA meetings and things like that so I could get to know some of the more involved parents.” (Pamela)

Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.

- "Even as a returning adult student, I appreciate feedback from somebody who’s been doing it for a while and has been in the field. So, I think any time that you’re working with a professional colleague in the same field, that feedback, to me, is important; and I think if I didn’t feel that way, I wouldn’t be as credible or effective as I think I am.” (Robert)

Quality of Supervision Experiences

As reported in Table 3 two salient domains were included in the theme describing the quality of supervision experiences: (1) deficient, and (2) good. These domains are described in the following two sections.

Deficient

This domain, in which participants described the quality of their supervision experiences as new-entrant professional school counselors as deficient, was supported
with 33 clips identified from eight participants as summarized in Table 3. These reports were similar to the results of several researchers who reported that the practice of school counseling supervision was lacking in the field (Borders & Usher, 1992; Portman, 2002; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Usher & Borders, 1993). Excerpts of the clips representative of the participants’ description of deficient supervisory experiences include the following.

**Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.**

- "As the year went on, there are a lot of things that come up that I’ve never done before. And, there’s even like dates and things like that, that I should be aware of that I’m not because I haven’t done it before. And, so, I think sometimes as the year has gone on and its gotten really busy, I think, you know, there are things that come up that it is sort of assumed that I already know I how to do this or something...and sometimes, I don’t even know what to ask for because I’m not aware it’s going to come up.” (Jillian)

- "It wasn’t as much as I would have hoped. But, with both of us working...I only work part-time...I tried to squeeze in kids, groups, meeting with parents, or meeting with principals, and supervision time was tough...the way my position was set up was not conducive to getting supervision I would like to have gotten. And the social worker I worked with most closely, she wanted to meet more too; but it wasn’t like she was ignoring and trying to not meet at all, she wanted to.” (Ben)

- "But a lot of supervision is just...a lot of it’s surface, you know, what appears to be going on...sometimes they don’t even think to fill me in on something because they all know what it is, you know, like an annual event, like convocation, they need to take some time to explain it to both of us after we’re sitting in a meeting going, ‘Huh?’; and, when they realize we both didn’t know what was going on, they’re like ‘Oh, we haven’t talked about that yet.’” (Jackie)

- "One thing is I guess I would have liked my supervisor/mentor this past year to be a little bit better of a listener. Um, especially, there was one case where it actually ended up involving her nephew. She’d come in, for the first 15 minutes and just want to talk about him; and I would have questions I’d want to go over with her, so I almost ended up counseling her rather than having a session.” (Pamela)
• "I haven't had a good experience with supervision, I don't think...I just don't have as many people around that I can talk to about that now. I don't have a lot of other counselors around, I'm kind of an island now...I mean it's like we're kind of tossed to the wolves out there. Not that it's a horrible job or it has been a horrible thing or anything like that, but its kind of like sink or swim." (Anne)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• "I am just the only counselor for this program, I didn't have anyone who was a go-to person. I didn't have a mentor. I basically would, if something came up that I didn’t know, I went back to my internship supervisor, contacted her via e-mail or phone call. Many times, I just consulted the principal and our superintendent because our superintendent actually is in-house daily and is also an intern.” (Natasha)

• "I just felt like I was just given the minimal amount, what would I have liked for it to have looked like or been. Is this maybe a scheduled meeting with the administrators, more consistent meetings with the other school counselors? And I guess maybe I didn’t reach out and ask for that myself. I don’t know, being only 3-4 months into it...it just seems like you kind of learn as you go...it's just like on-the-job experience; and I think that’s unfortunate. So, I haven’t seen what good supervision would look like.” (Robert)

• “Well I never feel like it’s enough, that’s one thing with where I’m at. I never feel that what I do...Supervision is never enough. You know, you always feel like you’re dog-paddling, trying to keep your head above water. You’re never quite there, because things come up constantly.” (Tami)

Good

Before the descriptions of internship and practicum supervision experiences were omitted from the clip collection, salient domains in the area of supervision quality included descriptions of the quality of supervision experiences as good and as satisfactory. However, when limiting the results to supervision experiences as new professional school counselors, as reported in Table 3, only one clip describing the
quality of these experiences as good was included in the collection by Grace, who stated: “I had a really good supervisor. I felt that she gave really valuable feedback.” There were no clips describing participants’ supervision experiences as satisfactory.

Supervision Activities

When discussing their supervisory activities without regard to whether the supervision was provided in their training or in their work as new professionals, several of the participants included descriptions of activities like presenting cases, group supervising, observing counseling sessions, role playing, and reviewing video or audio recordings of counseling. However, when supervisory experiences were limited to participants’ descriptions of supervision experiences of their work as new-entrant school counselors, descriptions of the activities described above were no longer included in participants’ discussions. Instead, new-entrant supervisory activities were described in one of two domains: (1) communication, and (2) role confusion. The two salient domains as reported in Table 3 include a clip collection of 24 clips from 9 participants.

Communication

The domain of communication included a variety of supervision activities that identified the process of communication as an important part the supervisory experiences of eight participants. These activities (e.g., consultation and discussing cases) are described in the 16 clips found in the clip collection describing these activities from eight participants. Representative excerpts are included as follows:

• “We talk more about cases and things like that.” (Jillian)
• “Just to have someone there that’s been through it, who can answer, you know, the daily questions that come up. Now, after 2 years, I feel like I have a good grasp on my job; but, when I started, Megan was the other counselor, and I was constantly popping my head in her office and asking just simple questions that I wouldn’t know unless I’d been here and lived through it...Now, I receive a lot of informal supervision from my assistant principal, who was a counselor at one point. So, I’m constantly asking her questions and kind of, you know, using her as a sounding board.” (Danielle)

• “Supervision also allowed for an opportunity to communicate ideas and ask questions. Personally, if I was unsure of how to proceed in certain situations, I had a veteran colleague to ask. It helped me to recognize and appreciate different perspectives, as well as make more informed decisions.” (Margie)

• “At lunchtime we’d try to meet once in a while to talk. You know, the few times we worked together on different cases, I learned a lot just from listening and absorbing...Yes, I mean, that’s where I learn the best, is listening and then doing it myself. That’s the way I learn, and it would have been great if we had time to be able to do that more.” (Ben)

• “I know that I can go to any of them with questions, they know that, if any of them see something or have a suggestion for me, they can go ahead and make it.” (Jackie)

• “She had on-the-spot answers for me, which is highly important to not have to wait a week until the next time you meet to ask a question...And so I would ask for advice on ‘What would you do with these kids? Do we have resources for this?’, and I would ask for her advice on what to do or, if I had a new idea, like I did the interviews for 4th grade, you know, what she thought of that.” (Pamela)

• “I mean, there’s a constant dialogue; but there’s always a situation that comes up that can’t wait, that, you know, you need to maybe get a second opinion on...and that’s when I access it. I continue to need that dialogue with someone who is experienced.” (Grace)

**Role Confusion**

The domain of role confusion included descriptions of two roles that were often confused with supervision: (1) mentoring, and (2) evaluation. When asked to describe what their supervision experiences looked like, several of the participants described it in
terms of mentoring and others described it as synonymous with evaluation. Similar confusion between these activities was described earlier in the literature review by Roberts and Borders (1994). This clip collection included eight clips from six participants and the following excerpts are representative of this domain:

• “I’ll say, ‘You know, when you have time, I’d like to talk about this…’ I guess that’s more of the mentorship-type role, where she’s just available pretty much most of the time when I need her…You got a supervisor who is also your co-worker; and how you balance all that out, you know. They’re kind of your mentor and kind of above you in that way, but yet you’re trying to have this equal relationship working together. And, sometimes, that’s kind of awkward; and just trying to figure it all out is sometimes hard.” (Jillian)

• “A supervisor should provide a good leadership role, just a professional, mentor kind of role. You know, someone who can also critique you but not put you down. You know, ‘Hey, you may want to think about doing this too…” or ‘you know, hey, what else could you try’…those kinds of things.” (Margie)

• “I’m not sure there is a difference between supervision and evaluation. I think maybe supervisors are more directive. If somebody’s supervising, they’re either giving me instructions, guiding me in what I need to be doing…where an evaluator is more looking what I’m doing and then offering feedback. It’s confusing. A supervisor can do some of the feedback end too; but I think, from an evaluator standpoint, it’s not so much the directing as ‘Okay, here’s what you’re doing, here’s what I think about what you’re doing.’” (Jackie)

• “Even teachers can be considered supervisors or mentors because whoever is there to guide you. And the only problem with that is you have 60 different people trying to guide you in what you should be doing…you have to be careful; and it’s better to have a supervisor, a mentor, that can understand a little bit about what you’re going through.” (Pamela)

• “I think that a supervisor kind of needs to have a plan, especially if you’re going to a new school that you may not understand the set-up or how things operate, or the role that you’re expected to fulfill. I think they need to kind of have a mentor-sort-of role where they’ve got kind of an agenda themselves, not just relying on the student to ask the right questions…there should be a kind of road map.” (Grace)

• “So, when they decided to reinstate the counseling position and they hired me, so I was coming in where there hadn’t been a counselor, but they eliminated
administration in the process; they said, ‘Well, we’re just going to have this
retired teacher...since she still lives in town, she’s going to be your mentor and
your supervisor...you can go to her for anything.’’” (Anne)

Structure of Supervision

In the earlier report of the credentials of supervisors it was noted that six
participants were not currently receiving supervision as new professionals. Of the nine
participants who indicated that they were currently receiving supervision, five described
how their supervision was structured. Structure refers to the frequency of supervision
sessions and the degree of formality of the supervision. As reported in Table 3, the
descriptions of the four participants included 22 clips that varied between two domains:
(1) weekly supervision that was more formal and structured, and (2) supervision that was
provided as needed that was less formal and structured. None of the participants
discussed a formal agreement or contract that included a description of what the
supervision would look like. The degree of structure appeared to be subject to the need
for supervision expressed by individual supervisees. Time for supervision also appeared
to be a factor that impacted whether or not supervision was provided. One participant
(i.e., Ben) described that he met with his supervisor two or three times but then it got
busy, and they stopped meeting.

Weekly

The domain describing supervision structure as provided weekly and more formal
and structured included 15 clips from two participants as reported in Table 3. A clip from
both participants represented in the clip collection is included as follows:
"And it works out pretty well, because, you know, I guess the one thing that I appreciate about our relationship and how we've worked it out is I can kind of just go in and talk with her casually about a couple of different things...We kind of set aside like an hour a week, which ends up being more of a, you know, clinical supervision." (Jillian)

"We do meet regularly. I meet with administration, my partner and myself meet with administration and talk about issues on a regular basis; so we are proactive in that sense...Sometimes we'd focus on student concerns; and there might be a student that there's an ongoing concern...and I want to keep them up to date." (Grace)

As Needed

The domain describing supervision as less structured and provided on an as needed basis included 7 clips from two participants as reported in Table 3. A clip from both participants represented in the clip collection is included as follows:

"We had to meet at least 2 hours every month for the whole year...You know, they weren't all just like one hour meetings. One might be a 15 minute meeting, one might be 45 minutes...It was more as I needed it." (Pamela)

"It's basically on an as-needed basis. We don't have a set weekly meeting just because of my schedule and her schedule...that would never be possible. We do try to do, you know, working lunches once a month or so, and talk about things; and we keep each other updated on e-mails, phone calls, that sort of thing, but no set meeting schedule... We tried to meet once a week for 10-15 minutes. There were weeks that we didn't see each other at all. There were weeks that we spent a lot of time together working on certain cases." (Carol)

Supervision Experiences Summary

Themes that emerged from the data provided by the 15 new-entrant professional school counselor participants of this study included a description of the following six areas: (1) credentials of those providing supervision, (2) disadvantages of receiving supervision, (3) advantages of receiving supervision, (4) quality of supervision,
(5) supervision activities, and (6) structure of supervision. The participants who were currently receiving supervision as new professionals \((N = 9)\) described that they were being supervised by LPCs \((N = 4)\), principals \((N = 4)\), licensed or endorsed professional school counselors \((N = 3)\), social workers \((N = 2)\), and teachers \((N = 1)\). As described earlier some of the participants were receiving supervision from more than one supervisor or from supervisors who held multiple credentials.

Although five participants reported that they had not received supervision as new professionals, they were able to contribute their thoughts about the advantages, disadvantages, and qualities of receiving supervision as new professionals based on their efforts to fill the void of supervision by networking with other professionals and comparing their current experiences with past supervisory experiences. Disadvantages of receiving supervision as new-entrant professional school counselors were identified by the participants in the following six areas: (1) autonomy conflict between the new school counselors’ needs for dependency and autonomy, (2) finding time for supervision, (3) poor supervision experiences, (4) the cost of supervision for those pursuing the LPC credential, (5) the dual role that emerges when a peer serves as a supervisor, and (6) inability to see value in the supervision provided by a counseling professional with an LPC. Five advantages of receiving supervision as identified by these 15 new-entrant professional school counselors included opportunities to (1) improve skills as a school counselor, (2) learn the job, (3) receive validation, (4) receive support, and (5) establish credibility as new professionals. The quality of supervision experiences as new-entrant professionals was described as deficient and one participant described it as good.
The 10 participants who described that they had received supervision as new professionals, including Anne who was not currently receiving supervision at the time she was interviewed but had received supervision in her first year as a school counselor, also described their supervision activities and the structure of supervision that they received as new-entrant professional school counselors. Supervision activities included communication with their supervisors and confusion between the activities of supervision, evaluation, and mentoring. The structure of supervision experiences were described as varying between more formal weekly supervision and less formal supervision provided on an as needed basis.

Report of Perceived Supervision Needs

When participants described their supervision needs during their interviews, one theme emerged as central to all of the others that were reported by participants. This theme focused on the need for support that new-entrant school counselors identified as necessary in their roles as new-entrant professionals. Two additional themes emerged from the data as participants described their beliefs about their supervisory experiences in terms of whether or not their perceived supervision needs had been met. The following list ranks these three themes in order from the highest number of participants identified in the clip collection of each to the lowest: (1) support, (2) unmet supervision needs, and (3) met supervision needs.

These themes are also listed in Table 4 along with a summary of the number of clips identified in each theme as well as a report of the number of participants represented in the clip collection of each theme. Similar to the report of supervision experiences
summarized in Table 3, this summary for each of the three themes is found in the rows labeled “Total.” Descriptions of each domain found within each theme are also reported in the sections that follow as they relate to describing the participants perceived needs for supervision. The domains that were identified within each theme are reported in rank order according to the number of participants included in each of the clip collections from the most to the least participants as reported in Table 4. Each section that follows also includes a report of the number of clips included in each of the domains as they are summarized within each of the themes in Table 4.

Need for Support

When discussing their supervision needs as new professionals, 14 of the participants described their need for support. Six salient domains emerged from the data as reported in Table 4. During the data analysis process, three salient domains (i.e., improving counseling skills, affirmation, and uncertainty of supervision needs) were omitted from the database because they were not supported by the data across participants. A list of the salient domains included in this frame follows in rank order from the most participants represented in each of the clip collections to the least as reported in Table 4: (1) learn the job, (2) consultation, (3) validation, (4) legal and ethical considerations, (5) establish identity, and (6) empathy. A description of each of these six domains along with a report of the number of clips in the clip collection and the number of participants represented in these clip collections is provided for each domain in the sections that follow. Since all participants were able to describe perceived supervision needs based on their previous experiences with supervision received during training
Table 4

*Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified in Participants’ Descriptions of Perceived Supervision Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (Keyword groups)</th>
<th>Salient domains (Keywords) identified within each theme</th>
<th>Number of units of meaning (Clips)</th>
<th>Number of participants represented in the clip collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Support</td>
<td>Learn the Job</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Validation</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Legal and ethical considerations</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Establish identity</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>97</td>
<td>14 Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unmet supervision needs</td>
<td>Supervisor access</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Support</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>27</td>
<td>11 Total</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Met supervision needs</td>
<td>Empathy</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>All met</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Units of meaning and domains identified within each of these themes are ranked in order from most to least participants represented in each clip collection.

and/or on their current supervision experiences as new professionals, all participants’ contributions were included in this description of the results. Similar to the preceding sections, excerpts provided by participants reporting no supervision experiences as new professionals are identified at the end of each excerpt collection.
Learn the Job

The first domain in this theme includes 32 clips from eight different participants who reported that they needed supervision to help them learn the job of professional school counseling. These clips demonstrate that participants believed that supervision could support them as new professionals by helping them learn aspects of the school counseling position specific to the school district or building that includes the unique culture and/or politics of each specific setting within each school district.

The focus on the importance of learning the unique politics and culture that was related to the building is found in the comments of Ben, Jackie, and Pamela. Ben and Pamela indicated a need to get to know the building. Ben said that he needed “to know procedures for the building.” Similarly Pamela stated, “I think a supervisor/mentor is always beneficial in the sense that getting to know the staff, and I don’t just mean by names; but who does what on the side or academics or school council. Getting to know the school building itself, who’s in charge of technical facilities, computers, those kinds of things.” Jackie described needing to have support available in the school building that could help her in her new roles. She commented, “I think just the ability to be able to have somebody to learn from or to at least know who to go to even if you don’t have somebody directly supervising you in your building, knowing that you have a contact person.”

Although Grace did not specifically reference the need to learn about “the building” per se, she expressed in her comments a need to learn the practical roles that were unique to each school its day-to-day operation. She wondered, “How do you make
sure that you’re doing all the things you’re supposed to do...I also had a lot of questions about daily planning, like how do you structure your day?”

While Grace described the need to understand the general day-to-day role of school counselors, Lena and Anne described feeling unprepared to work more specifically with special needs students. Both Lena and Anne felt that these skills could be learned through a supervisor to help them become successful in their roles as new professional school counselors. Lena indicated that this learning is needed because it was “lacking in our training, before we even become certified or endorsed.” Her concern focused on the roles counselors are asked to fill in the area of supporting special needs children. Anne also mentioned this concern when providing services for special needs children. She commented, “We’d never seen a CA-60, we’d never been to an IEP, we don’t understand what a 504 is...It was really overwhelming, and we felt very unprepared.”

Anne also expressed the need for supervision to help those without teaching experience who had never worked in school settings to learn the culture of the school. This concern is evidenced in this comment: “For many of us in the program, we didn’t have teacher certificates; and so we were kind of blind sided, and we got in these positions...and we’re thinking, ‘What are you talking about? I’m just here to counsel.’” Similarly, Tami expressed a similar thought when she was describing that she needed an example of professionalism as she started in her new role. She said that this was especially important for “students who don’t have a teaching background. They need to do school kinds of things so they need to know what school entails as a teacher, guider, or counselor as opposed to being a student in school.”
Robert also expressed a need to have a supervisor help him learn the job, but his needs were focused on learning how to implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling program in his school district. He indicated, “My biggest supervisory needs or I would almost call them fears is I don’t feel that I’m following the ASCA National Model, and I am not sure how to implement this model in this school district.” While others in this section were interested in learning the roles within the school district, Robert found himself looking beyond the school to the recommendations of a professional organization that encouraged him to implement a comprehensive guidance and counseling program. Robert is the only participant to describe his needs in terms of fear, and he indicated that a supervisor could help him assess how he is doing following this model and provide support and direction with this task. The implied assumption is that such support might help him modulate his fear.

**Consultation**

Eight participants identified consultation as a form of support that they needed from supervision. These eight participants described their need for direction in their work with others as beginning counselors. There were no observable differences between the demographic variables reported by these participants in this domain. For example, the group of participants who commented on this domain included participants whose years as new-entrant professional school counselors ranged from .5 years to 3 years. This domain consisted of 10 clips, and excerpts of 1 clip from each participant represented in this clip collection are included as follows.
Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “So I think that is just huge for a supervisor to be a good listener, someone with who you can consult and do some problem solving and stuff like that.” (Jillian)

- “If I was unsure of how to proceed in certain situations, I had a veteran colleague to ask.” (Margie)

- “I would like to be able to meet with a counselor, you know, maybe once a week or once throughout the week to discuss cases, to discuss issues, problems I’m having, questions I have.” (Ben)

- “It would be good to be able to run scenarios and situations by him.” (Grace)

- “I didn’t know what I was supposed to do in those situations. We had a student’s parent die, so I just called their office and said, ‘What do I do in this situation?’” (Carol)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “I would hope that supervision would allow me to bounce ideas off of someone more experienced than I. As far as, sometimes I wonder, ‘Did I handle a situation appropriately, did I say the right things, is there something more I could have done?’ And so it would be nice to have someone to bounce that off of.” (Olivia)

- “Well, if more than one head is together on a problem, just would provide more resources; and it would also help provide possibly solutions or alternative ways of approaching a situation that you hadn’t thought of, because we all get kind of trapped by our own perspectives.” (Elaine)

- “Or even looking for, ‘Okay, this is what I’m thinking... what have you guys done in the past that has been successful?’ So, you know, I need to consult because there’s no point in failing about the same thing that everybody else has done...” (Tami)
Validation

The next domain found within the theme of support from the participants' descriptions of their supervisory needs as new-entrant professional counselors was the need for validation of their work. This domain is similar to consultation, but in addition to direction in their work, these participants described that they also needed their supervisors to validate their performance (e.g., decision making abilities). This need was expressed in a clip collection of 23 clips from seven participants, and no differences between demographic variables were observed in this domain. Excerpts representative of these clips are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “Just that supervisors let you know that you are doing something good; and that’s something that’s nice to hear, ‘I like what you did’, things like that. Because, sometimes, you come into a setting, especially when other people have been there a while; and you can feel like you’re the odd person out, not knowing the routines, not knowing the system, and so it’s nice to have that verbal support.” (Jackie)

- “And often, even in supervision, my supervisor would say ‘Well, you know what to do’...but I just needed her to say ‘Yeah, that’s what I would do’, even if it was the same.” (Grace)

- “I guess I feel like a supervisor is more of a supportive role, to kind of help the rookie, maybe, to try things out and gain some confidence and that kind of thing. And that’s how I’ve seen the supervisor role more.” (Anne)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “The biggest need is I just want to know, am I handling the situation in the right way, could I be handling things differently, could I change the way I phrase statements; or I just want feedback on my counseling with students.” (Olivia)
• “It's just really hard sometimes to know that you are a good counselor, that you are doing the best for your students, that you are doing the best for the school, that you’re moving forward...I think it just would have been so much more comforting, for lack of a better word, to actually have someone who can say ‘Yeah, you’re in the right direction...maybe you should try this...no I wouldn’t go that direction, that’s really probably not an area...’; and there were times where I had to become very, very honest with myself and very, very honest with others; but a supervisor truly could have given that direction.” (Natasha)

• “People have different levels of self-esteem; but you still go into a new position, and some people are able to jump in and just hit the floor running. Others, I would think that it’s kind of natural to have a little bit of self doubt. I think it’s just human nature, at least it is with me, to have some type of fear; and I think it’s good when you go into a new position, being a little bit nervous, not quite sure of how your performance is, and I think any type of quality supervision from a colleague at least, ideally, if not from an administrative person, could only be beneficial as they validate what you are doing.” (Robert)

• “I think as a new school counselor, you’re always wondering, ‘Am I doing this right?’ You want to make sure that you’re following some of the...you know...for instance...Protective Services. When you file a CPS form, ‘Did I do this right?’...So, I think it would’ve been nice to have a supervisor say, ‘These are the laws...these are the rules.’...reiterating to you and helping you say that you did the right thing even though somebody else might have a problem with it.” (Tami)

Legal and Ethical Considerations

Legal and ethical considerations were identified by six participants as a supervision need. These participants indicated that supervisors’ knowledge of legal and ethical issues supported them as new-entrant professional school counselors while they learned to apply knowledge of these issues to their practice. Although legal and ethical concerns were grouped together in this domain, participants discussed their need for support with legal issues more frequently than their need for support with ethical concerns. Nine clips were identified in the collection for this domain. Seven of these clips included the need for support with legal issues and two included the need for support with
ethical concerns. Representative excerpts from each of these six participants who indicated their need for legal and ethical considerations are provided as follows.

**Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.**

- “He has a great legal background and legal school counseling, what are the laws and things; and, like I said, I know what they are in a general kind of way and I know where the boundaries are so I don’t step outside those boundaries. However, he knows like the details. So, I had a few experiences this year where I said ‘Listen, I had this experience; and I want to make sure I’m covering all my bases.’” (Lena)

- “It is important to know how we handle certain cases with kids and legality, what I can and can’t do, that would be more my understanding of the need for supervision.” (Ben)

- “You have a kid who is pregnant or suicidal or something like this, drug use, alcohol use, all the kinds of things that we said ‘Well, you know, this is obviously confidential…’ Schools sometimes have different policies, and you’re walking a really fine line…am I following the school policy…am I following my own ethics…I mean, it’s very difficult; and I think you need somebody who understands that and that’s not going to be a 65 year-old home economics teacher. I can’t say to her, ‘Well, I’ve got a cutter, do I need to report this to the parents or the administration?’ She’s gonna say ‘What, what?’ She’s not an appropriate supervisor for those types of issues.” (Anne)

**Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.**

- “When you’re doing something and a student walks in your office and they start talking to you about struggles and about general things, and then, all of a sudden, the bottom falls out; and they just reveal to you all kinds of things happening in their world; and, obviously, you start chatting with them about their circumstances and so forth. But, it would have been very nice to have a supervisor with whom I could have just chatted with about that whole experience. You know, ethically.” (Natasha)

- “And there are some other situations, too, in regards to calling Child Protective Services. I never dreamed I’d have to make so many of those calls. I don’t know if you really can be prepared for some of those situations. Yeah, so I think some
more supervision regarding sticky situations, shall we say, or situations that involve the law or personal liability of the counselor? That would be helpful.” (Elaine)

- “So, I think it would’ve been nice to have a supervisor say, ‘These are the laws…these are the rules.’” (Tami)

Establish Identity

Five participants mentioned that supervision helped them establish their identities as professional school counselors in the school setting. They talked about the importance of having a supervisor who could help them advocate for the role and needs of school counselors and school counseling programs. Other than the observation that only one of five participants with excerpts in this clip collection (i.e., Anne) had received supervision as a new professional, there were no differences observed between the demographic variables of participants who reported this need. This clip collection included six clips from these five participants and representative clips are included as follows.

Excerpt from a participant reporting supervision as a new professional.

- “It just really threw me because, during my internship, I sat in this really cute little office and I saw kids all day long. I thought, ‘This is fantastic!’ I got along with everyone in the school, and it was great; and then they had a counselor retiring, so I interviewed for his position; and I got it. So I came in, first day of school, thinking ‘This is so cool, I know these kids already; and I just get to sit here and counsel them.’ And they said, ‘We won’t see each other for the next few days, you’ll just be in your office and have 25 kids lined up outside. You know, it’s a mad house…’ I was like, ‘You’re kidding me, I thought I was here to counsel kids.’ That’s what I did here in my internship. I thought I knew what to expect, and it was different. I think if I had a supervisor…a supervisor might help me say, ‘Wait, this is too much because this is not all what a school counselor should be doing.’” (Anne)
Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “I guess, in the school setting, I feel like I don’t get to do what I went to school for, and a supervisor could help me communicate this to my administrator.” (Olivia)

- “What I need from a supervisor...my biggest supervisory needs or I would almost call them fears is I don’t feel that I’m following the ASCA National Model, and I am not sure how to implement this model in this school district.” (Robert)

- “I would say that it would still be helpful, once you get a counseling job, to have some further assistance in helping to steer or direct a counseling program more to be comprehensive guidance counseling and how to approach administrators regarding that.” (Elaine)

- “A supervisor could help the administrators understand what needs we might have as school counselors like going to meetings and being in touch with other counselors and making sure that we’re doing what we can do to help student achievement, that this is only going to benefit in the long run, even though we’re being taken out of the building for half a day.” (Tami)

Empathy

This domain includes a collection of 17 clips from four participants who described that they needed supervisors willing to provide empathy. These participants suggested that they considered empathy to be important because it helped them recognize that their concerns were heard and that these concerns were not unique to them as new-entrant professional school counselors. There were no clips in this domain from individuals who reported not receiving supervision as new professionals. The following clips from each of the participants are representative of each of the participant’s comments:

- “I need a supervisor who listens well, listening I think is huge; and I think most counselors do that very well. I think that empathy is the number one part of their job. And the supervisors I’ve had are excellent at that, but that listening skill is
huge; and I’ve worked with other colleagues that kind of lack in that area, but I just think of that when I think of a good leader, I think of somebody that really listens to their people that they’re supervising.” (Jillian)

• “Yeah, we’ve gotta be able to do that because there’s so many ongoing things that are beyond the control of this office; and so just knowing that we have others around who are feeling exactly what we’re feeling, like the frustration over being behind in scheduling. We all felt it. So, we knew it wasn’t just one of us upset with it, we all were strung out.” (Jackie)

• “So having the support of a supervisor/mentor is not just about the guidance of what you’re actually going to do but just the emotional support of letting out frustrations.” (Pamela)

• “Just as colleagues supporting each other in the things that we see and the things that we have to deal with.” (Carol)

Unmet Supervision Needs

As participants discussed their supervision needs, it was apparent from their descriptions that several of these needs were not being met. These unmet needs were found in 27 different clips as reported by 11 different participants as summarized for this theme in Table 4. As reported in Table 4 there were two salient domains that emerged from participants’ descriptions of perceived unmet supervision needs as new professionals. The unmet needs theme included participants’ reports of limited access to a supervisor as well as an unmet need for support.

Supervision Access

Six participants expressed that their unmet needs had to do with limited access to supervision. This limited access ranged from participants who were receiving no supervision at all (i.e., Olivia and Tami) to participants whose supervision was limited
because of systemic constraints like not enough time (i.e., Ben) or high caseloads (i.e., Carol). Excerpts from the clip collection of 18 clips are included as follows.

**Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.**

- “I have tried to find somewhere to get supervision and have been having a really hard time finding anyone that will...I have no idea what to do. So, as far as anything formal, I haven’t been able to connect with that yet at all.” (Danielle)

- “So it would be nice to have her bring, ‘Here, let’s talk about this topic, and these are things that I’ve gone through, and these are the different techniques that I’ve used...here’s what I’ve done, this is what has worked for me...try it, tweak it, make it your own, however you want; but, you know, this is what I’ve tried’...so that was something we didn’t do as much. If I had a question, I’d go to her; and she was able to answer questions, but it was just, you know, she’d be in the middle of something, so I’d try to make it quick.” (Ben)

- “I don’t know if that happens anywhere else, but it hasn’t happened for me. So, that would have been huge. We had offices next to each other, but a lot of times I would call because the door would be closed or I would be with somebody and would call with a quick question. It was never a sit-down. That would have been helpful...I don’t have a lot of other counselors around, I’m kind of an island now.” (Anne)

- “In a perfect world, it would be nice to be able to sit down, like I did in my internship, and say ‘This is what I’m doing with this kid’ or ‘this is what I did with this kid...what do you think?...was that good?...what would you add to it?’; but, with 1,100 kids on my caseload, I don’t have time to do that, she doesn’t have time to do that. I would love to be able to; but I don’t think it’s feasible, at least not until I have my head above water a little more.” (Carol)

**Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.**

- “My basic needs are surrounding the fact that I know I need to have supervision and I feel like I don’t have the resources yet to accomplish this.” (Olivia)

- “I do sometimes feel like because, and rightfully so, we’re always looking at the needs of the building and students within the building, I wonder, ‘Am I meeting all of the school counseling models?’ I don’t feel like I follow that to 100% of a
degree, where maybe being in touch with counselors on a monthly meeting or something, you know what can we do to add careers to 5th and 6th grade without it having some big meeting because school time is short.” (Tami)

*Need for Support*

Common to the six participants included in the theme that described participants’ unmet needs domain was the participants’ expressions of unmet need for support as new-entrant professionals. Representative excerpts from the nine clips of these six participants who described that their need for support has gone unmet are included as follows.

*Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.*

- “I’m on my own here; and I don’t really talk to the elementary school counselor that much, and I don’t talk to the high school, because we’re all busy doing our own stuff and it sometimes gets lonely.” (Lena)

- “I meet with them; but, then, trying to get out or ask those right questions, questions to rule out certain issues they might be dealing with and then maybe narrow my focus on how to help this child. And those kinds of things, I didn’t learn.” (Ben)

- “I think sometimes, like coming in new to a situation, when there’s things that are going on that maybe could be done differently, but you get the line ‘this is the way we do things’...I think sometimes you get the inability to change...so to have to work within a system; and sometimes I don’t always feel, you know, my voice is heard in terms of advocating for change, I guess...there have been 2-3 moments that I could think of that I would have really liked to do something differently but I felt like my unofficial supervisors would not have supported that.” (Jackie)

- “I need more of an understanding about school traditions. I mean, who does what? You know, the special education teacher brought in the National Guard to talk about jobs; and I was surprised, I’m like, ‘Isn’t that kind of something I would do as a career thing?’; but to kind of be aware of things like that happening would be nice.” (Pamela)
Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• “My administration here was wonderful, has been wonderful. I mean, they’ve given me the pats on the back, they’ve talked to me about things where maybe I was concerned or whatever. But I think it just would have been so much more comforting, for lack of a better word, to actually have someone who, again, can say ‘Yeah, you’re in the right direction.’” (Natasha)

• “Realistically and ideally, I think if you’re a school counselor, you should be supervised by another school counselor. Somebody who has been trained. That did not happen for me. I keep on going back to the ASCA National Model... I mean that’s what, at least I was trained in, that’s what I believe in, that’s what I think would be the most effective way to reach as many students as possible. Then, I think you should be supervised or evaluated by somebody who is familiar with that so that you can get the actual feedback to help you with your actions and how you are trying to implement the ASCA National Model.” (Robert)

Met Supervision Needs

During data analysis the investigator discovered that all nine participants who were currently receiving supervision described that one or more of their supervision needs had been met. The investigator identified 23 clips describing met supervision needs from these nine participants. Each of these clips fell into one of three salient domains that are summarized in Table 4: (1) empathy, (2) consultation, and (3) all needs met. During data analysis five other salient domains were omitted from the results as met needs because they were supported by only one participant. These domains included (1) learning the job, (2) improving skills, (3) validation, (4) establish identity, and (5) uncertainty of whether or not supervision needs had been met.
Empathy

When discussing their supervision needs as new professionals, six of the participants shared that their supervisor provided them with empathy. As expected since they were not receiving supervision as new professionals, there were no excerpts in this domain from participants who had reported that they were not receiving supervision.

Excerpts from the 13 clips included in this clip collection, one from each participant, are as follows:

- “It’s really helpful to get supervision because they can relate to what I am doing and it just affirms the decisions I make. I have been able to vent a little bit about, you know, frustrations and how I want to do things better and things like that.” (Jillian)

- “If you have a kid that’s going through something and you just want some advice on how to handle it or where should I go next or, you know, if I feel like I’m stressed out or too emotionally involved in a student’s issues, I can kind of debrief with that person and say, you know, let me step back from this for a moment so I can do my job. I would go crazy if there wasn’t another person just to talk about, because it is such an emotional job at times, to have someone to talk about that with who knows what you’re going through is key…Most schools don’t have the luxury of having an administrator who has been a counselor; but I think that that’s been really helpful who has someone else who knows what you’re going through.” (Danielle)

- “Yeah, we’ve gotta be able to do that because there’s so many ongoing things that are beyond the control of this office; and so just knowing that we have others around who are feeling exactly what we’re feeling, like the frustration over being behind in scheduling. We all felt it. So, we knew it wasn’t just one of us upset with it, we all were strung out. That part of supervision was good.” (Jackie)

- “Her office was probably more the place where I would vent or get more of the emotional support, and she would listen. I could tell that she knew what I was going through.” (Pamela)

- “Yeah, I think I access my principal less than I access my supervisor. You know, I obviously have learned some things because my supervisor has been patient with me. Whatever I needed I was able to get. I think it helped that my supervisor had
been there...and now I am more comfortable in my own decisions and judgment calls.” (Grace)

- “I think that the biggest need that has been met is I feel I can call on various people, but especially my actual supervisor, whenever I need assistance. I always know that I have an empathetic ear there.” (Carol)

Consultation

Another domain that emerged from the data in the area of met supervision needs included descriptions of supervisors providing participants with consultation. This domain was reflected by four participants in the clip collection of seven clips. Similar to the empathy domain in this theme of met needs, the consultation domain included only participants who reported that they were receiving supervision as new professionals.

Excerpts of these participants’ descriptions are provided as follows:

- “If there is kind of a bigger issue that comes up for a student during the day or some dilemma with a student in the classroom or a student has something going on at home that’s interfering with them here at school and I need some support right then on just to how to...I’ll just consult with her about how to deal with a certain situation, you know, that has been, she’s really great about that; and she stops what she’s doing and takes a moment to kind of help me hash out what would be the best thing to do.” (Jillian)

- “I’m not good at keeping things in my head, numbers and things like that. He’s very helpful, in that, if I say, ‘Well, I have a question about this.’ Boom, boom, boom, he rattles off all of these resources from his brain; and, you know, I just write them down. So, I say, ‘Well, I’ve got this kid that has this.’ And he says, ‘Well, you know, here’s a good resource for ADHD; and here’s a good resources for Autism.’ Or I had a kid that sounded like he had, there was no diagnosis; but he said, ‘Here’s a book for you to read.’” (Lena)

- “They’re always really willing to consult with me; and, if they’re not available then, I know I can come back at another time.” (Jackie)

- “I don’t see my supervisor as someone who is, I guess, above me, although she is. We consult on a lot of things. Obviously, she has more experience, so she can give me ideas.” (Carol)
All Supervision Needs Met

Three participants (i.e., Lena, Danielle, and Grace) specifically commented that all of their supervision needs had been met. Although, each of these participants reported that they were receiving supervision as new professionals, the credentials of Lena’s supervisor varied somewhat from the credentials Danielle’s and Grace’s supervisors who shared the same credentials. Lena, who was supervised by an LPC, reported, “I don’t really think I’ve felt that I’ve had any supervision needs that have gone unmet.” Although her supervisor did not work in the school setting, Lena described that he was very familiar with work in the schools because he served as a consultant for several school districts.

Both Danielle and Grace were supervised by administrators who were former school counselors. When asked what supervision needs had been met for her, Grace commented, “I think they pretty much all have been met.” Similarly, Danielle shared, “I think that all of my supervision needs are met through my supervisor because she’s here, she knows the district, she knows the kids, she knows the job, she’s been there and done that.” Danielle elaborated, “When I started my principal was the other school counselor and I was constantly popping my head in her office and asking questions...she’s been a teacher, and a counselor, and now an assistant principal; so she knows everything.” Grace shared a similar comment when she stated, “I’m lucky enough to have a new building principal who came here in December who is a former school counselor; and it is very helpful to have somebody with a background with what I do.”

Based on the descriptions by Danielle and Grace, it appeared that an administrator who worked in the professional school counselor role was able to meet their needs based
on their understanding of the unique roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors. Aside from the consideration of the credentials of their supervisors, there were no other observable differences that helped to understand why these participants describe that their needs were all met as compared to the other participants.

Perceived Supervision Needs Summary

In this section the perceived supervision needs of new-entrant professional school counselors were reported. In sum, participants described their need for support in the areas of learning the job, validation, consultation, legal and ethical considerations, establishing their identity, and empathy. Some of the participants also described a variety of their perceived needs as going unmet largely because of their difficulty gaining access to a supervisor. Others indicated that they had an unmet need of support in their work as new professionals. The new-entrant supervision needs that were reported by participants as met included their needs for empathy and consultation as they learned their new roles as professional school counselors. Three of the participants described that all of their supervision needs were being met as new professionals.

Themes Identified Across All Frames of Analysis

The previous two sections identified themes that emerged from participants’ descriptions of supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs. This section includes a report of two themes that emerged across both of these areas: (1) supervision types and (2) focus of supervision. While searching for themes across domains during data analysis, it was observed that these themes fit across the units of meaning within the
six themes that participants used to describe supervision experiences as well as the units of meaning within the three domains used to describe perceived supervision needs.

The investigator observed that participants reported three different types of supervision (i.e., administrative, clinical, and developmental) that were described by Barret and Schmidt (1986) as discussed in Chapter II. These different types of supervision formed the first theme that emerged from the domains in the areas of supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs. The second theme identified across both areas of participants' descriptions of supervision experiences and perceived needs included the focus of supervision. It was noted that participants' descriptions of their supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs focused on their own experiences and behaviors (i.e., focus on self), the experiences and behaviors of others (i.e., focus on others), or a combination of these (i.e., focus on both). Each of these themes and the salient domains within the themes are summarized in Table 5 and discussed in the following sections. A summary of the number of clips identified in each theme and a report of the number of participants represented in the clip collection of each theme in the rows labeled “Total” is also reported in Table 5.

**Supervision Types**

As they discussed their supervision experiences and their perceived supervision needs, the participants of this study described all three supervision types (i.e., administrative, clinical, and developmental) that were first reported in the literature by Barret and Schmidt (1986). These three supervision types formed the three salient domains that were reported by the participants of this study. The clip collection in this
theme consisted of 92 different clips from 14 participants as reported in Table 5. These domains are listed in rank order from the most participants represented in each domain to the least number in Table 5, and they are reported in the sections that follow in this same order: (1) administrative, (2) clinical, and (3) developmental.

Table 5

*Themes, Domains, and Units of Meaning Identified Across Participants’ Descriptions of Supervision Experiences and Perceived Supervision Needs*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes (Keyword groups)</th>
<th>Salient domains (Keywords) identified within each theme</th>
<th>Number of units of meaning (Clips)</th>
<th>Number of participants represented in the clip collection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supervision type</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative</td>
<td></td>
<td>41</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical</td>
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<td>29</td>
<td>9</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Both</td>
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<tr>
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<td>78</td>
<td>14 Total</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Frames of analysis and domains within each of these themes are ranked in order from most to least participants represented in each clip collection.

*Administrative Supervision*

The area of administrative supervision includes a focus on the tasks of the job that are not specific to counseling. This type of supervision provides support with the day to day administrative activities that are needed to perform the job of professional school...
counseling. There were 11 participants whose descriptions of supervision experiences and perceived needs matched this type of supervision. The clip collection in this domain was larger than the clip collections of the other two areas with 41 clips as reported in Table 5, suggesting that when supervision experiences and perceived needs were described by the participants they were most often described as administrative in nature.

When discussing their perceived needs for supervision, four of the five participants who reported that they were not currently receiving supervision (i.e., Natasha, Robert, Elaine, and Tami) described their supervision needs as administrative in nature. Only Olivia and Elaine described supervision needs in the other areas. Four of the participants (i.e., Jackie, Pamela, Anne, and Carol) represented in this clip collection described administrative supervision experiences, and seven of them (i.e., Natasha, Margie, Ben, Grace, Robert, Elaine, and Tami) described administrative supervision as a perceived need. Excerpts from each of these 11 participants are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “And I think that’s another thing, that they need to be very clear and concise about you know what things you have to do versus things that can be put off on the back burner, you know, organization, time.” (Margie)

- “You know, just being new, you know, I don’t know everything, and I need to know procedures for the building.” (Ben)

- “I go to my colleagues, my experienced colleagues, which in essence I guess are my supervisors, more for advice. A lot of times, I’ll say to them, ‘Here’s what I’m doing right now, are there other tasks I should be doing this time of year…what are you doing today?’” (Jackie)

- “I’m talking ideal-wise kind of supervision because a couple of things that I had wished that my mentor had gone over a little bit more with some of the school
traditions, I came up with a school-wide awards program based on the ‘I Care’ rules, only to find out that the middle school students already had character-based awards...so, or to know who does what when it comes to awards programs or plays and things like that because I like to be in the know so I know what to plan for.” (Pamela)

- “I think it may need to be really intentional about, ‘Okay, this is what we do here...this is what...’ I mean, I know we just evolved a calendar for ‘Okay, this is what happens in November...this is what happens in December...’ you know, so that if I were to leave or someone else is to leave, they would know what’s expected; and I would think that a mentor or supervisor would have some more approach because your role does change depending on the time of year.” (Grace)

- “I had no idea of the workings of the school, I’m not a teacher; and so I didn’t have any grasp of how the school operates and really I guess what a school counselor actually does in reality. My first supervisor was really helpful in saying, ‘You know what? You’re gonna spend a lot of time on registration and class enrollment and dual enrollment; and these are the types of things you’d better learn, like right now.’ So, she was helpful, not as a counseling supervisor, you know we didn’t discuss clients, we didn’t talk about kids’ cases or things I was struggling with in that sense but just teaching logistics of the job.” (Anne)

- “I’m evaluated by both of my building principals twice a year; and they give me things that I am doing well as well as things I need to work on. I don’t see it as being similar just because my supervisor doesn’t know what I do on a day-to-day basis, she’s not in the building with me. So, I would say that my principals would be able to give a more accurate representation of what I’m doing and how I’m doing it than my supervisor would.” (Carol)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “I have been trying to find the previous counselor’s information as far as what was done previously so that I could piggyback on that. A supervisor would be able to give me that information. Those types of things with the guidance as far as where the program is and how we can then implement what’s already there as a new counselor or an older counselor. I didn’t have that information, and I would want a supervisor...I think a supervisor should provide that kind of information.” (Natasha)

- “I’m not sure if that answers your question or not, but just something like, ‘Hey, what are you doing? What do you got planned? Here’s some thoughts that I had
from the administrators. How are you doing with this group? Here’s a group that I think…’ and some of that stuff can be taken care of with a survey.” (Robert)

- “I received the job, last July, the principal had the foresight to contract the outgoing counselor for up to 20 days of training, so to speak, for me; and, so, I took advantage of that by using 10 days in the fall to assist with just basically what all my responsibilities were, to help me get through the initial distribution schedules and the open house and explain where some of the paperwork was kept, those types of things.” (Elaine)

- “I think when somebody walks out of the Master’s program they need someone to say, ‘Listen, this is a database…these are e-mail addresses…if you get stuck, these are people you can contact who have maybe been there…’ and, if not, then get somebody that can put them in touch with somebody else so they’re not lost or just not on their own to start.” (Tami)

Clinical Supervision

Clinical supervision involves the supervision of supervisees’ clinical counseling skills. This type of supervision was identified in nine participants’ discussions of supervision experiences and perceived needs. Interestingly, the only comments discussing actual clinical supervision experiences were limited to the four participants who were currently engaged in supervision to meet the requirements of their LLPC credential (i.e., Jillian, Lena, Pamela, and Carol). The other participants (i.e., Margie, Ben, Grace, Olivia, and Elaine) in this area talked about their need for clinical supervision rather than actual experiences. The clip collection for this domain included 29 clips as summarized in Table 5 and representative clips from each of the nine participants are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “But anything that’s related more clinically, you know, to things that come up with kids, probably more personal/social kinds of things, I think we take more time to sit down during that hour and kind of go over.” (Jillian)
• "So, I say, ‘Well, I’ve got this kid that has this.’ And he says, ‘Well, you know, here’s a good resource for ADHD; and here’s a good resources for Autism.’” (Lena)

• “I think a person who you feel that you can go to when you have questions...depending on the issue, how to approach different issues with kids.” (Margie)

• “Hopefully my supervision person would have more experience in different things that come up, with kids that may have a parent who is very sick and how you would work with this child with those issues that he’s come to school with, he’s withdrawing from school or not get his work done, those kinds of things, how would I approach him so I don’t push him and be too direct with him.” (Ben)

• “I guess my weakness would be one-on-one counseling. I think that’s something that can only come with experience. And so I would ask for advice on ‘What would you do with these kids? Do we have resources for this?’ and I would ask for her advice on what to do or, if I had a new idea, like I did the interviews for 4th grade, you know, what she thought of that.” (Pamela)

• “I think supervision should provide guidance when it comes to difficult situations or new situations that you might not know how to handle. That was probably the most important factor for me...every situation is different, what would you do, and kind of learning how to respond to those kinds of scenarios with parents and students.” (Grace)

• “I am pretty confident in my counseling abilities and pretty independent as far as the actual counseling goes, but really just somebody that I can call on if a situation that I haven’t encountered comes up. This year, I had kids removed from Protective Services. I didn’t know what I was supposed to do in those situations. We had a student’s parent die, so I just called their office and said, you know, ‘What do I do in this situation?’” (Carol)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• “I just want to know, am I handling the situation in the right way, could I be handling things differently, could I change the way I phrase statements; or I just want feedback on my counseling with students.” (Olivia)

• “And there are some other situations, too, in regards to calling Child Protective Services. I never dreamed I’d have to make so many of those calls. I don’t know if you really can be prepared for some of those situations. Yeah, so I think some
more supervision regarding sticky situations, shall we say, or situations that involve the law or personal liability of the counselor? That would be helpful.” (Elaine)

**Developmental Supervision**

Developmental supervision includes supervision activities that focus on the professional growth and development of the supervisee. As reported in Table 5, the clip collection in this domain included 21 clips from six participants who described the importance of seeking supervision to support their growth as new professional school counselors while discussing their supervision experiences and perceived needs. This supervision type was described the least by participants in their reports of their experiences and perceived needs. Only two of the participants (i.e., Jillian and Lena) described actual supervision experiences that included a developmental focus and four participants (i.e., Olivia, Ben, Robert, and Elaine) described it as a need. Representative excerpts from each of these participants are included as follows.

*Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.*

- “I’m still learning, and it’s nice to be able to go to somebody else.” (Jillian)

- “One of my goals with Barry is to become more knowledgeable about professional needs or kids that need special things in the way of accommodations or whatever, because I feel that’s the part that’s lacking in our training, before we even become certified or endorsed or whatever it is, we had one class in special education; and more and more school counselors are being asked to step outside and service more and more special needs children.” (Lena)

- “I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision. I think just getting ideas, maybe you haven’t been to a certain workshop that others have been to that came up with a new technique or new idea that may work or not work, the new research
that has been done. I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision, I don’t think I would. It’d just be nice to have someone in the same field.” (Ben)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “I feel like I’m not going to grow as a counselor until I receive supervision.” (Olivia)

- “I don’t think we should ever get too complacent as far as getting critical and positive feedback, continuing to learn the job. I think that can only help; and, if we can start getting that when you first start, I think it can only help you become a better counselor.” (Robert)

- “I would say that it would still be helpful, once you get a counseling job, to have some further assistance in helping to steer or direct a counseling program more to be comprehensive guidance counseling and how to approach administrators regarding that. I mean, that was touched upon in my courses maybe more than once; but, if you truly want to take a counseling program in that direction, I would say some continuing support in terms of how to do that would be a supervision need.” (Elaine)

Focus of Supervision

Supervision literature identified the area of self/other awareness as an indicator of a counselor’s level of developmental (e.g., Stoltenberg et al., 1998). It was observed that as participants of this study described their experiences with supervision or their perceived supervision needs that the focus fell into one of the following three salient domains as consistent with the reports in the literature: (1) focus on self, (2) focus on others, and (3) focus on both self and others.

There were a total of 78 clips assigned to this theme from the transcripts of 14 participants as summarized in Table 5. The three salient domains identified in this theme are reported in rank order in Table 5 from the most to least number of participants.
represented in each of the clip collections. Participants’ descriptions of the supervisory experiences and perceived supervision needs of new-entrant professional school counselor supervision are included in the following sections.

Focus on Self

As described in the literature review of this study, beginning counselors often focus on their own needs rather than on the needs of their clients (Stoltenberg et al., 1998). Consistent with this notion, the majority of the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors’ reports of supervisory experiences (i.e., Jillian, Natasha, Ben, Jackie, Pamela, Grace, Anne, Robert, and Tami) and perceived supervision needs (i.e., Olivia and Margie) focused on descriptions of the impact of these experiences and needs on their development as it related to “self” rather than on how these experiences and needs impacted “others” (e.g., students, parents, or colleagues). This finding is evident in the following excerpts from the clip collection that included 48 excerpts from 11 of the participants as summarized in Table 5.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

- “And, you know, I guess talking a little bit more about that, she was named as my mentor by the school as well as she has given me supervision to work on my LPC, which is nice for me because it’s just convenient.” (Jillian)

- “A supervisor should provide a good leadership role, just a professional, mentor kind of role. You know, someone who can also critique you but not put you down.” (Margie)

- “At lunchtime we’d try to meet once in a while to talk. You know, the few times we worked together on different cases, I learned a lot just from listening and absorbing... Yes, I mean, that’s where I learn the best, is listening and then doing
it myself. That's the way I learn, and it would have been great if we had time to be able to do that more.” (Ben)

• “But a lot of supervision is just...a lot of it’s surface, you know, what appears to be going on...sometimes they don’t even think to fill me in on something because they all know what it is, you know, like an annual event, like convocation, they need to take some time to explain it to both of us after we’re sitting in a meeting going, ‘Huh?’; and, when they realize we both didn’t know what was going on, they’re like ‘Oh, we haven’t talked about that yet.’” (Jackie)

• “We had to meet at least 2 hours every month for the whole year...You know, they weren’t all just like one hour meetings. One might be a 15 minute meeting, one might be 45 minutes... It was more as I needed it. I believe that she came out 3-4 times, but we probably would e-mail each other maybe once every 2 weeks; or I’d call her.” (Pamela)

• “I also had a lot of questions about daily planning, like how do you structure your day; and do you have a set time that you see individual students and then, you know, how many groups do you try to run at a time; and how do you communicate that to teachers...so the practical sort of day-to-day.” (Grace)

• “Thank goodness I had a year where I did have somebody who could kind of show me the ropes and at least I got that 1 year in, training and understanding and learning about all the different things I had to learn about before I came up here.” (Anne)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

• “I feel like without supervision my skills are never going to improve...I want to be a better counselor...supervision contributes to my growth as a counselor to help me know whether or not I am on track with the cases that I have—that feedback.” (Olivia)

• “A lot of their supervision has been hugely beneficial for me just in their understanding of how things work and being very respectful to the different parts of counseling that they don’t know, that they don’t have the training in; but they understand that I have the training in.” (Natasha)

• “Everybody is stretched out pretty thin time-wise, responsibility-wise; and I don’t think anybody realizes...you know you get very few people who kind of reach out and say, ‘How you doing?’ and give you an ‘adda boy’ and that kind of stuff.” (Robert)
• “I know that the kind of person I am, too, is I reached out to a couple of people that I knew; and they were really persistent in helping me get established there.” (Tami)

*Focus on Both Self and Others*

As summarized in Table 5 it was observed that 22 of the clips from 8 participants included a focus on both self and others when participants described their supervision experiences and perceived needs. Four of the participants (i.e., Jillian, Lena, Pamela, and Carol) described a focus on both self and others when describing supervision experiences and four (i.e., Olivia, Margie, Ben, and Elaine) reported this focus when describing their perceived supervision needs. Focusing on self and others is an indicator of a counselor who is advancing in their development as they use a focus on self to inform their work with others. Examples of clips from each of the participants are included as follows.

Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.

• “If there is kind of a bigger issue that comes up for a student during the day or some dilemma with a student in the classroom or a student has something going on at home that’s interfering with them here at school and I need some support right then on just to how to...I’ll just consult with her about how to deal with a certain situation, you know, that has been, she’s really great about that; and she stops what she’s doing and takes a moment to kind of help me hash out what would be the best thing to do.” (Jillian)

• “I’m not good at keeping things in my head, numbers and things like that. He’s very helpful, in that, if I say, ‘Well, I have a question about this.’ Boom, boom, boom, he rattles off all of these resources from his brain; and, you know, I just write them down. So, I say, ‘Well, I’ve got this kid that has this.’” (Lena)

• “I think a person who you feel that you can go to when you have questions, or I guess to even understand how everything is supposed to work, you know, whether it’s paperwork or how you approach teachers, how you approach teachers as
individuals because they’re so different, depending on the issue, how to approach different issues with kids.” (Margie)

- “So, coming on the other side of it where I can focus on that child, how I would go about working with those kids. I haven’t had much experience with the counseling area.” (Ben)

- “And so I would ask for advice on ‘What would you do with these kids? Do we have resources for this?’ and I would ask for her advice on what to do or, if I had a new idea, like I did the interviews for 4th grade, you know, what she thought of that. And then she’d help me with the Taranova.” (Pamela)

- “This year, I had kids removed from Protective Services; so I didn’t know what I was supposed to do in those situations. We had a student’s parent die, so I just called their office and said, you know, ‘What do I do in this situation?’” (Carol)

Excerpts from participants reporting no supervision as new professionals.

- “Just knowing whether I’m on track with the cases that I have—that feedback.” (Olivia)

- “If you are doing something that might not necessarily be to the benefit of students, it would be good to know before it becomes an ingrained practice, you know, or a habit.” (Elaine)

Focus on Others

This domain included eight clips from three participants as summarized in Table 5. A focus on others is described as an indicator of counselor development in which the counselor moves beyond a focus of his or her own needs with a greater concern for the needs of others. However, a focus that is limited to considerations of others indicates room for development since a focus on self is as important in the work of counselors. This focus was least reported among the participants in this study. Two participants (i.e., Natasha and Grace) reported this focus as they described their supervision, and one (i.e.,
Jillian) reported this focus when discussing a supervision need. Excerpts from the clip collection are included as follows.

**Excerpts from participants reporting supervision as new professionals.**

- "But also, I think having that lunch meeting or whatever at least once a week, if not more, once or twice a week, to just really hash out some more clinical things and dynamics of the different teachers and principal and assistant principal that you work with." (Jillian)

- "Sometimes we'd focus on student concerns; and there might be a student that there's an ongoing concern...and I want to keep them up to date." (Grace)

**Excerpt from a participant reporting no supervision as a new professional.**

- "There was one situation that was extremely huge question legally, and it could not be answered in-house, and we didn't move forward until we talked to someone. And it was interesting because, when I called my professor, who was the head of the department, she also had to call legal counsel from a university as far as what the next step was." (Natasha)

**Summary of Themes Identified Across All Frames of Analysis**

This section reported on two themes that were identified across all frames of analysis as described by the 15 participants of this study: (1) the supervision types (i.e., administrative, clinical, and developmental); and (2) the focus of supervision (i.e., focus on self, focus on both self and others, and focus on others). Administrative supervision was described most frequently and developmental supervision was described least frequently by participants as they discussed their supervision experiences and perceived needs as new professionals. While nine participants included descriptions of clinical supervision experiences and perceived needs in their work, only the four participants who
had their LLPC credentials reported that they were currently receiving this type of supervision. Characteristic of beginning counselors, participants’ descriptions most frequently included a focus on self rather than a focus on others or a focus on both self and others that is characteristic of more experienced counselors.

Chapter Summary

This chapter reported the everyday lived supervision experiences and perceived supervision needs reported by 15 new-entrant professional school counselors in attempt to answer the following two research questions: (1) What are the supervision experiences reported by new-entrant professional school counselors? and (2) What do new-entrant professional school counselors describe that they need from supervision experiences? The results of this phenomenological study reported themes in six areas that described supervision experiences and in three areas that described the perceived needs for these participants. Themes were also identified in two areas that described both supervision experiences and perceived needs. A summary of these results was included in each section of this chapter that reported these results.

Participants reported both advantages (i.e., improve skills, validation, learning the job, support, and establish credibility) and disadvantages (i.e., autonomy conflict, time, poor supervision, and cost) of receiving supervision without regard as to who was responsible for providing them with supervision. When discussing supervision activities as new-entrant professional school counselors, participants described communication activities. Participants also confused the process of supervision with mentoring and evaluation when asked to describe their supervision experiences. The quality of
supervision was described as deficient, and the structure was described as weekly and more formal and provided on a less formal as needed basis among participants.

The second research question asked what new-entrant professional school counselors needed from supervision experiences. This study found that the need for support as described by participants was identified as an overarching theme in six areas: (1) learning the job, (2) validation, (3) consultation, (4) legal and ethical considerations, (5) establish identity, and (6) empathy. Participants also identified needs that have been met (i.e., empathy and consultation) as well as needs that have gone unmet (i.e., supervision access and support).

The 15 new-entrant professional school counselors who participated in this study reported their supervision experiences and perceived needs as most similar to two of the three types of supervision reported by Barett and Schmidt (1986): administrative and clinical. Four participants of this study (i.e., Jackie, Pamela, Anne, and Carol) described their supervision experiences as administrative in nature as described by Barret and Schmidt. This supervision was described as being provided by school administrators and focused on an evaluative role by paying attention to behaviors not necessarily specific to school counselors (e.g., use of time). Four of the participants (i.e., Jillian, Lena, Pamela, and Carol) described their supervision experiences as more similar to clinical supervision that was defined by Barret and Schmidt as provided by counseling peers with particular attention focused on theories and techniques used when providing therapeutic kinds of service. All four of these participants were credentialed as LLPCs, and received their supervision from supervisors who had credentials as LPCs. Only two of the participants (i.e., Jillian and Lena) described the third kind of supervision that Barret and Schmidt
referred to as developmental supervision when they reported their supervision experiences.

As participants described their supervision experiences and perceived needs, their descriptions largely focused on concerns with their performance. This focus on self is characteristic of beginning counselors. Although there were some reports of supervision experiences and needs that provided evidence of a focus on the concern for the welfare of those served, the majority of descriptions included a focus that was limited to their performance. Some of the participants’ descriptions included a balanced focus on both self and others.

A discussion of these results including implications and limitations for the practice of supervising new-entrant professional school counselors is included in Chapter V. This chapter also includes direction for future research.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This chapter begins with an overview of the significant findings of this study and is followed by a consideration of the findings in the light of existing research studies. Implications of the results from this study are also described in this chapter as they relate to the general practice of professional school counselor supervision as well as for the more specific practice of supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors. The consideration of the implications of these results also includes discussion related to the work of counselor educators. Discussion of the implications of this study is followed by a description of the limitations of this study, and the final section of this chapter includes recommendations for future study.

Overview of Significant Results

The purpose of this investigation was to examine the supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant professional school counselors in order to understand the essence of the lived experience of receiving supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors. The themes that emerged from the data in this study indicate that the practice of new-entrant professional school counseling supervision is lacking. Although some new-entrant professional school counselors reported receiving supervision that supported them in their work as new professionals, others reported that the quality of this
supervision was deficient in terms of meeting their supervision needs. In fact, five participants reported receiving no supervision whatsoever as new professionals.

Ten of the new-entrant professional school counselors who participated in this study received supervision from LPCs, principals, licensed or endorsed professional school counselors, social workers, or teachers. Disadvantages of receiving supervision for new-entrant professionals included a conflict between autonomy and dependence on others, finding time to participate in supervision, poor supervision, and the cost to obtain supervision. Advantages of receiving supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors were that supervision helped them improve skills, provided them with validation, helped them learn their jobs, provided them with support, and helped them establish their credibility. Supervision of new-entrant professional school counselors included communication activities that were often confused with mentoring and evaluation activities. The quality of these experiences was lacking and their structure varied between casual contacts provided on an as-needed basis to more formal structured contacts that were regularly scheduled.

The description of the supervision experiences as lacking did not stem from a lack of perceived need for supervision on the part of new-entrant professional school counselors. In terms of the themes of new-entrant professional school counselors’ beliefs about their perceived supervision needs that emerged from the data, participants in this study indicated a need and desire for supervision to support them in their work as they learned their new roles. The participants reported needing support in the following areas: learning the job, validation, consultation, legal and ethical considerations, establishing identity, and empathy. Although their needs for empathy and consultation were met, some
of the participants faced limited access to a supervisor and very few experienced
supervision as new professionals in which all of their needs were met.

When new-entrant professional school counselor supervision was provided, it was
most often administrative in nature rather than clinical or developmental. In addition, the
focal point of this supervision more often centered on the behaviors of the new
professional as they were learning the job rather than on the impact of their behaviors on
those who were served.

Discussion of Results

The results of this study are discussed in this section in the context of the
supervision literature described in Chapter II. This section considers how the supervision
experiences and needs of new-entrant professional school counselors compare to
supervision literature that has documented the underutilized practice of professional
school counselor supervision (e.g., Agnew et al., 2000; Bunch, 2002; Herlihy et al., 2002;
Paisley & McMahon, 2001; Portman, 2002; Protivnak, 2003). This discussion begins
with a comparison of supervision objectives as described in the literature with the reports
of new-entrant professional school counselors. Ethical and legal issues in supervision are
also considered as they relate to the reported experiences and perceived needs of new-
entrant professional school counselors. Supervision practices used to provide supervision
are also discussed as they relate to the results of this study.
Supervision Objectives

Similar to many mental health fields, the field of counseling has been allowed to regulate itself with the expectation that it places the welfare of the general public above its own interests. As described in Chapter II, the practice of supervision has been employed in the counseling field to meet this expectation by monitoring and enhancing the quality of the service provided by junior members of the profession (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). When considering the ever increasing complexity of student needs described in the literature (e.g., Baker, 2001; Borders, 1991a; Page et al., 2001; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Portman, 2002), it would seem that supervision of junior members’ skills would be even more important to help these new-entrant school counselors address the increasingly complex needs. However, as reported in this study, six new-entrant professional school counselors reported that they were not currently receiving any supervision, and six others reported that their supervision experiences were lacking due in part to limited access to a supervisor. Only 3 of the 15 participants in this study indicated that all of their supervision needs were met.

Although several of the new-entrant professional school counselors described disadvantages of receiving supervision, many of them were able to identify several advantages. As described in the results section, these new-entrant professionals noted that supervision helped improve skills, provided them with validation, helped them learn the job, provided them with support, and helped them establish credibility. Advantages of supervision that have been documented in the literature include increased professional development of supervisees (Usher & Borders, 1993), a greater likelihood that therapy
will go well, increased safeguard for the clients’ welfare, shared responsibilities for 
interventions, input from supervisors that generate more systematic approaches to 
therapy, and an opportunity for counselors to observe more seasoned professional as they 
model skills (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). This focus included attention to the 
development of the practitioner as well as to the importance of safeguarding the welfare 
of those served. Interestingly, the focus of supervision described by new-entrant 
professionals in the present study was on supporting their needs as practitioners rather 
than on the need to safeguard those whom they served. A comparison of the reported 
advantages of receiving supervision in the literature with the reports from the participants 
in this study demonstrates that the participants of this study were more focused on their 
own needs as might be expected of beginning counselors. Perhaps this is not surprising 
given that beginning counselors are characteristically focused on their own needs 
(Stoltenberg et al., 1998). However, this limited focus on their own needs ignores the 
expectation to safeguard the welfare of the general public, particularly for those new-
entrant professionals who were not receiving any supervision.

Ethical and Legal Issues

Six participants of this study indicated that they were not currently receiving 
supervision as new-entrant professional school counselors. This description was 
consistent with supervision literature that reported many professional school counselors 
receive no post-graduate supervision (e.g., Borders & Usher, 1992; Portman, 2002, 
Roberts & Borders, 1994; Usher & Borders, 1993). This study supported another finding 
in the supervision literature that identified confusion between supervision, mentoring, and
evaluation (e.g., Portman). This role confusion led new-entrant school counselors to believe that they were receiving supervision when in fact no supervision was being provided as they were being mentored or evaluated.

The counseling profession advocates that supervisors should have training in supervision prior to serving in the supervision role (ACES, 1993). Although ASCA (2004) does not specifically address supervision in its discussion of ethical standards for school counselors, it specifies that professional school counselors are to function within the boundaries of individual professional competence. This specification has ethical implications for school counselors who provide supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors without training in supervision and for professional new-entrant school counselors who practice school counseling without supervision. The disparity between professional expectations and practice creates an ethical bind for both groups as they run the risk of functioning outside the boundaries of their professional competence. Although the professional standards established by ACES and ASCA do not apply to administrators, social workers, or teachers who provide school counselors with supervision, practicing supervision without supervision training creates a potential for legal issues (Guest & Dooley, 1999).

Although state law specifies that LLPCs receive supervision from an LPC who has received training in supervision (e.g., Michigan Department of Community Health [MDCH], 2003), three of the participants who had their LLPC credentials reported that they were not currently following this requirement (i.e., Danielle, Olivia, and Anne). This served as a source of anxiety for all three participants as they described the difficulty in finding qualified supervisors. As reported in Appendix H Danielle and Olivia were
successful in finding qualified supervisors after the interviews for this study were conducted.

As reported in the results section of this study in which the credentials of those providing supervision were described, only four participants indicated that their supervisors had training in the practice of supervision. These participants were all pursuing the LPC credential which mandated them by state law to be supervised by an LPC who had supervision training. The other five participants who reported that they had supervision described supervisors who had no training in the practice of supervision. This report is similar to the findings included in supervision literature that described many supervisors have little or no training in the practice of supervision (Guest & Dooley, 1999; Loganbill et al., 1982; Studer, 2006).

Supervision Practices

Although the counseling profession reported three types of supervision models used to inform the practice of supervision (i.e., models grounded in counseling theory, developmental models, and social role models; Bernard & Goodyear, 2004), it was not evident from the new-entrant professionals descriptions that supervisors' practices were informed by any particular model. While it was difficult to determine which supervision models that supervisors were using as new-entrant professional school counselors described their supervision activities, the investigator was able to identify the three types of supervision (i.e., administrative, clinical, and development; Barret & Schmidt, 1986) from the reports of new-entrant professional school counselors' experiences. For example, when participants discussed activities during supervision that related to learning
how to structure their day, the investigator was able to identify this supervision as administrative in nature. Those activities that involved consultation about counseling were identified as clinical, and those that focused specifically on improving the skills of the new-entrant professional school counselors were identified as developmental in nature.

When the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors who were the participants of this study described what supervision looked like for them, it was noted that their descriptions were most frequently similar to the descriptions of administrative and clinical supervision. As reported in the results section of this study, 11 participants described supervision as administrative in nature and nine provided clinical descriptions.

Similar to the supervision literature that identified administrative supervision as most frequently provided by administrators (e.g., Page et al., 2001), this study identified that supervision provided by administrators was most often administrative in nature. Clinical supervision activities described by participants in this study focused on communication with supervisors. Participants described activities that are often associated with clinical supervision (i.e., group supervision, live supervision, and reviewing audio or video recorded sessions) when they described their internship and practicum supervision experiences, but they did not indicate that these activities were part of their clinical supervision experiences as new-entrant professional school counselors.

Only two participants reported receiving developmental supervision, although four others discussed the importance of this type of supervision that focused on the developmental level of counselors during supervision. These two participants described supervision that took into account their unique needs as they started their careers as new
professionals. The limited description of developmental supervision experiences corresponded with the report of Barret and Schmidt (1986) who indicated this type of supervision was lacking in practice.

Although use of developmental supervision was limited, this type of supervision helps explain why the new-entrant school counseling professionals who participated in this study largely focused their descriptions of supervision to discussions of their own needs in terms of support rather than discussing the need for supervision to support others' needs. None of the participants identified their need for supervision in order to protect others' welfare as they provided guidance and counseling services. Instead, they described their needs for supervision as they limited their focus to consideration of their own performance in their new roles as school counselors. As described in developmental models of supervision (e.g., Stoltenberg et al., 1998), this limited focus is expected of beginning counselors who often are often fixated on their own needs. Providing developmental supervision could serve to expand the focus of these beginning counselors on the needs of others as well as on their own needs for supervision.

**Results Summary**

Discussion of new-entrant professional school counselors' experiences and perceived needs as they relate to supervision objectives, ethical and legal considerations, and supervision activities suggests that supervision experiences of new-entrant professional school counselors are lacking. Although several of the supervision needs of these new-entrant school counselors are being met, a variety of needs continued to go unmet for these new professionals. It was also not clear from participants’ descriptions
whether or not the needs of those who were receiving services from these new-entrant professionals were being met. These results suggest that the profession of school counseling may be failing in its duty to protect the welfare of those served by these new professionals. Several implications emerge from the results of this study to support the needs of new-entrant professional school counselors as well as the needs of those who are served by these new professionals.

Implications

Since professional school counselor associations and counselor educators are in a position of influencing the practice of professional school counselor supervision, this section considers implications of the results from this study for professionals who identify themselves in each group. The implications of this study for professional school counselor associations include impacting supervision practice as it applies to all professional school counselors as well as the more specific practice of supervision of new-entrant professionals. The next section discusses implications of these results for counselor educators who are well positioned as practitioners and researchers to advocate for supervision that enhances the professional functioning of new-entrant professional school counselors.

Implications for Professional School Counselor Associations

The role confusion that was described when the participants of this study discussed their supervision experiences provides the focus of implications for the general practice of school counselor supervision in two areas that are described in the following
section. Implications are also described for professional school counselor associations that are specific to the supervision of new-entrant professional school counselors. These implications for supervision practice center on a comparison of the supervision of these new professionals with the supervision of new-entrant counselors in other settings.

Supervision Practices for Professional School Counselors

Implications of this study for professional school counselor associations that support the practice of professional school counselor supervision center on the role confusion described by participants when discussing supervision activities as confused with mentoring and evaluation. There are two areas of concern that arise from this role confusion that could be addressed by professional school counselor associations: (1) failure to differentiate supervision from evaluation and (2) limited knowledge of the unique roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors. Implications that address both of these areas of concern are described in this section.

Differentiating supervision and evaluation. In terms of the first area of concern, participants’ discussions indicated that at times the evaluation process was confused with the process of supervision. When participants (e.g., Jackie, Anne, and Robert) indicated that they were receiving supervision, what they were actually describing was the evaluation provided by their administrators. As described in supervision literature, too many administrators confused evaluation and supervision (e.g., Benshoff & Paisley, 1996; Bunch, 2002; Crutchfield et al., 1997; Herlihy et al., 2002; Paisley & Borders, 1995; Portman, 2002; Synatschek, 2002; Tucker, Stronge, & Beers, 1998). As discussed by
Borders (1991a), evaluation is an administrative role, and limiting supervision experiences to evaluation restricts the professional growth and development opportunities that could be experienced with supervision that goes beyond administrative evaluation to include clinical and developmental supervision (Barret & Schmidt, 1986).

The results of this study indicate that new-entrant professional school counselors described needing supervision that is more than administrative in nature. Participants of this study described that they also needed clinical and developmental supervision. Unless those who provide professional school counselors with supervision understand that the professional role of school counselors also requires supervision that is clinical and developmental in nature, it is anticipated that supervision will continue to be primarily administrative in nature and confused with the process of evaluation.

Limited knowledge of professional school counselor roles. The second area of concern identified in the area of role confusion came from the descriptions of three of the participants in this study (i.e., Natasha, Anne, and Robert) who commented that their building principals had no clear understanding of the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors. These experiences are the rule rather than the exception as reported by several researchers who have intentionally published work in professional school administration journals in attempt to inform school administrators about the unique roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors (e.g., Coy, 1999; Crutchfield & Hipps, 1998; Henderson, 1999; Schmidt, Weaver, & Aldredge, 2001; Studer & Sommers, 2000; Tucker et al., 1998).
Professional school counselor associations can serve as an important training resource for those who provide all school counselors with supervision as they communicate appropriate school counseling roles and advocate for supervision that meets the supervision needs of any professional school counselors who receive supervision. Supervision advocacy activities by school counseling organizations could provide training opportunities to help those providing professional school counselors with supervision understand the differences among the different types of supervision as well as learn supervision activities that facilitate effective administrative, clinical, and developmental supervision. It is anticipated that such an understanding would reduce confusion surrounding the process of supervision that was described by participants as they talked about their supervision experiences. As leaders and members of these organizations continue advocating and educating others on the role of the professional school counselor in schools, it is anticipated that the supervision experiences of these professionals will reflect supervision that supports professional school counselors in their work while protecting the welfare of those served.

Supervision Practices for New-Entrant Professional School Counselors

The results of this study, in which five participants report not receiving any post-master’s supervision, point to a discrepancy in the field of counseling that has not been discussed in supervision literature. Those who practice counseling in private practice and agency settings are required in most states to pursue post-graduate supervision for a prescribed number of hours on the job (e.g., MDCH, 2003). No such requirements are expected of professional school counselors. In fact, to date there have been no studies that
have advocated for similar requirements for school counselors or called on the profession of school counseling to recommend mandating supervision experiences for new-entrant professional school counselors. Although such requirements cannot insure that every new-entrant school counselor receives adequate supervision, it would emphasize the importance of this activity on the work of these new professionals.

Advocating for the required practice of new-entrant school counselor supervision would also be consistent with the mandate for the professional organization to protect the welfare of those whom they serve in similar ways to the standards that are required for new-entrant professional counselors who work in settings outside schools (e.g., agencies and private practice). School counseling professional organizations are well positioned to make recommendations to practicing school counselors in terms of the supervision practices that they should be expected to pursue as new professionals. These same organizations could also make recommendations to professional school counselors who provide these new professionals with supervision (e.g., school counselors should have training in supervision before providing it). Although the professional school counselor associations have no control over the supervision practices of school administrators who provide supervision, school counselor organizations might encourage members to inform school administrators of appropriate supervision for professional school counselors by presenting on both the roles and responsibilities of school counselors as well as on appropriate supervision practices at professional association conferences for school administrators.

Currently, there are no professional standards in school counseling that address appropriate responsibilities of new professional school counselors to obtain supervision
or of those who provide supervision. It is anticipated that such recommendations would reduce the number new-entrant counselors who enter the school counseling profession and are left to sink or swim at the expense of those whom they serve. Supervision standards in the profession could reduce the number of students whose ever increasingly complex needs go unmet by new-entrant school counselors. Such a position could also demonstrate that professional school counselor associations are doing their part to fulfill the mandate of protecting the welfare of those served by school counselors.

Meanwhile, in effort to meet the developmental needs of new-entrant school counselors, administrators should consider providing support for these new professionals to participate in professional development activities such as joining professional associations, attending conferences, and fostering opportunities for networking. The support provided by administration could also include release time and financial support for a trained supervisor. Such activities were described as needed by the participants in this study who were required to pursue supervision from an LPC because of their LLPC credential (e.g., Lena, Olivia, and Danielle) and by those who reported being the only counselor in their building (e.g., Lena, Natasha, Robert, Ben, Anne, and Carol).

Implications for Counselor Educators

There are several implications from this study that impact the work of counselor educators. These implications include providing professional school counselor students with supervision training during the completion of their master's degree programs; educating post-master's professional school counselors and administrators on the roles, responsibilities, and supervision needs of professional school counselors; developing
models and theories appropriate for the supervision of professional school counselors to fit with their work as they deliver comprehensive guidance and counseling programs; and urging professional school counselor associations to develop supervision guidelines or standards for the practice of supervision.

**Supervision Training for Professional School Counseling Students**

Although participants were able to describe their supervision experiences and needs as new professionals, none of the participants in this study described supervision theories, models, or modalities that were used to provide them supervision. Participants’ understanding of supervision was limited to the experiences that others provided them. If supervision training were included as a part of their school counselor preparation experiences, perhaps these new professionals would be better consumers of supervision who understand the process of supervision. Such an understanding might help students understand the need for supervision as new professionals and reduce the confusion of roles that was reported by the participants of this study. It might also serve to encourage school counseling students to provide supervision to others after they have gained experience as professional school counselors. Such training in supervision could then impact the quality and structure of the supervision for new professionals in the future.

**Educating Post-Master’s Professional School Counselors and Administrators**

This study serves as a reminder of the important role that counselor educators play in educating practicing school counselors and administrators on the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors as well as on the supervision needs of
professional school counselors. Current professional standards encourage counselor education programs to provide site supervisors with professional development opportunities (CACREP, 2001). Although this standard applies to supervisors of counselors in training, similar professional development opportunities might also serve to benefit those who supervise new-entrant professionals. It is important to note that if supervisors of new-entrant professional school counselors hope to offer counselors clinical or developmental supervision, they need to be informed of the current role of school counselors as well as the models that support professional development. Counselor educators can provide these supervisors with this necessary training.

*Development of Models and Theories Appropriate for the Supervision of Professional School Counselors*

Counselor educators might also contribute to development of school counseling models that address all of the roles and unique needs of professional school counselors described in comprehensive guidance and counseling programs. As described in the literature review of this study, there are models of supervision that address administrative, developmental and clinical supervision. However, there are not any models that include all three of these supervision types while addressing the work of professional school counselors. Models are needed that include a focus on administrative, clinical, and developmental supervision to encompass all of the roles and needs of professional school counselors that are required in the delivery of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.
As described by the participants of this study, supervision experiences most frequently include an administrative focus that limits supervision to a series of activities designed to evaluate the job performance of new-entrant professional school counselors rather than looking at their overall development as professional school counselors. Although there are several models which consider developmental needs of new-entrant professional counselors (i.e., Littrel et al., 1997; Stoltenberg et al., 1998), these models are not specific to the field of professional school counseling. As detailed in ASCA (2005), the role of professional school counselors goes beyond providing clinical services to students. It also includes delivering a guidance curriculum, providing individual student planning, and providing support to the school system. While developmental models of supervision support counseling activities as described in the area of responsive services, these models do not provide developmental supervision of other skills required by professional school counselors in comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (e.g., individual student planning or delivering guidance curriculum).

There are also several models that limit supervision of new-entrant school counselors to clinical supervision. Such supervision also has its drawbacks because the role of professional school counselors is more than therapeutic in nature. Clinical supervision is limited to discussion of theories and techniques used in individual and group counseling. Using an approach to supervision that is clinical in nature does not pay attention to other areas of job performance. There is a need for counselor educators to develop supervision models and theories that take into consideration all of the roles of professional school counselors as they administer comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools.
Supervision Guidelines and Standards for the Practice of Supervision

Since many counselor educators are involved in professional school counselor organizations, they could urge school counseling associations to develop supervision guidelines or standards of practice that encourage new-entrant professionals to pursue supervision. As mentioned in the section describing implications for professional school counselor associations, such a position could reduce the number new-entrant counselors who are left to sink or swim. Counselor educators might also advocate for professional school counselor organizations to develop guidelines and standards of practice directed toward those who provide supervision.

Summary of Implications

The results of this study have implications for professional school counseling organizations and counselor educators. Implications for professional associations that impact supervision for all school counselors include clarifying the role of supervision for those who provide and receive supervision in the following two ways: (1) differentiate it from the process of evaluation by including a focus on clinical and developmental supervision and (2) expand the knowledge of roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors. Implications that impact the supervision of new professional school counselors include a need for supervision standards that address appropriate responsibilities of new professional school counselors in terms of obtaining supervision as well as standards for those who provide supervision in the field. The results of this study have four implications for the field of counselor education. Counselor educators
should (1) provide school counseling students with supervision training so that they can become better consumers of supervision as new professionals, (2) provide current professional school counselor supervisors and administrators with training in the roles and responsibilities of professional school counselors as well as in the process of supervision, (3) develop supervision models and theories that take into consideration all of the roles of professional school counselors who administer comprehensive guidance and counseling programs in schools, and (4) urge professional school counselor associations to develop supervision guidelines or standards of practice for new professionals and practicing supervisors.

Limitations

This phenomenological study was designed to investigate the supervision experiences and perceived needs of 15 new-entrant professional counselors to arrive at an understanding of the essence of their experiences and beliefs. As described in the methodology chapter of this study, the investigator took several steps to minimize contamination of the data by researcher bias (e.g., member checking and bracketing). The investigator is confident although not certain that the results of this study represent participants’ thoughts and beliefs and not his own. Four areas have been identified as limitations of this study: (1) demographics of participants, (2) use of interviews, (3) use of a transcriber, and (4) use of qualitative data analysis software.
Demographics of Participants

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to identify the meaning or essence of supervision experiences and perceived needs for 15 new-entrant professional school counselors. The purpose was not to produce generalizations. However, it should be noted that the essence described represents a group of participants who were selected using a criterion sample of potential participants known to the investigator through professional acquaintances that resulted in a relatively homogenous population of Caucasian females from a similar geographic location (i.e., the Midwest). There were two males represented among the participants. One participant identified herself as Hispanic and another identified herself as Hispanic and Caucasian in terms of race/ethnicity. The essence or meaning of supervision experiences should be recognized as the essence or meaning of supervision experiences for these 15 participants in this study. A study that included more variation in the gender, race/ethnicity, and geographic location of participants might have produced a different essence or meaning of new-entrant professional supervision experiences and perceived needs.

Use of Interviews

Another limitation of this study is tied to the method of data collection that was selected. The difficulty of getting into the mind of the interviewee has been identified as one of the limitations of interviewing (Hatch, 2002). The motivation to be perceived as doing well and the desire to please others is common among new-entrant counselors and is developmentally appropriate as reported by Stoltenberg et al. (1998). It is possible that
these characteristics typical of new-entrant school counselors may have impacted the
trustworthiness of the participants’ reports as they may have described their supervision
experiences and needs to the investigator in ways that cast them in positive light and met
their needs to please the investigator. It would be helpful to identify a means of
triangulating the data as recommended by Hatch to verify the trustworthiness of the
information received from participants using other sources.

Use of a Transcriber

In qualitative research it is preferred that the investigator transcribe the interviews
right away because it allows the investigator to do some initial analysis of interviews as
soon as possible (Hatch, 2002). This process helps the investigator stay close to the data
as he or she begins the analysis process and provides the investigator with the opportunity
to shape the direction of future interviews by providing immediate feedback about the
effectiveness of questions, prompts, and probes. However, the size of this project
necessitated the use of a transcriber to transform the recorded interviews to transcripts.
Although the investigator was not able to benefit from the immediate feedback described
above, the data analysis steps described in the methodology chapter of this study
document how the investigator attempted to stay close to the data throughout the analysis
process. This attempt to stay close to the data included listening to the audio recording
immediately following the interview, reviewing each transcript for accuracy as soon as it
was transcribed, reading and rereading the data throughout data analysis, and keeping
detailed notes about observations in the margins about possible meanings and
connections.
Use of Qualitative Data Analysis Software

As mentioned in the methodology chapter when discussing qualitative data analysis, an ongoing debate concerning the use of qualitative data analysis software continues in the field of qualitative research (Willis & Jost, 1999). Two concerns raised by Creswell (1998) describe potential limitations of this study: (1) qualitative data analysis software programs often serve as a substitute for careful analysis gained from a close reading of the material to gain a sense of the whole, and (2) the categories are often construed as fixed in nature once they are labeled rather than taking the time to consider alternative categories, labels, or patterns of organization. Basit (2003) summarized the limitations of using computers to conduct qualitative data analysis by stating that the computer and text analysis programs cannot perform data analysis for the researcher. The investigator tried to minimize these concerns by following the inductive data analysis process described in the methodology chapter. Specific activities included reading the data in its entirety several times throughout the process and keeping notes throughout the data analysis process in terms of domains and themes that were identified throughout.

Recommendations for Future Research

The discussion of the results of this present study includes three recommendations for future study that are described in this section. These recommendations include (1) investigating the value of supervision training on the practice of school counselor supervision, (2) examining differences in supervision experiences according to
supervisors’ credentials and type of supervision training, and (3) exploring and developing practices for new-entrant professional school counselor supervision.

Supervision Training

As identified in this study, some of the participants reported that their supervisors had received training in supervision while others commented that their supervisors did not have any training in supervision. The value of supervision training on the impact of the practice of supervision for professional school counselors has not been explored in the literature. It is also not known whether supervision training during the completion of one’s master’s program, following the completion of a program, or training that includes a combination of both results in more effective supervision practice. Future studies are needed that investigate and recommend advantages and disadvantages of supervision training during these different phases of a professional school counselors’ development. Such research could provide counselor educators with rationale to help them identify the best time to provide supervision training.

Differences in Supervision Experiences

Future studies might also explore the differences in professional school counselor supervision experiences that consider the following three differences: (1) credentials of supervisors, (2) the amount of supervision training, and (3) the type of supervision training of supervisors. Although this study did not intend to explore these differences, it appeared from the results that differences in supervision experiences existed between the participants whose supervisors had supervision training compared to the participants
whose supervisors did not have such training. It is not known whether training in supervision accounted for participants’ varied descriptions of their supervision experiences.

*Exploring and Developing Practices for New-Entrant School Counselor Supervision*

Having explored the supervision experiences and perceived needs of new-entrant school counselors, it would be appropriate to explore what types of supervision experiences best meet the supervision needs of new-entrant school counselors. Several researchers have explored effective supervision experiences of school counselors (Borders & Usher, 1992; Roberts & Borders, 1994; Usher & Borders, 1993), but there has been no literature that has reported which supervision theories, models and methodologies are best suited for use with new-entrant professional school counselors.

As mentioned in the section describing implications for counselor educators, there are a limited number of theories, models, and modalities that have been designed specifically for the practice of professional school counselor supervision. It is expected that there is a need for additional theories, models, and modalities based on some of the reports of the participants of this study who indicated that their supervisors were providing supervision that was not helpful to some of the aspects of their work. If researchers developed supervision theories, models and modalities specifically for the use of professional school counselor supervision, perhaps such models could meet professional school counselors’ supervision needs that are not met in traditional supervision models. For example, researchers might develop models of supervision that consider each of the four delivery systems described in the ASCA (2005) national model
for comprehensive guidance and counseling programs (i.e., guidance curriculum, individual student planning, responsive services, and system support). As the school counseling supervision literature expands, perhaps ASCA would include a discussion of school counselor supervision in its role statement for school counselors and in its national model of comprehensive guidance and counseling programs.

Conclusions

In attempt to answer the research questions presented in this study, the supervision experiences and needs of 15 new-entrant professional school counselors were explored using phenomenological inquiry. The results of this study, which described the lived supervision experiences and the perceived needs for these 15 participants, reported that when participants received supervision, it was provided by LPCs, building principals, licensed or endorsed professional school counselors, social workers or teachers in the form of administrative supervision. Supervision experiences were described as dependent on communication activities and were often confused with mentoring and evaluation. Both advantages and disadvantages of receiving supervision were described along with descriptions of the quality and structure of these experiences.

In terms of the supervision needs of new-entrant school counselors, the results of this study suggested that new-entrant school counselors needed support in their new roles. They also indicated that new-entrant professional school counselors described needs that have been met (e.g., empathy and consultation) along with needs that have gone unmet (e.g., access to supervisors and support) in their new positions. The focus of these supervision experiences were largely fixed on the behaviors of the new professional
school counselors rather than on the welfare of those who were impacted by their services.

The description of supervision experiences and needs of the 15 new-entrant professional school counselors in this study adds to the existing literature by identifying that the practice of supervision for new-entrant school counselors is lacking. It is hoped that this critical issue gains attention in the school counseling profession because without appropriate attention, the profession of school counseling is left to consider how it regulates new-entrant professional school counselors to meet the ethical mandate of placing the welfare of the general public above its own interests. In addition to protecting the welfare of those served by professional school counselors, attention to the practice of supervision for new-entrant professional school counselors could provide support for the socialization of new professionals into the school counseling setting once their training is complete. Such attention could lend support to balance the ethical imperative to ensure clients' welfare with the needs of supervisees to learn to function effectively as professional school counselors. Effective supervision practice is intended to ensure that the welfare of students with increasingly complex needs is protected as it encourages and supports the continued growth of new-entrant professional school counselors as they develop into seasoned professionals who are well equipped to supervise future new-entrant professionals.
REFERENCES


Appendix A

Human Subjects Institutional Review Board
Letter of Approval
This letter will serve as confirmation that your research project entitled “Supervision Experiences and Needs of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors: A Qualitative Study” has been approved under the expedited category of review by the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the application.

Please note that you may only conduct this research exactly in the form it was approved. You must seek specific board approval for any changes in this project. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date noted below. In addition if there are any unanticipated adverse reactions or unanticipated events associated with the conduct of this research, you should immediately suspend the project and contact the Chair of the HSIRB for consultation.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

Approval Termination: May 29, 2008
Appendix B

Initial Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide
Initial Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide

1. Describe your current roles and responsibilities as a professional school counselor.

2. Since the nature of this study focuses on the supervision experiences of new-entrant professional school counselors, describe for me your supervision experiences up to this point in your development and training as a professional school counselor.

3. Describe your supervision needs as a school counselor.
Appendix C

Revised Semi-Structured Interview Question Guide
1. Describe your current roles and responsibilities as a professional school counselor.

2. What is your understanding of what supervision should provide for new professional school counselors?

3. How would you describe the supervision that you received in your master’s program?

4. How would you describe the supervision that you are currently receiving (if any)?

5. How do your current supervision experiences (if any) compare to the supervision that you received in your master’s program?

6. Describe your supervision needs as a new school counselor.

7. Which of these supervision needs would you say have been met?

8. Which of these supervision needs would you say have gone unmet?

9. What would you say are the advantages of receiving supervision as a new professional?

10. What would you say are the disadvantages of receiving supervision as a new professional?

11. Is there anything else that you would like to add?
Appendix D

Scripts for Participant Recruitment
Scripts for Participant Recruitment

*Script for Initial Contact with Potential Participants*

Contact information for the schools at which each school counselor is employed is published in local telephone directories. Using the published listings, the student investigator sought to contact the school counselor at the school using the following script:

"Hello, may I please speak with __________________________ (name of potential participant)?"

"Hello, __________________________ (name of potential participant), my name is __________________________, I am looking for professional school counselors who have been working in the profession for three years or less to participate in a study that I am conducting as a research project through Western Michigan University."

"The purpose of this study is for my doctoral dissertation. For this study we are using a design that relies on the reported supervision experiences of up to 15 new-entrant school counselors to describe what supervision experiences look like for these professionals."

"I would like to request a meeting with you for about twenty minutes in your office to review the purpose and the consent form of this study to help you consider whether or not you would be interested in being one of the participants in this study. Your commitment would involve 2-3 meetings that would not last longer than one hour in which you help me understand your supervision experiences and needs as a new-entrant professional school counselor."

"The consent form explains all of the details for this study that I think will help you make an informed decision about whether or not you would like to participate, including the costs and benefits to you as a participant."

"Would you be interested in reviewing this consent form with me to help you consider whether or not you would like to participate in this study?"

If no, say, "Thank you very much for your time, Good bye."

If yes, say, "Thank you, what would be a convenient time and place to meet? I look forward to meeting with you on __________________________. Thanks for your time. Good bye."
Script for Informed Consent

"Thank you for agreeing to meet with me to consider whether or not you would like to participate in this study."

"I would like to remind you that the purpose of this study is to serve as my doctoral dissertation. For this study we will use a design that will rely on the reported supervision experiences of up to 15 new-entrant school counselors to describe what supervision experiences look like for these professionals."

"To help you consider whether or not you would like to participate in this study, would you be willing to look at the consent form for this study with me?"

If no, say, "That is all that I needed to ask about. Thanks for your time. Have a good day."

If yes, say, "Here is the consent form, please read along silently as I read it aloud..." (Read the consent form aloud to the potential participant).

When finished reading the form ask, "Do you have any questions about participation in this study?"

Answer any questions the potential participant may have and say, "Thank you for your time considering whether or not you would like to participate in this study. If you are interested in participating in this study, you may sign the informed consent and return it to me now or you may wait to sign it and return it to me using this stamped envelope that is addressed to my home (hand the potential participant a self-addressed, stamped envelope). You may keep this second copy of the consent form that I was reading for your reference (hand a second copy to the potential participant). If you are not interested in participating in this study, there is nothing more you need to do with the consent forms and you may recycle or throw out these forms along with the envelope. Are there any questions that you have?" Answer any questions the potential participant may have.

Ask, "Would you like to return the consent form to me now?"

If yes take the form and say, "Thank you for your willingness to participate. When would be a convenient time and place to meet for an interview that would last no longer than one hour?" After agreeing on a time and a place, say, "I look forward to interviewing you on _____________ (the agreed on date). Have a good day."

If no, say, "Thanks again for your time. Have a good day."
Script for Scheduling Initial Interview for Consent Forms Returned by Mail

"Hello, may I please speak with __________________________ (name of potential participant)?"

"Hello, __________________________ (name of potential participant), this is __________________________. I am calling because I received your consent form for participation in our study for new-entrant school counselors. Are you still interested in participating in this study?"

If yes, say, "Thank you for your willingness to participate. When would be a convenient time and place to meet for an interview that would last no longer than one hour?" After agreeing on a time and a place, say, "I look forward to interviewing you on __________________________ (the agreed on date). Have a good day."

If no, say, "Thanks for your consideration about participating in this study. Have a good day."
Appendix E

Consent Form
Western Michigan University
Department of Counselor Education/Counseling Psychology
Principal Investigator: Suzanne Hedstrom
Student Investigator: Shawn Bultsma
Supervision Experiences and Needs of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors: A Qualitative Study

I am invited to participate in a dissertation research project entitled “Supervision Experiences and Needs of New-Entrant Professional School Counselors: A Qualitative Study.” The purpose of this research is to gather data which may lead to a further understanding of the supervision experiences and needs of professional school counselors who are in their first three years of employment as school counselors.

This study will take place between May 1, 2007 and April 30, 2008 during which I will be asked to participate in at least one (but not more than two) in-depth interviews that will not last longer than one hour and one meeting that will not last longer than one-half hour. During the in-depth interviews I will be asked to describe my roles and responsibilities, supervision experiences, and supervision needs as a new-entrant professional school counselor.

I will be reminded by the investigator at each interview not to identify supervisors or any other people during these interviews. These interviews will be audio-recorded, and these audio-recordings will be destroyed at the conclusion of the study. At the one-half hour meeting I will be asked to review a summary of information gathered from my interview to ensure that the information accurately reflects my report.

Risks in this study might include (1) experiencing uncomfortable feelings of dissatisfaction by discussing experiences that might prove to be inadequate in supporting me as a new professional in the field of professional school counseling, (2) being inconvenienced in making time for at least one but not more than two one hour interviews and one half-hour meeting, and/or (3) experiencing uncomfortable feelings with the presence of a third party during the supervision session in which my work might feel evaluated or judged by the investigator.

The expected benefits associated with participation in this research include an opportunity for me to reflect on and discuss my work as new professional school counselor. I might also benefit from feeling good about contributing to an area in the profession of school counseling that has not received a lot of attention.

All of the information collected from me is confidential. This means that neither my name nor any other identifying information will appear on any papers on which this information from the interviews or observations is recorded. All forms will be coded, and the investigators will keep a separate master list with the names of participants and the corresponding code numbers. Once the data are collected and analyzed, the master list will be destroyed. All other forms will be retained in a locked cabinet in the principal
investigator's work office for the duration of this study and for a three year period following the study's completion. All forms and data will be destroyed following this three year period.

I may refuse to answer a question or to participate, and I may quit at any time during the study without prejudice or penalty or risk of any loss of service that I would otherwise have. If I have questions or concerns about this study, I may contact Suzanne Hedstrom at (616) 742-5069 or Shawn Bultsma at (616) 458-6993. I may also contact the chair of WMU Human Subjects Institutional Review Board (HSIRB) at 269-387-8293 or the vice president for research at 269-387-8298 with any concerns that I have.

This consent document has been approved for use for one year by the HSIRB as indicated by the stamped date and signature of the board chair in the upper right corner. Do not participate in this study if the stamped date is older than one year.

My signature below indicates that I have read and/or had explained to me the purpose and requirements of the study and that I agree to participate.

__________________________________________  
Signature                                      Date

Consent Obtained by:  
__________________________________________  
Researcher's initials  Date
Appendix F

Demographic Information Form for Participants
Demographic Information Form for Participants

code no.

1. Gender ______

2. Age ______

3. Race/ethnicity __________________________

4. Number of years in the schools ______ as a professional school counselor

5. School level in which you work:
   (e.g., elementary, middle, or senior/high school)

6. Number hours per week working as a school counseling intern ______

7. Please list your academic background:

   Degree ______  Major ______  Year Received ______

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

   ______________________________________________________

8. Licenses/certification that you have
   (check those that apply):
   ______ certified teacher
   ______ endorsed school counselor
   ______ school counselor license (for non-teachers)
   ______ Limited Licensed Professional Counselor
   ______ Licensed Professional Counselor
   ______ other ________________________________
   (please specify)

9. Prior experience as a counselor (check those that apply)
   ______ none
   ______ volunteer counseling in the schools
   ______ volunteer counseling in a non-school setting
   ______ employment as a school counselor
   ______ employment as a counselor in a non-school setting
   ______ Other ________________________________
   (please specify)

10. Prior experience in receiving counseling supervision (check those that apply)
   ______ none
   ______ supervised in my practicum
   ______ supervised in my volunteer experience as a counselor
   ______ supervised in my previous employment as a counselor
   ______ supervised in my current employment as a counselor
   ______ other ________________________________
   (please specify)
Appendix G

Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement Form
Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement Form

As a transcriber, it is my responsibility not to violate any confidence of the participants of this study through indiscriminate discussion pertaining to the information shared by the participants. I understand and agree that all information shared by participants on the audio recordings is strictly confidential and I will not make any disclosures of these recordings.

___________________________  _______________________
Signature                      Date
Appendix H

Interview Summaries
Jillian’s Supervision Experiences

Jillian loves her job as a professional school counselor. She described that in her work “there is such a variety of different things to do. I mean you’re never bored, everyday is completely different!” She has worked two years as a professional school counselor, each year in a different school setting. Her first year was at a middle school setting and her second year was at a high school freshmen campus where she continues employment. In addition to working as a new school counselor, she has a limited license as a professional counselor (LLPC) and is pursuing licensure as a professional counselor (LPC). As a result, Jillian is required by state law to receive 100 hours of supervision during her first 3000 hours of practice. Jillian described the current supervision she receives with the following comment:

The woman who was actually my mentor here for this district, she also is a professional counselor. So, because she was already kind of naturally doing supervision with me because I work with her everyday, I now, I talk with her... she was named as my mentor by the school as well as she has given me supervision to work on my LPC, which is nice for me because it’s just convenient.

At the freshmen campus 2 school counselors serve about 650 students and Jillian described that her “primary role is to help students acclimate to the school setting to transition from middle school to the high school and to make sure that they get the support that they need.” As she provides services to the students, Jillian commented that supervision often takes on different forms. She stated that at times

I’ll just kind of check in with her...because that’s kind of a new one on me; but just different things with the curriculum and stuff like that too...sometimes, there’s things that come up immediately that, you know, I kind of just need her to
consult with me about, you know, like “what do I do” kind of thing. And we’ll kind of just quickly brainstorm, and then we might take those issues up again when we have more time to really kind of look at, you know, what would be the best way to deal with that situation and what are the options with that.

Jillian described these events as part of her supervisor’s assigned mentorship-type role, where she’s just available pretty much most of the time when I need her as her. She elaborated on these thoughts by stating that

if there is kind of a bigger issue that comes up for a student during the day or some dilemma with a student in the classroom or a student has something going on at home that’s interfering with them here at school and I need some support right then on just to how to...I’ll just consult with her about how to deal with a certain situation. She’s really great about that; and she stops what she’s doing and takes a moment to kind of help me hash out what would be the best thing to do. And, so, that’s been great.

She differentiated these instances from those in which she described as more formal instances of supervision.

We kind of set aside like an hour a week, which ends up being more of...clinical supervision, or we talk more about cases and things like that. But anything that’s related more clinically...to things that come up with kids, probably more personal/social kinds of things, I think we take more time to sit down during that hour and kind of go over them.

Jillian commented that during the weekly hour of supervision in addition to discussing “personal/social kinds of things...we also end up talking a lot about politics of the school, too, and just, you know, different things that come up between staff members and the principal and assistant principal and just dynamics like that.” Jillian shared that although this “set aside” hour of supervision was not like a therapy session for me...it’s gonna bring up a lot of personal issues for yourself from time to time...you can’t do a good job unless you look at yourself too. And you know, just the counter transference and the transference stuff that comes up or just, you know, looking at your own strengths and weaknesses and trying to strive to do a better job for your clients kind of thing.
Overall, Jillian expressed satisfaction with the supervision that she was receiving. However, the following excerpt from our interview reveals a degree of concern that Jillian has had with her current supervision experiences:

You know, I guess, one thing that’s kind of interesting is that the position I’m in now, the one that I’m working with, who is my mentor, was also the person I worked under as a student, too. And, I was, you know, a little concerned about that and have been a little concerned about that because I worked with her in the student role; and now I’m working with her more as a co-worker. And, for the most part, it’s worked out really well; but I do know that there are times, and this is just something that’s come up, I thought about first, there are times where I really have to assert myself so that I don’t end up just being the assistant all the time and kind of still in that student role. Because I’m not a student anymore. But I think, as long as I do that very appropriately and professionally but yet keep in mind, it’s worked out pretty well; and so that’s an issue that has come up that has been a little bit touchy from time to time.

The dual roles of mentor and supervisor have created some conflict for Jillian as she described it in her own words,

there are things that come up that are frustrating, it’s like because she’s my supervisor and she’s really not my, I mean she’s not the one that evaluates me, but she is my supervisor for the LLPC and she’s my mentor and so I consider her my supervisor. It’s hard to know how to confront some of those things sometimes...there’s things that come up and you have to figure out how to be open enough to talk with each other about that but it’s hard and that’s just a process and it takes time. So, I would say that that is something that we need to continue to work on that maybe I don’t know if it will ever be met because it’s a working relationship... I guess, you know, one thing that I kind of just talked about already, is the dual relationship, a little bit. You got a supervisor who is also your co-worker; and how you balance all that out, you know. They’re kind of your mentor and kind of above you in that way, but yet you’re trying to have this equal relationship working together. And, sometimes, that’s kind of awkward; and just trying to figure it all out is sometimes hard. That might be one disadvantage.

In spite of these concerns, Jillian noted that
I guess I wasn’t completely aware of it at the beginning of the year, you know, she kept a lot of things more in confidence from me. And I feel like, as our relationship has developed over the year, that she’s really trusted me with some things that, um, you know, and she even said one time “You know, well I kind of share a little bit more with you than I have with others that I’ve worked with in the past.” And so, you know, I appreciated that because, you know, they were more personal things about her and her working style and how she does her job. So I think, as our relationships developed, that her trust level will increase with me as well, so that’s good, you know, that feels really good.
Lena’s Supervision Experiences

Lena follows the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program in her work as a full time middle school counselor. When describing her responsibilities as a professional school counselor she commented that she needed to list those responsibilities for her supervisor the following day. In addition to working as a new school counselor, she has a limited license as a professional counselor (LLPC) and is pursuing licensure as a professional counselor (LPC). As a result, Lena is required by state law to receive 100 hours of supervision during her first 3000 hours of practice.

Lena described the supervision that she received during her internship as follows:

I had two; and one of the counselors supervised me more individual kind of group kind of counseling, and it was more counseling, more like if you’d go outside to a private practice, which she was really good at that. And then the other counselor was really good at, you know, the more classroom lessons, the organization, and really more of what I think a school counselor does today, is doing now, not doing you know the counseling, per se. So, I had two different experiences there; and they were both great, you know, in their areas of expertise. So, that was a really good experience.

She described the structure of her internship supervision by stating that

...at the elementary school, it was more everyday kind of a thing. You know, we talked at the end of the day, sometimes at the beginning of the day. The middle school was more of a structured thing because I was only there for 100 hours...Well, I did more than 100 hours there; but it was more I think maybe once a week we’d get together; and I’d talk to one or the other or both of them about what was going on because like I said they had their areas of expertise. And then the high school, it was in the morning, we had a counselors’ meeting once a week. So, we’d talk about stuff there. And then I met with, there were three of them; but the one that was supervising me, we talked in the morning or the afternoons, you know, before the end of school. So, it wasn’t a real structured activity; but I mean we talked about the kids that were on my case load and whatever I was doing and all that.
In terms of her current supervision experiences, Lena commented that

I feel like I’m getting a really good experience with my current supervisor because he works with the school. He actually is a consultant for a number of schools in ________ as well as outside of ________, and he goes in and he talks in special education meetings. I think he is like a parent advocate as well as kind of “working with the school” kind of a person, to help, you know, the kids that have 504s or IEPs. He has a lot of knowledge about what happens in the school.

Lena expressed that she was having difficulty understanding what could count as hours toward her license as a professional counselor. She explained this difficulty as follows:

…it’s only been a couple of times a month because we had, at the beginning, come up with an estimated number of hours that I was directly providing counseling to students. So, we came up with like an average number, “how many hours do you think last year, you know, you provided”; and I said like, “oh, 25-30 hours”, and he said “okay”. Well, then I talked to ____ this year because she and I were kind of in the same situation...she told me, she said she got her’s in a couple years; and I said, “How did you do that? I mean, how did you calculate your hours and how did you...?” And she said, “Well, I just counted every hour that I...” Well I said, “How did you...how come you...” Because he didn’t want me to count everything that I was doing because it had to directly impact a student. Well now, I’m hearing from _____ that that’s not the way it is supposed to be. I don’t know what your experience with it is at all; but I guess I should be able to count everything that I’m doing, which kind of makes sense to me. I mean, when he said that, you know, I’m perfectly fine with it; but everything I do indirectly or directly impacting students? I don’t do anything that doesn’t impact the students.

Lena reported the following when asked what she hoped that supervision would provide for her:

I need that person to be knowledgeable about what happens in the school because, like, I’m on my own here; and I don’t really talk to the elementary school counselor that much, and I don’t talk to the high school, because we’re all busy doing our own stuff. And so, it’s helpful to be able to talk to a person about what happens in the school, and they go “Oh yeah, I’ve been there, you know, I know about that.” As well as, one of my goals with Barry is to become more knowledgeable about special needs for kids that need special things in the way of accommodations or whatever, because I feel that’s the part that’s lacking in our training, before we even become certified or endorsed or whatever it is, we had one class in special education; and more and more school counselors are being
asked to step outside and service more and more special needs children, and I haven’t really, out of all my 2-½ years of experience under my belt; but, I mean, if somebody asked me to do a formal behavior plan, I could figure it out; but I don’t have any training in that. You know, there’s a line where the Social Worker kind of comes in too; and they’re trained, the Social Workers are trained in doing behavior plans or formal behavior plans. So, I’ve kind of worked with the Social Worker too, trying to work that out; and I know that school counselors aren’t supposed to be special needs... I mean, and I’m sure there are other school counselors that are called on for that also because you have kids that have ADHD and more limited kind of special needs than, you know, someone who is a quadriplegic or something like that a more physical kind of thing.

In terms of what she needs from her current supervision Lena commented:

I mean, I think I said one already about him having a background in education, that was really important to me; and I didn’t realize it until he and I had met for a couple of times, and I was like, “Wow, that is really helpful that he has some knowledge of how schools run.” As far as my other needs, he has what I don’t have. I am more of, for instance, I’ll give you an example. I get a feel about things. My perspective comes from more of a person centered, kind of play therapy, more of eclectic kind of thing; and I don’t keep a lot of data in my head, I have resources for that. I’m not good at keeping things in my head, numbers and things like that. He’s very helpful, in that, if I say, “Well, I have a question about this.” Boom, boom, boom, he rattles off all of these resources from his brain; and, you know, I just write them down. So, I say, “Well, I’ve got this kid that has this.” And he says, “Well, you know, here’s a good resource for ADHD; and here’s a good resources for kids with Autism.” Or I had a kid that sounded like he had, there was no diagnosis; but he said “Here’s you know the Explosive Child.” Have you read that book? “Um, this sounds like it might be helpful for you to read for this kid.” So, he had a lot of things in his head. I don’t keep all that in my head, so that was somewhat helpful... I don’t want him to be directive or be the overseer or whatever you want to call it, You know what I’m saying. I’m glad that we can work together; and I can provide, you know, I can work as a sounding board for him if he works for me, you know, we share some things from his experience that would be helpful for me, then I’ll share mine... one of the things he’s provided with me, I don’t think I mentioned this, is he has a great legal background and legal school counseling, what are the laws and things; and, like I said, I know what they are in a general kind of way and I know where the boundaries are so I don’t step outside those boundaries. However, he knows like the details. So, I had a few experiences this year where I said “Listen, I had this experience; and I want to make sure I’m covering all my bases.” And I even called him a couple times on the phone because I didn’t know for sure. “Okay, should I call ____?”
When asked about the role of evaluation in supervision Lena reflected that

...maybe Barry should be in on that whole evaluation process, you know what I mean? He is the outside supervisor. However, I have to say, that, because of what my principal wants me to be doing as a school counselor and what the boundaries of school counseling are, if you want to call it that, I’m not sure my principal would have been directive in that. He may have said, “I really don’t want you...”, I mean, he could under the law say “I don’t want you to go out and get supervision for an LPC.” Because he doesn’t want me to be doing counseling in the building, because that’s outside of what he wants me to be doing and really what I can do in a school system. I mean, you have classes that run 45-50 minutes. I can’t have kids out for an hour. Then, they miss a whole class period. You know, sometimes, I’ve got to do, you know, what an LPC might do in 5 minutes in the hall. You know what I mean? We just have to work within the confines of our situation.

Lena expressed some uncertainty when asked whether she would have sought out supervision if it were not required. She said, “Well you know, that’s a really scary question because I had no clue until I went to, last year, or maybe a year and a half ago...if you have taken your test and you don’t have a supervisor, you are...you’re in trouble, basically.” As she reflected on the worth of her supervision she stated that it’s definitely worth it, because it gives me...the reason I’m doing it is to give me that window. If I decide this is not where I need to be, I need to be out in a private practice or I need to be, you know, volunteering for Catholic Family Services or you know, whatever it is, that will give me the opportunity to do that without crossing any ethical lines there.
Danielle’s Supervision Experiences

Danielle has worked two years as a professional school counselor at the high school level in a school with about 560 students, making ratio of school counselor to students is 1: 280 since there are 2 full-time counselors in the building. Danielle described that most of her time in her work involves “scheduling type activities or preparing for/administering standardized tests.” She also listed managing 504 plans, Student Support Teams (SST), meetings with parents and students, crisis interventions, “responsive service-type stuff with kids that are in need”, and “group work with groups of friends, trying to resolve issues and conflict resolution.” She summed up this list by stating: “So, we’re all over the place.”

In addition to working as a new school counselor, she has a limited license as a professional counselor (LLPC) and is pursuing licensure as a professional counselor (LPC). As a result, Danielle is required by state law to receive 100 hours of supervision during her first 3000 hours of practice. Danielle described the current supervision she receives with the following comment:

We receive a lot of informal supervision from our assistant principal, who was a counselor at one point. So, we’re constantly asking her questions and kind of, you know, using her as a sounding board; but, as far as anything formal, Karla and I have tried to find somewhere to get supervision and have been having a really hard time finding anyone that will, I mean, we don’t even know where to start. We’ve e-mailed old professors, we’ve, you know, gone through school counseling agencies and asked them where we should look for supervision; and we have no idea what to do. So, as far as anything formal, we haven’t been able to connect with that yet at all.

As she provides services to the students, Danielle commented that her current supervision that is provided on a daily basis
is far more useful than anything I've ever received in the Master's program. Kind of my thought on [____]'s School Counseling Program is that it's all nice and good in theory, but it doesn't give you a realistic picture of what it's like to be a counselor, especially at the high school level because never once did I learn about standardized testing or putting together a master schedule or anything that, you know, I do on a daily basis.

Danielle elaborated on her comparison of her current supervision experiences by describing the supervision that she received in her training program as follows:

...it was a group setting of maybe 8 other students or so who all had different internships, whether it be in a community-based agency or in drug abuse. So I mean, we were all coming from different areas within counseling. Um, and we did some, there was some sort of a set curriculum where the instructor would talk about different theories and that kind of thing; and then the second part of the time was used just talking and kind of relating to each other about our experiences.

Describing the on-site internship supervision Danielle stated:

I worked for 3 different school counselors that did elementary, middle, and high school. So, I worked for 3 different school counselors; and, I mean, just the process of talking with them as we were going through...it wasn't like "this is an hour where we're gonna have supervision". It was ask questions as you go along kind of thing.

Danielle described her supervision needs by noting the following:

Just to have someone there that's been through it, who can answer, you know, the daily questions that come up. Now, after 2 years, I feel like I have a good grasp on my job; but, when I started, Jackie was the other counselor, and I was constantly popping my head in her office and asking just simple questions that I wouldn't know unless I'd been here and lived through it... like I said, just having someone who has been through it, who can answer the simple questions, or you know, if you have a kid that's going through something and you just want some advice on how to handle it or where should I go next or, you know, if I feel like I'm stressed out or too emotionally involved in a student's issues, I can kind of debrief with that person and say, you know, let me step back from this for a moment so I can do my job. Both Karla and Jackie, I would go crazy if there wasn't another person just to talk about, because it is such an emotional job at times, to have someone to talk about that with who knows what you're going through is key.
Danielle differentiated the often confused process of supervision from evaluation by sharing

I see supervision as a conversation, like a two-way, asking and responding kind of conversation, whereas evaluation is printed up on a sheet, and you know marked “satisfaction, exemplary, novice, whatever”. And that’s kind of a one-way “here’s how you’re doing” sort of thing.

From Danielle’s perspective all of her supervision needs were being met as evidenced by the following thoughts:

Personally, I think that all of my supervision needs are met through Jackie because she’s here, she knows the district, she knows the kids, she knows the job, she’s been there and done that. So, I think that she meets all my needs for supervision to develop my skills as a school counselor. However, for the LLPC, she is not technically trained in supervision. So, I have the need of finding someone outside who is trained in supervision who can provide me with that for my LPC.

Danielle was referring to the state law mandating those with an LLPC to receive supervision from an LPC. This law created a sense of frustration for her. She clarified this source of frustration as follows:

And that’s not because I feel personally that it’s necessary to have someone with supervision training, because I don’t think it is; but that’s simply to fulfill that requirement of getting an LPC, getting away from the LLPC and getting the hours to get an LPC. So, you know, for me, the supervision by someone who’s trained in supervision is just a hoop to jump through, it’s not because I feel like I need that extra.

Aside from the frustration of the state law mandating her to pursue supervision from a LPC who has had training in supervision, Danielle expressed satisfaction with the supervision she is receiving. She concluded her interview by sharing that

I know most schools don’t have the luxury of having an administrator who has been a counselor; but I think that that’s been really helpful to have someone else who knows what you’re going through. Um, something else that has been helpful is that Karla and I came in around the same time, you know, we’re both fresh out of the counseling field, so we have new ideas; and you kind of have that young teacher mentality, where we want to change the world, which is, I guess, positive
and negative at the same time. But to have someone who is there to support those new ideas and knows what it's like has been really beneficial. And there's no way to instill that in every school because it's just luck of the draw that we had that with Jackie.
Olivia’s Supervision Experiences

Olivia is in her second year as a professional school counselor in a school with two full-time counselors that serves about 560 students. She described that in her work she is involved in scheduling and involved in crisis response, um personal social counseling, meeting with parents regarding academic concerns. We follow up with students who are on academic probation. We monitor those students closely, and we serve as a liaison between the administration and the staff.

She expressed that she wishes she could do more personal social counseling in her work. She added, “That’s a piece that I really miss. In grad school, we didn’t take classes on scheduling; and I didn’t think that, that was going to be 95% of my job, which it is sometimes.” In response to a question asking if she saw scheduling as the role of the counselor she responded by stating the following:

No, I don’t. Not at all. But, at the high school level, from what I’ve heard, talking to other counselors at the high school level, it seems to be the status quo; but, honestly, I think that it’s an administrative responsibility. However, folks don’t seem to see it that way.

When asked if she addressed this with her administrator, she commented, “I keep that to myself… if I say, ‘That’s not my job’, that doesn’t sound very professional.”

In addition to working as a new school counselor, Olivia has a limited license as a professional counselor (LLPC) and is pursuing licensure as a professional counselor (LPC). As a result, she is required by state law to receive 100 hours of supervision during her first 3000 hours of practice. Olivia described her current situation in terms of supervision by sharing, “I’m not receiving supervision currently. Megan and I, the other counselor, bounce ideas off each other. ‘What did you do in this situation?’ And
sometimes I’ll go to our principal to discuss issues.” She added, “If I was really struggling with an issue, I wouldn’t hesitate to contact Rhonda, who supervised both Megan and I in the past.”

Olivia described supervision in her past that she received during her training in three areas of supervision (1) during her practicum, (2) during her internship from her on-sites supervisors, and (3) during her internship from her university supervisor. She mentioned that the supervision that she received during her practicum was from a doctoral student. She provided the following details:

I thought it was good. We had a doctoral student that supervised us, group supervision; and it was helpful. We would watch the tapes together of our counseling sessions, and we would get feedback not only from our doctoral supervisor but from other classmates. So, it was good to get different perspectives as to how other counselors would have handled the same situation.

In contrast, Olivia described her internship supervision from her university instructor as follows:

for my supervision for my internship, there wasn’t really a lot involved in that, basically nothing. We would meet once a week; and, once in a while, we would discuss issues currently relating to counseling. But, it was hit or miss. Sometimes, we really would just go and not really talk about anything. And everyone was coming from different backgrounds. There were a couple of school counselors in my supervision group, and then there were community agency counselors. There were people coming from different areas.

She explained that she wished this experience would have been more similar to her practicum experience “where we would have had more of a chance to talk about the cases that we were currently working on and then bounce ideas off our classmates and instructor.” She further described that it was helpful having a group of students with different backgrounds because
in the school setting, I feel like I don’t get to do what I went to school for; and so it was nice to hear other people’s perspectives and the cases that they had because, in the school setting, sometimes I didn’t even have cases at the time when we met.

In terms of supervision experiences during her internship from her on-site supervisors Olivia reflected the following comments that pointed to more ongoing, informal supervision at the elementary and middle school levels and minimal supervision at the high school level:

As far as my supervision when I did my internship at the elementary school, Rhonda was absolutely wonderful... Rhonda would watch us, do guidance lessons and things like that, and evaluate us that way. But it was nothing as far as her meeting with me once a week and doing an evaluation that way, it was more ongoing...and then, I worked for a week at the middle school in also. And Ken, I don’t know if you’re familiar, he was great. And then I worked at _____ High School. And then, at the high school, I wasn’t doing a lot of counseling. So, I didn’t have a lot of supervision.

In reflecting on her supervision needs Olivia stated, “I would hope that supervision would allow me to bounce ideas off of someone more experienced than I. As far as, sometimes I wonder, ‘Did I handle a situation appropriately, did I say the right things, is there something more I could have done?’” When describing her current supervision situation Olivia stated, “Well the biggest need is I just want to know, am I handling the situation in the right way, could I be handling things differently, could I change the way I phrase statements? or I just want feedback... I feel like I’m not going to grow as a counselor until I receive supervision.” She elaborated on these thoughts by adding “I feel like, without that feedback, my skills are never going to improve... I mean, students provide feedback; and, so, obviously, I use that. But, it’s not the same.” This was clearly a source of stress for her as evidenced in the following comment:

Well, part of what stresses me out is that I know that I’m required to obtain supervision; and I haven’t done that yet. And part of why I haven’t done that is
due to cost and finding a supervisor. Um, so, my basic needs are surrounding the fact that I know I need to do this and I feel like I don’t have the resources yet to accomplish this.

When asked if she was at a point in her career where she felt she was not growing, she responded by sharing,

Not as much as I would like to as a counselor. Yeah. In other areas of my job, I’ve improved. I’m starting to understand the master schedule, it’s starting to make more sense to me. I hate it, I’ll be honest; but, as far as the administrative-type things that I do, it’s becoming easier for me...I want to be a better counselor.

When asked how she was evaluated as a school counselor, Olivia commented,

Our assistant principal does our evaluations; and our evaluations mostly focus, I think, on administrative-type duties. Our evaluation focused on, for example, our classroom guidance lessons, on the career pathways, and things like that, and how well the administration feels like we handle parent contacts and keeping parents informed. But, as far as them evaluating how well we handle ourselves with students in the counseling-type settings, they don’t see that necessarily because we’re always behind closed doors.

Olivia mentioned the cost of supervision as something that “scares” her. She expressed that she was not sure how she would be able to pay for supervision. She concluded our time together with the following thoughts:

I feel like, in the school setting, I feel like we’re kind of stuck, because, not only do we not have the time to do the counseling that I wish we had, we need more time for that; and then, in addition to that, I feel like there’s no support as far as the school saying, “Yes, we’ll help you get this supervision.” They help us with professional development, and they’ll pay for seminars and things like that. I haven’t approached our school board about this yet, but I’m thinking that they’re going to say there’s no funding to help pay for supervision; but, if we were in a community agency setting, then that would be included. So, that’s frustrating. So, I feel like, with the LLPC, the state saying “yes, you need to do this”; but then, with the school license, they’re saying “we don’t care if you do this or not” because I already have my school license.
Natasha’s Supervision Experiences

Natasha spent one year working at a 7-12 building as the only school counselor with around 130 students. She expressed that although she was the only school counselor in the building she felt very supported. She described that her responsibilities as a school counselor were mostly consistent with a comprehensive school counseling program. She provided the following list of roles that she filled in her work:

I’ve worked with both personal/social areas, the academic area, and the career area. One of the extra duties, unfortunately, I’m also the testing coordinator for the school, and I think that that’s one of the things that, even though it does not fall under what we consider the counseling umbrella, most counselors I speak with, it does fall under their umbrella.

Natasha described the current supervision she receives with the following comment:

I am just the only counselor for this program, I didn’t have anyone who was a go-to person. I didn’t have a mentor. I basically would, if something came up that I didn’t know, I went back to my internship supervisor, contacted her via e-mail or phone call. Many times, I just consulted the principal and our superintendent because our superintendent actually is in-house daily and is also an intern... So, any kind of question that arose as a brand-new counselor in a situation where I didn’t have someone who... I was the only counselor... the new counselor and only counselor. Any kind of supervision questions that I needed answered, I went outside the building or to the principal... I also did several times talk with professors... Who were my professors when I was going through the program. If there were questions, I would contact one of my professors... There was one situation that was extremely huge question legally, and it could not be answered in-house; and, so, we didn’t move forward until we talked to someone. And it was interesting because, when I called my professor, who was the head of the department, she also had to call legal counsel from a university as far as what the next step was... But that’s where I went. I basically either went to my principal, to my superintendent, or previous supervisors not here in school.

When reflecting on her current supervision experiences, Natasha added:
But I think it just would have been so much more comforting, for lack of a better word, to actually have someone who, again, can say “yeah, you’re in the right direction...maybe you should try this...no I wouldn’t go that direction, that’s really probably not an area...”; and there were times where I had to become very, very honest with myself and very, very honest with others, not that I wouldn’t have been; but a supervisor truly could have given that direction... when you’re doing something; and a student walks in your office and they start talking to you about struggles and about general things, and then, all of a sudden, the bottom falls out; and they just reveal to you all kinds of things happening in their world; and, obviously, you start chatting with them about their circumstances and so forth. But, it would have been very nice to have a supervisor with whom I could have just chatted about that whole experience. You know, ethically, I did...I did run into a lot of issues with some of the staff because, when I would have something like that, often times, I would have a staff member say “I think something is bothering so-and-so.” You know, they’d come down; and, they’d chat with me, and then all of a sudden they would tell me what was going on. Then the staff member wants me to divulge all of that information; and I’m not comfortable divulging that information, which, if there were another counselor, you have that consultation aspect that can go on; and you can still keep that confidentiality. Without another counselor, there was never that...I shouldn’t say never. There were some staff members that truly struggled with my role and the fact that, as a person who ethically understands that I cannot divulge information. I took a little bit of heat for “well, she’s new, and she just doesn’t want to talk to us, I sent a kid down, now she’s not telling me what happened”. But, I can’t tell them what happened, it’s just not the ethical thing to do. And my own counseling integrity would be at question if I were sitting in a staff lounge chatting about everything that comes into my office; and a supervisor, just another counselor, kind of provides that opportunity. If there are questions, you can talk about those things and still understand that, that confidentiality is an understood; and, from that aspect, I would have preferred that kind of supervision too.

Although she was pleased with how she performed as a new professional school counselor, Natasha reflected on what supervision provides new professionals by commenting, “I would have loved someone here, a supervisor person, because I made all my mistakes; and so I kept a log of how I would do it differently next year.” She elaborated on this thought by stating:

I would think a supervisor, as a counselor, should provide all sorts of information that answers those questions about procedures, things that work well. Not everything works well for everyone; but it at least gives you an idea of where to start, not trying to reinvent the wheel every single time a situation occurs or every
single time that you’re trying to bring something new to the classroom. As far as
going into the classroom, trying to find the previous counselor’s information as far
as what was done previously so that I could piggyback on that. A supervisor
would be able to give me that information—those types of things with the guidance
as far as where the program is and how we can then implement what’s already
there as a new counselor or an older counselor. I didn’t have that information, and
I would want a supervisor. I think a supervisor should provide that kind of
information… Not as much catch-up and not going into so many things
wondering if this is what needs to be done, what’s been done, again, always going
in with my own new ideas and using what maybe I found in files and so forth but
not really knowing which kids had been affected by it previously and so forth.
And I did talk to, especially my field supervisor from my internship, a lot, early on
as the year got started, about “what do you do at this point in time?”, “how do I
accomplish this?”

Natasha described her supervision experiences that she received from her on-site
supervisor during her internship as “fabulous.” The following description of her
internship supervision provides a clear contrast to her current supervision experiences:

That experience, in and of itself, taught me so much about you get a student, you
don’t know anything about a student, where’s the first place you turn, the CA60.
And it was very frustrating at first because I wanted to get in and counsel, and I
wanted to work with all the different things. And it was kind of a humbling thing
at first, but it was extremely valuable; and, throughout the entire experience, I was
continually given more and more responsibility. And, by the end of my
internship, I was fairly comfortable that it would be an easy step into actually
being paid to provide school counseling.

About the structure of this supervision Natasha reported,

It was ongoing basically. We chatted all the time. It didn’t have to be “we will
meet on this day at this time”. Every once in a while, she would look at me and
say “You know, we probably should have a sit-down.” And, there were a few
times that we really did that; but, actually, daily we chatted about what was going
on, questions I had, and I always felt comfortable asking her things. Which is
why, when I started this counseling position, I could always call her and ask her. I
just ran into her last week…and we were chatting about different things; and I still
could ask her questions, and we could still chat about the progress and so forth.
At this point in time, I wasn’t asking anything new or huge revelation, but we just
chatted about “these are different processes that we’ve gone through” and so on
and so forth. She was an excellent supervisor; and, again, I started with that
whole CA60s thing, she understood the need for me to kind of get my feet wet,
and she progressively gave me more and more responsibilities, running
classrooms, running small groups, also gave me a lot of independence, too. So, it was just a wonderful experience... I think that, the field supervisors, I have talked with a lot of different counselors going through the program; and...I heard a lot of different input about “Well this person never even had time to help me with anything, I basically got put into an office and told just do the job” and so forth. So, I guess, with field supervisor, I think there needs to be some kind of sit-down with them before they actually start; and I know there’s a lot of time constraints, which is just so hard. But, in the end, I think that, if the field supervisor understands what the intern is going to be doing and is going to be recording and there is going to be reflections on each week, that there is going to be a better understanding for both. I think that’s really important.

Natasha described her supervision experience from the university by stating

I was in a unique situation where my professor, my boss at my paying position/my job that I was doing other than my internship, and my field supervisor, were all the same person my first semester. And I loved her dearly, but we both talked about the fact that we spent way too much time with each other; and, sometimes, that site supervisor or field supervisor, there was no clear line between the two, it was intermixed. The second semester, I was purposely assigned to someone else; and, truly, it was much more beneficial to me, much more. There weren’t any “I’m gonna see you tomorrow at work, we can chat about this.” So there were those kinds of things that did occur that first semester where there was the blurring. The second semester, the person who came and conducted the seminar had a wealth of information, was very perceptive to all the different situations we were going through in our seminar. And it was extremely positive. They were both positive, but the second semester was much better for me.

Although Natasha articulated the importance of supervision, she described the followed disadvantage of receiving supervision as a new professional:

I loved the fact that this is “my program”; and, being a somewhat experienced person in education as a whole and in life as a whole, sometimes I think that, when you have a supervisor, you’re trying to please the supervisor rather than stepping out and actually using and utilizing and implementing the ideas that you have that are your personality. You know, it’s my personality, it’s my strengths, I want to go in and do these kinds of things. I noticed that, in my internship, I definitely feel very comfortable going into classrooms; and that was a conflict, and I talked with so many counselors and spent a lot of networking this year. Especially in my position, I’ve talked with a lot of people trying to get their ideas about what’s been going on. And I think that a supervisor sometimes can say “you’re gonna do this, you’re gonna do this, and you know your roles” or “this is the way we’ve done it, we’ve always done it this way”. And one of the problems in the internship school was that your teachers were not real receptive to the
counselors coming in to the classroom; and there wasn’t a huge tie-in between the teacher’s curriculum and the counselor’s curriculum. And, obviously, when you walk into a program and it’s your program and there isn’t a supervisor, you can do your strengths; and, again, those are some of my strengths.
Margie's Supervision Experiences

Margie works in a 9th through 12th grade setting mostly with 9th and 10th grade students. Her role as a professional school counselor includes test administration, academic one-on-one counseling that includes meeting with students at least once a week if they are failing two or more classes, helping students with personal/social issues (more 9th graders than 10th graders), supporting foreign exchange students, college planning, serving as a liaison to teachers, leading the peer listening program, helping students transition from 8th to 9th grade, organizing information for students interested in attending the local career/technical center, and providing referrals to a local agency that provides students with services to students.

According to Margie supervision has the opportunity to provide a new professional school counselor with

a person who you feel that you can go to when you have questions, or I guess to even understand how everything is supposed to work, whether it’s paperwork or how you approach teachers as individuals because they’re so different, depending on the issue, and how to approach different issues with kids. And that was huge for me, like, how do you talk to a kid who has been cutting versus a kid who is, you know, thinking about suicide. I think we should be able to discuss those kinds of things with a supervisor and never feel like you’re being spoken down to. I think that’s huge, more like a colleague, even if you’re new, being treated as a peer. Giving a lot of resources, I think that’s huge too as a new counselor. You know, that’s the big thing, you can’t do everything. You really need to be able to get a hold of resources, and I think a supervisor should always be that person because they’ve been there for a long time and they know what they’re doing and they know what works, to make sure you have those resources open to you all the time.

She added that a supervisor should provide
A good leadership role, a professional, mentor kind of role. Someone who can also critique you but not put you down. You know, “Hey, you may want to think about doing this too...” or you know, “Hey, what else could you try?”...those kinds of things. Just somebody who works with you I think is huge as a supervisor but not, you know, being scared to tell you “look, these are some things that you have to do”. Like, my very first week, I had to contact Protective Services, and I didn’t think I was going to have to do that for a long time; but that was something that he made very clear to me. And I think that’s another thing, that they need to be very clear and concise about, you know, what things you have to do versus things that can be put off on the back burner, you know, organization, time. A lot of things that you don’t really understand as a new counselor. Like you would think you would because you’ve been in the building teaching for so long; but you don’t really know, until you become a counselor, how pivotal and different that role is. I think that they should be able to communicate those things to you very well.

When describing the supervision that she received while she was an internship receiving supervision from a university supervisor and an on-site supervisor, Margie shared

I like it like that, because one is from the outside, trying to be more objective because you really don’t work with those people. So, you get to see the outside view. And then, the other one on the inside, you know, knowing the people that you’re working with and the clients that you’re working with, I think that it gave a really good balance between the two so that I could work on a lot of different things. Having the outside supervisor, you bring different things to the table that maybe somebody who’s been on the inside for a long time (you know, you’ve been there for 10 years) that sometimes you just don’t see anymore. So, I thought that was, like I said, I thought that was a really good balance.

She described her supervision needs as follows:

I think, I mean, in terms of still giving me that constructive criticism. Like, I will always need that, you know, even after I’ve been there for 3 years. I think that, that reinforces the fact that you always need to be on your toes. I mean, it shouldn’t matter if you’re there 20-25 years, you should never, I guess, think that everything is all good. I think that’s something that I will always need, just to always realize that there’s always multiple ways to approach things; and I like the fact that we...like he and I and our school psychologist sit down, after a situation has already occurred and it doesn’t have to be like a big school shooting incident or whatever, it can be something that went on with one kid, we reevaluate the situation, and I like that because what we shouldn’t have done, what we did do, and what we could do, you know, since this kid is still here what we could do to
change some of the things. But I like that, like it’s always, you know, look at it from multiple perspectives; and that’s something that I feel like I need.

When elaborating on her comments about the limited training of her current supervisor, Margie said,

I think it would have been nice for my own supervisor to have some type of training; but I also think that administrators... and that’s what I was talking about before with my administrator. I mean, he’s evaluating me; but does he really know what he’s supposed to be evaluating me on? Because my evaluation is not the same as a teacher’s. I mean, I’m not teaching curriculum to these kids, you know, some type of lesson planning, it’s different. So, I think, you know, in terms of disadvantages, it would have been nice, yeah, if there had been some training there...

Margie continued by differentiating between supervision and evaluation by commenting,

evaluation seems like it’s something that’s more after-the-fact. Supervision is more ongoing, continuous. Evaluation almost makes it sound like ‘okay, this is the finish line’. And it’s not that there can’t be multiple finish lines; but it seems like that’s what it is, it’s more after the fact. You take all that supervision, all of those things that you’ve polled and observed, and then you evaluate that at the end. You take all those pieces together; and at the end, you tie them, or you decide what things work together and what things don’t and what you should do about them before you evaluate the next time. So, it’s kind of a continuous... The individual who’s place I took, she showed me her evaluation. From what it looked like, it didn’t look like the administrator had talked to the department head. Just the comments and things just didn’t look like they had spoken, which I think would have been important; because, again, we just do things differently.

In terms of the importance of supervision on her work with students, Margie added,

I think that it’s important, I mean, if you don’t have it, it’s almost like you’re shooting in the dark and you’re messing around with kids’ lives. I guess, when they say supervision, I can’t imagine not having supervision, I think I had just assumed that you had to be supervised because I would never not want to be...I would never, I guess, feel, as a professional in this career and this job, if I hadn’t gone through supervision. I mean, how do you know what you’re doing? It’s just right for the kids. Without having that feedback, it’s huge... because it’s so
important. Like I said, you can't do enough for the kids without, I guess, communicating to other professionals; and somebody who has been more of that... even when I was a teacher, he seemed to be more of that role. That's just the type of person that he is, and that's probably why I sought him out (when I was a teacher) as a supervisor kind of role rather than another teacher... Well and it's kind of neat too, because, at the same time, he validates, which I didn't talk about before, but he like will validate my ideas, not just to validate them; but, if he really thinks that it's something that's constructive or something that will work, he does go through that as well, which I think is part of that supervision process. You know, it makes you feel like you are part of this group of counselors who are trying to help all these kids... I finally feel more at ease, you know what I mean, I just feel like I slid back into the role; and you know, I ask him what I need to ask him and bounce ideas off of him. Or, we have another veteran counselor who does all of our balancing of the schedule. But you know what I mean, I just feel like I can do that without being almost like judged for my ideas. And they are very candid about "well, I don't know if that's gonna work, you know, because this, this, and this; but you know, think about it some more"... you know what I mean, they are candid with me but in a very appropriate way. So, I have found a very good group of people to work with.
Ben’s Supervision Experiences

Ben worked 50% of his time as an elementary school counselor with 180 students in grades K-12. The other 50% of his time was as a PE teacher. His work as a counselor consisted of working with students individually, running groups, creating behavior plans with teachers for some of the kids, and helping with disruptive students. The small groups that he ran included two friendship groups, groups for kids experiencing grief, a boy’s group that included ADHD students, and a girl’s group. Ben mentioned that he very much enjoyed working as a school counselor.

Ben shared that he thought supervision should include meeting with a counselor once throughout the week “to discuss cases, issues, problems I’m having, and questions I have.” He mentioned that new counselors do not know everything and need to learn procedures in the buildings. Ben indicated that supervisor could be helpful in facilitating this learning as long as the supervisor is in the same building as the new counselor. He added that a supervisor could help a new counselor understand how cases with kids are handled including legality issues—what can and cannot be done.

Ben elaborated on this thought by explaining that he hoped a supervisor would have more experience in issues that come up to guide a new counselor’s work with students. As an example, he mentioned a student who was slipping in school because of a very sick parent. He expressed that an experienced supervisor could help a new counselor determine how to approach this student who is withdrawing from school and not getting his work done. Another example that he described to indicate how a supervisor might help a new counselor included a scenario that involved working with a
student in a divorce situation. A supervisor would provide much needed experience to help manage students struggling with issues. He commented:

I was in a classroom for 7 years, so I was at a different side of it. You know, I had 25-29 kids... coming on the other side of it where I can focus on that child, how I would go about working with those kids? I haven’t had much experience with the counseling area.

Ben described the supervision that he received during his master’s degree from his field supervisors as follows:

It was less than what I was hoping for. I actually had to split my time up because I was still working full-time. So, I had to split my time up to get my elementary, middle school, and high school hours. So, I would focus on... I think I worked at a middle school, so I did middle school hours quite a bit during my planning time; and I didn’t quite... I mean I did sit down with the counselors that were there but not as much as I wanted to. And, unfortunately, they had their jobs; and I don’t know if they were used to having an intern and what to do with an intern, and so I didn’t feel like I had much supervision in those areas. Same with high school too, you know, I mean they were willing to accept me as an internship; but, for them to devote the time that I think was needed, there wasn’t as much there. So, that was a little hard for me. So then, going into the position, when I found out I was able to be the school counselor for this school year, I was excited; but I was also nervous too because I don’t think I got as much supervision as I really wanted.

Although he had initial difficulty recalling the experience, Ben also discussed the supervision that he received from his university supervisor who facilitated his internship seminar experience. When recalling this experience Ben said,

that was nice, bringing those people with their experiences and round table discussion, how you would handle certain situations and who else has had the experience and they can give their input from what they’ve done or from their supervisor what they’ve been told. So we did meet, I forgot about that part.

In this seminar Ben indicated that 60-70 percent of the interns were doing their internships in school setting, the others were in clinical settings. When asked what this offered the supervision experience, Ben commented as follows:
It was a little different, because, in the school counseling setting, you try to see them, you know, once a week and you know, the clinicals, the clinicals, you have a set meeting once a week or twice a week, you know a certain number of hours; and, with school counseling, you don’t get that as much because of teachers not letting the kids out because of curriculum or they’re gone on a field trip. And, so, the clinical counselors had a little bit different take on working with the people because they could see them, they wanted to be there. A lot of times, the kids didn’t want to necessarily see them. And they had, you know, some good information; but I got more out of it from the other school counselors who were in the same situation I was in...you know, with school counseling, you don’t get as much as you want with seeing the kids. And so, a lot of other counselors were feeling the same way. They wanted to see the kids more. So we were able to bounce ideas off with creative ways of pulling kids out, and they were able to offer that to me. And you know, the clinical counselors didn’t have those experiences, they just saw their clients whenever they had them scheduled.

Ben described the supervision that he received in his work as a new school counselor by commenting:

Again, it wasn’t as much as I would have hoped. But, with both of us working...I only work part-time. So, the weeks I was a counselor, I tried to squeeze in kids, groups, meeting with parents, or meeting with principals; and then to squeeze in a supervision time was tough. We started out at the beginning of the year meeting once with myself (I was the only school counselor in my building). We had one full-time social worker and then a part-time social worker. So, we tried to meet once a month. We actually pulled in another full-time social worker from our lower elementary building. So the four of us met...we met probably 2-3 times; but then it got really busy, and we weren’t able to...we had to cancel meetings. And so then, then in my weeks in PE, I was able to meet with them because that was the other half of my job. So, the way my position was set up was not conducive to getting supervision I would like to have gotten. And the social worker I worked with most closely, she wanted to meet more too; but it wasn’t like she was ignoring and trying to not meet at all, she wanted to. And, every time we’d meet...we’d pass each other in the hall...we did work together on a few different cases. A few different hard ones, which was good; it was great learning from her. She has been in the field for 30 years and so she’s got a lot of experience, I learned a lot from her even when we didn’t meet. But I wish we could have met more. As we’re moving or at lunchtime we’d try to meet once in awhile. You know, the few times we worked together on different cases, I learned a lot just from watching and listening and absorbing.
This description was followed by a discussion of supervision needs that Ben has in his work as a new school counselor. During this discussion Ben stated:

My needs would be, ideally, what I would want, once a week, meet once a week for an hour, preferably, you know, before school, before we get going with kids and parents and with that not; and my needs would be to bring to the table as much knowledge that you can bring me. Places I can go to find information or you know bring me an article about a certain posttraumatic stress syndrome, or bring me something I can read and we can discuss it, because I just want to absorb as much as I can... You know, I came to this position with just my practicum experience. I mean, I did some counseling as a school teacher working with the kids but a little different. I didn’t ask those questions that would bring out the information that would help those kids. My job as a school teacher was to nurture them and make sure they’re okay and tell them I’m here for them, similar to a school counselor. But, with school counseling, you brought those questions and those things that just bring out just a little bit more information to help those kids. So, you know, I didn’t have a lot going in, just what I learned in my courses and what I was able to bring as a school teacher definitely... I mean, that’s where I learn the best, is watching and listening and then doing it myself. That’s the way I learn, and it would have been great if we had time to be able to do that more.

Ben felt strongly that some of his needs to watch and learn have been met in his current position as a new school counselor. He provided the following example:

Our child-study meetings we have had, our social worker would sit in, in the first few of the year and I was able to listen and watch and learn what I’m supposed to do and how I’m supposed to ask those questions of the teachers when I meet with particular kids. You know, we started out meeting regularly; but then that kind of fell through. So, it started to be met, the continuous meeting; but we didn’t follow through on that, and then we got busy and it’s hard to reschedule those kinds of meetings when it’s kind of above and beyond your position that you’re already working in.

In terms of unmet supervision needs Ben shared:

Coming to the table with information about just various topics that I may not even encounter. You know, it seems like, when I had a chance to meet with the social worker to discuss issues, if I only met with a child once, you kind of forget exactly what you want to bring out. So it would be nice to have her bring, “here, let’s talk about this topic”; and these are things that I’ve gone through, and these are the different techniques that I’ve used with kids that have this certain issues they’re dealing with, divorce or death in the family, or even ADHD and “here’s what I’ve done, this is what has worked for me... try it, tweak it, make it your own, however
you want; but, you know, this is what I’ve tried”...so that was something we
didn’t do as much. If I had a question, I’d go to her; and she was able to answer
questions, but it was just, you know, she’d be in the middle of something, so I’d
try to make it quick...And she never made me feel that way, that’s just my own
perception. That’s just me. Because I know sometimes I feel that way if someone
has been coming to me, unfortunately...There’ve been times where a teacher
might come to me and say you know “this so and so has been very down and can
you see them?” So, I meet with them; but, then, trying to get out or ask those
right questions, questions to rule out certain issues they might be dealing with and
then maybe narrow my focus on how to help this child. And those kinds of
things, I didn’t learn.

When asked about the advantages of receiving supervision Ben said,

I came to the position not knowing a lot, just whatever I learned in my classroom
for the courses I took, and what I learned as a classroom teacher. And so, adding
the supervision, the advantages would be just gaining knowledge in the area in the
field, especially if you can work with someone who has been in it for 10 years or
longer, they’ve had those experiences, more than likely they’ve worked with kids
who have had various issues; and they can bring what they’ve learned, what
they’ve worked with, techniques they’ve used, and techniques that didn’t work.
So I think that’d be the main advantage, just bringing that vast knowledge of their
experiences.

Ben shared that even after he had been in the profession ten years or more that he
would seek out supervision. He commented,

I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision. I think just getting ideas,
maybe you haven’t been to a certain workshop that others have been to that came
up with a new technique or new idea that may work or not work, the new research
that has been done. I don’t think you would ever stop seeking supervision, I don’t
think I would. It’d just be nice to have someone in the same field, 1-2 other
people that would even just to decompress the position and you know debrief on,
you know, what has worked and hasn’t worked; and I don’t think supervision
would ever end...It puts me in a place of “Am I on the right track” or “Nope, this
is not working, try this instead.” We had some deaths in our school district, so I
was called up to the middle school; and I called up to the middle school with this
kid. It was a grief room, but we didn’t call it the grief room. And so, kids who
were peers of the student who died, we worked with those kids; and we did some
group things with those kids, get them talking about it, not hiding/keeping
everything internal, and kind of give everybody a chance, who might not normally
talk one-on-one, make them feel more comfortable. And then to meet afterwards
and discuss, ‘did it work’ and ‘what would we do different next time if this were
to happen (hopefully it doesn’t, but reality things will happen again) and what we
could try next time; so I don’t think supervision would ever end for me if I continue in the position.

When asked about disadvantages in supervision, Ben said,

Trying to make the time to get out of the daily routine. You know, you want to meet; but then, at the same time, it’s like, okay, if we meet for that hour once a week, that’s an hour that you could have been doing this, doing that; but I think it’s important to meet. Also, I think a disadvantage would be philosophy in the field, your approach versus someone else’s approach. There may have been a few times that, you know, I may have disagreed with the social worker just because I’m coming from a different aspect of the classroom, whereas, you know, she’s never been in the classroom. So we might be, not that we’d argue about it, but you know, I’d disagree; so I think that would be a disadvantage, if you have opposing philosophies, I should not say opposing…but non congruent philosophies and approaches to the field, that could be a big disadvantage. It would be hard…so then you kind of discuss ‘well no, this is what I would do instead’; although, I don’t know, you know, if you’d be put in a position where you would have different philosophies, but I suppose it’s a possibility.

Ben was also asked to compare the process of supervision with evaluation.

Comparing similarities and differences was a bit of a struggle for Ben at first, but after some thought he was able to articulate the following response:

I would say I think that it would be hard to be evaluated with the same place you have been working with all year, to improve your skills. I think, as a counselor, I don’t know if I would want to be evaluated by my supervisor, because then here you’re trying to get advice and you’re trying to hone your skills in these areas of asking questions and working with kids in groups and individually and then that same supervisor is going to evaluate you on how you’re doing. I think that would be hard to take, I could see maybe discussing, maybe not…I think ‘evaluation’ is kind of a strong word. If they were to observe and…‘constructive criticism’ maybe? But I think to evaluate and maybe put that in your permanent record…like, you know, as a school teacher, you get evaluated every three years and that goes in your permanent record, ‘are you doing okay, are you lacking, if you are lacking, here’s your plan to improve’; and I think then, as a school counselor, I think it’s a little different than to be evaluated by the same person on the same skills, I think it would be hard…because then I think it would be hard to go and talk then with your supervisor who just critiqued you on an area you might be struggling in. And, you know, being a new counselor, I’m gonna be struggling, it’s the nature of the job, it’s a new position. For me, it was brand new; and so I know I’m going to struggle in some areas. But I would want to go to the supervisor for support, for help; but then, for them to come back and say ‘you
know, you’re lacking in this area’. As an evaluator, I think it would be hard to go
back and get more advice. And information from them when they were just like
‘you weren’t doing well’... You know, if I have an outside counselor in another
building after the evaluation, and say, “here’s my struggling areas, how can I fix
this?” I think it was helpful too. And then, I have the principal who evaluated
me, she saw me as ‘teacher’, so it seemed like everything worked out fine, you
know, but I don’t know if she’s looking for the same kinds of things as maybe a
counselor would who would evaluate me in the same field.

Ben was given an opportunity to add anything that he would like to our
conversation about supervision as a new professional. He shared:

It would be nice to have a time to have that supervision. Schools in general,
whether you’re a teacher, social worker, counselor, principal, you are jam-packed;
and fit that time in beyond the school time... it would be beneficial, but it’s also
hard because you’ve got families, you’ve got outside responsibilities; and so
you’d have to try to fit in into a school day; and, for me, as a part-time counselor,
that school day was very important because I didn’t have much. I had a week,
kids who wanted to see me, kids in my groups, trying to get supervision that was
more on the spur of the moment supervision versus scheduled time. But I think
it’s very important, I would have loved to have gotten more supervision,
definitely.
Jackie’s Supervision Experiences

Jackie works in a 9th-12th grade high school and has about 400 students on her caseload. She stays with the same student throughout their 9th-12th grade high school experiences. She handles many academic issues in her role as a school counselor. She occasionally gets into personal counseling, although she also commented that the school partners with a local agency to provide some personal counseling for students who need these services. She added that her role also includes a lot of college and career counseling with seniors. As a school counselor she is not in charge of the standardized testing in the building, however, she does provide support when standardized tests are administered. One of the school counselors in the building coordinates the AP testing, and the other four counselors provide support.

Jackie described her situation as a school counselor in terms of her supervision as positive, particularly since she was a new counselor along with one of the other four school counselors with whom she works. She indicated that she does not have an “official” supervisor, but the three “veteran” school counselors “know that, if any of them see something or have a suggestion for me, they can go ahead and make it.” She stated, “I don’t feel like a rookie, for that reason, although it will be nice next year when I don’t have to ask questions on every single thing.” She qualified this comment by providing the following example:

One of them, for example, has done the financial aid meetings for years. So, he’s probably the most knowledgeable on financial aid. Even this year, I had experienced a trimester from my previous school from my internship where others didn’t, so I was approached quite a bit with trimester questions. And so, even though I was new, I was still able to help; and I think that helpfulness is important in supervising of new counselors.
When asked to describe the supervision that she currently receives, Jackie indicated that they supervision is informal and ongoing. She said,

I do believe our principal is my official “new employee supervisor”, he has to do my evaluations; but that’s more from a new employee standpoint than from a counselor in particular. But that’s the only formal supervision that the district has… You know, he’s probably more of an evaluator than a supervisor when you get right down to it. I guess he’s the one formally assigned to… I don’t know that I would have an official supervisor with this office. From an administrative standpoint, yes, he’s the one over me; but he’s probably more of an evaluator than a supervisor… We do have a department head, but it’s more of a collaborative effort with everyone… I think an element of supervision is important in the fact of making sure that everything’s on track, no matter how good a counselor’s intentions might be, they might be off track simply because they don’t know better.

When asked to differentiate between supervision and evaluation Jackie said,

Well, I think supervisors are more directive. If somebody’s supervising, they’re either giving me instructions, guiding me in what I need to be doing… where an evaluator is more looking what I’m doing and then offering feedback. A supervisor can do some of the feedback end too; but I think, from an evaluator standpoint, it’s not so much the directing as “okay, here’s what you’re doing, here’s what I think about what you’re doing”.

Jackie discussed the supervision that she received from her university supervisor who facilitated her internship seminar experience as follows:

The professor that I had supervising me was always very approachable, very easy to get a hold of, very flexible at the different times that she came to visit me. For example, I instituted the first ever Junior Night at the school that I was at. And so, instead of supervising me during the day, which she did - and most of the counselors came in the evening to see how that went, and so I thought that, that was really nice of her to be flexible around the different types of duties that I was performing so that she could see a broad spectrum and offer suggestions on many different areas.

In terms of her on-site supervisor Jackie commented:

We had a very good relationship. We’d usually start out every day… I was teaching while I was doing my internship, so I was running back and forth a lot; and she did a very good job keeping me informed on what I missed when I was in the classroom and not in the counseling office. We’d usually start our day
together with her just filling me in for 10-15 minutes on anything I needed to
know, trying to get me a variety of duties to try, which was good, because I know,
from talking to classmates, that sometimes the counselor interns get kind of the
junk jobs that nobody else wants to do; and she did a great job of giving me
experience in a lot of different areas...If I had any questions about anything that
was going on, she was definitely a good source. We bounced ideas off each other.
And there were three counselors at the school that I was at; and the reason I asked
her to be my supervisor was I felt she was one who was really a go-getter, really
looking to make positive changes rather than just continuing to do things the way
they were always done, and so that was a good example; and she was the newest
one on staff out of the others. The others were both good counselors, but they had
both been in the profession for a while and were a little more stuck in their ways;
and so it was nice to see how somebody can work gradually toward making
change... I still e-mail her with questions every once in a while. We stay in good
contact. We actually became pretty good friends through the process of her
supervising me.

When comparing this experience to her current supervision experiences, Jackie
explained,

I think I’m working more independently, where before I was given more tasks that
needed to be done. Now, I’m determining those tasks on my own, in large part.
And there are some tasks that I am given to do. For example, this morning, I was
working on AP numbers, which is something my department head had asked me
to do. When you look in terms of my at-school supervisor... we were sharing
office space a lot because of limited space. So, we were working together
probably more than here when we’d each have our own space, so that was a big
thing; and that was just luck of the draw that one of the special education people
needed the spare office that I normally would have been able to receive. And so
that made it a little bit, I guess, more hands-on to the supervisor because we were
right there a lot but a little more difficult as far as independence task-wise. Oh!
I’m focusing more on the high school. I also did some middle school and
elementary work. The bulk of my internship was at the high school. Middle
school, the counselor there was probably more at the supervisor guideline, in that
she would tell me directly “these three students need to be met with today”, you
know, “here’s the class they’re in, pull them on in”. The elementary one was an
awesome experience for me. It was a combo counselor/social worker, so she had
me running small groups and everything independently.
Jackie explained that during her internship all of her on-site supervisors at the
three different levels provided her with supervision. She described her experiences as
follows:

The elementary person in particular provided separate supervision. The middle
school one was a little bit more hands-off, but I think that was her personality,
from what I could understand. I was a little more aloof. But the elementary one, I
really learned a lot from because I had limited experience from that age group,
having taught at the high school. And she showed me a model of what the
relationship level is like for a counselor with kids down there. The kids loved her,
the teachers loved her, which was great because some teachers are very hands off,
you know, “my classroom time, don’t take my kids out”. And the teachers, even
though I was only there a couple of days a week, warmed up to me really well;
and I think that was part of the supervisor, that love of her leadership, just because
they respected her so much, that, if I was working with her, a lot of the respect
automatically got transferred to me, which was really nice. I appreciated her.
And she gave me ideas, when you talk about supervising; but yet I could also do
my own thing. I helped her out with the small groups for a few weeks; and then,
when new ones started up, said “here’s some ideas I’ve done, you don’t have to do
any of these”. So I used some of her’s, used some of my own, let her know what
was going on; and she was pretty happy with just letting me be creative...It was a
good experience for me to be able to see different levels.

This description was followed by a discussion of supervision needs that Jackie has
in her work as a new school counselor. During this discussion Jackie stated:

I’d say more on the advice standpoint. I’m pretty good with coming up with
ideas, especially...they joke in this office that I’m the chart queen because I love
coming up with ways to use data. I really believe in being data driven and not just
doing something without reason behind it. So, I’ve been trying to come up with
ideas in that way; but I go to my colleagues, my experienced colleagues, which in
essence I guess are my supervisors, more for advice. A lot of times, I’ll say to
them, “here’s what I’m doing right now, are there other tasks I should be doing
this time of year...what are you doing today”...I don’t want to miss something for
students that I should be doing. And, most of the time, they’ll say “yes, that’s
exactly what I’m doing”. Other times, they’ll give me ideas on things they’re
doing. And it’s interesting, too, when I go to different ones for advice to see how
they do things differently. For example, last week, asking them, when they
reschedule some of their classes for kids who have failed. One was doing it right
away, another one was waiting until summer school sign-up happened. So, even
within that, it’s interesting to see the different advice...they’re always really
willing to help me out; and, if they’re not available then, I know I can come back
at another time. Also, I think it’s support, new counselors, that they need to give them support, just that they’re doing something good; and that’s something that’s nice to hear, I hope this is a good idea...I like what you did”, things like that. Because, sometimes, you come into a setting, especially when other people have been there a while; and you can feel like you’re the odd person out, not knowing the routines, not knowing the system, and so it’s nice to have that verbal support.

Jackie described that since she was not the only “new” counselor in the office that it made things a little easier for her. She expressed that it was comforting knowing “knowing that, as a new person, you can’t come in and change all the systems, and so we both kind of vent to each other once in a while, knowing that we can’t do anything now but that we have the same ideas for the future.” She added that without the other “new” counselor,

I think I would have felt a little bit more left out at times when they’re talking about things. And sometimes they don’t even think to fill me in on something because they all know what it is, you know, like an annual event, like convocation, they need to take some time to explain it to both of us after we’re sitting in a meeting going, “Huh?”; and, when they realize we both didn’t know what was going on, they’re like “Oh, we haven’t talked about that yet.”

When asked if there were other needs Jackie could think of, she added:

You know, I think if I was just the only counselor in a building, I would need to know who I could go to, where, within this building, you know, there’s obviously four other counselors I can ask. There’s a registrar, there’s a secretary, there’s a principal...but I think a lot about those buildings where there is one counselor for everyone. A colleague of mine came in to, I think it was a charter school in Grand Rapids and was the only counselor, was new at her position, never been a counselor before other than interning. And so she had a totally different set of needs, and she had to listen to me sometimes. She’s going “I don’t know what I’m doing, I have to learn it myself.” And so I think just the ability to be able to have somebody to learn from or to at least know who to go to even if you don’t have somebody directly supervising you in your building, knowing that you have a contact person...also somebody to back you up on things. I know how easily parents can run over people or students can if they’re unhappy that you won’t change their schedule or something. And having a supervisor who can be a support person, not just of me but to support the decision made in a situation so if it ends up...they’re always threatening to go to higher levels on things over some of the most ridiculous things...“a class is full, you can’t get in”...well, I’m going
to call Mary Van, the superintendent’...I got that a week ago, but just knowing that there’s actual support.

In terms of unmet supervision needs Jackie shared:

I think sometimes, like coming in new to a situation, when there’s things that are going on that maybe could be done differently, but you get the line ‘this is the way we do things’...I think sometimes you get the inability to change...so to have to work within a system; and sometimes I don’t always feel, you know, my voice is heard in terms of advocating for change, I guess. And it’s minimal. But there’s been a few things that just are like “why”; and my other new colleague I know feels that way on some things...when supervising gets to be dictatorial, it can be a little rough sometimes. When it starts to be a matter of ‘this is how you needs to do things’, when it’s not necessarily a need to-do, it’s a suggested to-do; but sometimes those suggestions can be ‘you have to do it this way’ because it’s coming from a supervisor. And so I think that’s the one area that can get complicated, and here it’s really not that bad...But there have been 2-3 moments that I could think of that I would have really liked to do something differently but I felt like my unofficial supervisors would not have supported that.

When asked about the advantages of receiving supervision Jackie said,

Well, just knowing there’s somebody there, even if I go, you know, a month without even needing to use a colleague in a supervising role, just knowing that there’s somebody there I think is very beneficial. Going back to what I said earlier about just keeping me on track, making sure I’m doing what needs to be done, teaching, just teaching the job. Because there’s things that, you know, you look at it from a school perspective, a college perspective, you teach what it’s like to be a counselor and some of the things you might encounter. There’s just no way to cover every single thing...In fact, we keep joking, my colleague who has been here the longest should write a book because of all the crazy things that have happened...but being able to go to somebody, you’re like, “okay, I’ve never dealt with this, what do I need to do”....

Jackie shared that “even the experienced counselors in here look for advice on things.” She commented,

I think, like, when I hear them asking a question about something, I know it must be something that’s new to them that they haven’t encountered before; and so it’s always interesting to me to hear ‘wow, you can be in a profession for 20 years and still have new things happening’. Especially with the way the state is changing things, there’s a lot of things that are new to very experienced people. Yesterday, we were questioning a policy and what the state’s current perspective is on it, something that, no matter how many years of experience you have, when
something changes, we all need each other to try to decipher what exactly they’re looking at.

When asked about disadvantages in supervision, Jackie said,

I don’t know that there’s really anything I would see as a strong disadvantage unless it’s a poor supervisor...and, personally, I didn’t have that; but I could see where, in some situations, I know from counseling classes, some of the situations that my colleagues were in during their internship where their supervising counselors didn’t sound like they were receiving the best supervision, either because they’re just plain mean to them, which I heard happened, or they just didn’t do anything, the stereotypical coffee-cup counselor, where needs of students are being unmet; and their supervisor isn’t doing anything about it. And so I think a huge disadvantage is if it’s a bad supervisor... And I don’t know if supervisors always know how to be supervisors. Well, you know, I see it a lot, if you look at it in terms of student teaching and even some with counseling. But I’ve had friends with horrible student teaching experiences because...like, this one person...actually this person was working on their counseling internship at the time, and the student teacher came in, said “Okay, here’s your class”, and left the room and never returned. First day. And so I think, like, with supervising of new counselors, they don’t always know how much help to give, what their responsibilities are, if you look in terms of supervising during an education standpoint, what is the school’s expectations for that counselor intern. I think that’s really important to have a good communication with the supervisor in that regard. If, in a school setting, it’s an official supervisor, like that’s their job, then I would hope they would have some job responsibilities that they’re given, that it’s not just “okay, you’re in charge of her, you’re in charge of him, go at it” but that whoever is in charge of supervising knows what they need to do as a supervisor.

Jackie was given an opportunity to add anything that she would like to our conversation about supervision as a new professional. She shared:

Just that supervisors really need to make sure that the new counselors get the experience they need. Um, I think sometimes more different tasks or more complex tasks might be held back while the person is new; and that can be good if the person feels overwhelmed, but I think it can also be a disturbance by not teaching them the full spectrum of the job. So that would definitely be something, just to make sure that they get a good experience, that they understand the profession and not just a particular job within the profession. Um, and to make sure things are fair. I think sometimes it goes to the opposite end, that the new person gets dumped on because they can’t say now because they’re new. That’s very easy to happen; and that’s actually why my department head wouldn’t let me be on a committee, because she was just afraid I’d get dumped on because I’m
more of a ‘if it’s going to be done, I want it to be done right’...and then the rest of
the people in that committee would not have been “done right”; and she knew I
would probably take too much on. And I was a little miffed at first when she said,
“No, you can’t do this.” But I understood, in the big picture, that she was looking
out for me.
Pamela’s Supervision Experiences

Pamela worked part time in a small elementary/middle school and had about 350 students on her case load. Her job included the expectation of implementing the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program at the elementary and middle school levels in her district. She was expected to deliver guidance lessons in each classroom 3-4 times a year. Examples of these lessons included personal safety, sexual harassment, bullying, and study skills lessons. She saw 8-9 students in one on one counseling either weekly or every other week. These students were struggling with issues that included recently divorced or separated parents, students who were bullying others, students who were being bullied, and students having academic troubles. She reported, “There were times I felt like I was a vice principal or assistant principal” as she found herself occasionally involved in discipline issues with students.

Pamela also ran 5-6 small groups starting with a newcomers group. She also facilitated a middle school group called “Blues Out Group” (BOG) for students who seemed to be depressed because of divorce or some other stressful event happening in their lives, an elementary group for 3rd and 4th grade boys called “Educational Exploration Know-how” (EEK) that was intended to help boys with low expectations of themselves see their goals in life using career exploration activities, and two groups (one in the middle school and one in lower elementary) called “Getting Along Group” (GAG).

Several other activities that Pamela described that fell in her area of responsibility included planning two special days, serving as the chair of the lock-down committee that involved conducting the school’s first lock-down drill, coordinating the standardized
testing programs, organizing a reality store with 8th grade students, and conducting career programming (e.g., an interview day with 4th grade students). Pamela commented, "I was a part of different things here and there, you know, like any staff of a really small school, you have to get your hands in different areas. If the principal was gone, people would come to me for different things."

Pamela described her situation as a school counselor in terms of her supervision as two-fold. She was assigned a mentor from her district who was in her building as well as a mentor through a state professional association. She mentioned that the mentor assigned to her through the professional organization was great because she had decades of experience of what’s been tried and what hasn’t been tried; but the mentor through __________, since she was a teacher, she was in the building, so she had on-the-spot answers for me, which is highly important to not have to wait a week until the next time you meet to ask a question.

When asked to differentiate between the role of supervisor and mentor Pamela responded,

I don’t know if I can. In my mind, they’re both someone there to help but also to watch out in case I’m trying to do too much or to slow down or “you might try and do this”. In my mind, they’re almost basically the same thing since they both are there just to kind of guide you.

She contrasted this experience with her internship experience by commenting,

Now, my internship supervisor, just so you get an understanding of that, was null and void to some extent. About 2-3 weeks after my internship, the elementary counselor became medically ill and never came back to work. She never returned any phone calls, never returned any e-mails. So, I would go to the middle school and the high school; and, unless Jay was there giving me supervision, the other high school counselors basically ignored me. There I was, on my own, with only a calendar of what happened every month.
This internship then became her job at the elementary level and when that happened Pamela observed,

Even teachers can be considered supervisors or mentors because whoever is there guides you. And the only problem with that is you have 60 different people trying to guide you in what you should be doing...Some of them I knew because I grew up in the area, so I knew I could trust them; and then there were other ones, you know it’s like that in any school, you’ve got people you know you can trust and others you can’t. So, the supervisor has to be someone that’s there for the students and not someone there for themselves and be able to trust the advice that they’re giving you.

When asked whether she received supervision in her internship from a university supervisor, Pamela said,

Yeah, that was wonderful. That was great to be able to come every week and hear what other people were trying. So, if I was running out of ideas on how to handle situations, that was nice. I wouldn’t just say that was a supervisor, even though there was a professor there. I would say the whole group was a supervision group because of the ideas that we provided each other. But then the support was wonderful because some people had wonderful experiences that would make us feel better, and then some like mine were not the best; and there were times when people were crying out of frustration or they felt rejected. So, I think it was very good, especially when there were so many school counselors in the group. I think I felt a little bit bad for the ones who were clinical counselors because there were not many of them in the group, they had to sit through all our chatter.

Pamela added,

People say that, when you get into a job, especially this job, you have a year where people don’t really expect much out of you; but I think that that’s kind of false. They base how you’re doing compared to the person before you, or, in my case, to the person a few years before that who was an excellent counselor; and they still expect you to do all the same classroom lessons, they’re still going to send you kids’ names, they’re still going to try and get you to solve problems even if it’s your first year or not. So, they may say they have a year of not expecting too much as you learn the ropes; but I don’t see how that’s happened, even when I didn’t have anything, they still expected me to do just as much - if not more - than the counselor before. So having the support of a supervisor/mentor is not just about the guidance of what you’re actually going to do but just the emotional support of letting out frustrations. I mean, in a school setting...especially when you’re the only counselor...you don’t always know who you can trust and who you’d be blabbing to and what they might do with that information. Um, you
have to be careful; and it’s better to have a supervisor, a mentor, that can understand a little bit about what you’re going through.

When reflecting on her mentoring experience provided by a teacher in her district who used to work as a school counselor, Pamela shared that this experience was formal in nature. She explained,

We had to meet at least 2 hours every month for the whole year. And certainly we’d meet during the school, during like her special times when her kids would be in gym or something like that, which was okay; but sometimes it was hard to get her to focus. Like, I would have preferred a before or after school meeting when I wasn’t worried about being called up by a kid or she had something to do. But it worked out best for her because she has kids; and, yes, we had it all documented. It was a very nice form, about you know what the topic was, what the specifics of the topics were, and then how much time we spent on each thing. You know, they weren’t all just like one hour meetings. One might be a 15-minute meeting, one might be 45 minutes... You know, the first couple months, it was “So, what’s in this cabinet? What’s in this filing drawer?” Actually, my computer died, day one. So it was “So, is this saved on disk?” They were able pull things off the hard drive, but it took them 1-½ months to convince them that there was more on the hard drive to pull off...then as you get comfortable in the position yourself, you start making it your own...I guess my weakness would be one-on-one counseling. I think that’s something that can only come with experience. And so I would ask for advice on “what would you do with these kids”, “do we have resources for this”; and I would ask for her advice on what to do or, if I had a new idea, like I did the interviews for 4th grade, what she thought of that. And then she’d help me with the Taranova...So, you know, month or month, I would ask her the next month, “Where are these sheets?”

When asked to differentiate between the mentoring situation and the mentoring provided by the professional association, Pamela said the mentoring was provided as needed. She stated,

I believe that she came out 3-4 times, but we probably would e-mail each other maybe once every 2 weeks; or I’d call her. And I’d have to say she was out of building, so she was probably more the place where I would vent or get more of the emotional support, just because she wasn’t in the building where she could go back and tell everybody else. Plus, she just had so much experience; and she is just known as such a great school counselor that just asking her if she’s tried this or that.
Pamela discussed the supervision that she received from her university practicum supervisor who facilitated her practicum seminar experience as follows:

It was great. The group of people was very supportive; and no one dominated. Very supportive. The facilities were wonderful. Everything was very easy to use, collecting the money, everything was very organized in the building. The video, everything like that was good to use, to watch ourselves and listen to ourselves and to watch and listen to each other since we all took turns if we had a client or not that night. You know, I still remember the class that I had. You know, I’ll probably always wonder whatever happened to them, especially the ones that I had more long-term...And I’d have to remind myself “you’re not necessarily here to give advice, you’re here to listen to help them sort out what’s going on in their lives”, so I don’t have to have had their experiences to realize that I could help them; and I think that helps a lot in doing little kids because my parents aren’t divorced, but sometimes kids just need someone to listen to them...I think that’s just a natural human thing to want to do, especially when you’re a woman, is to give advice and get in there and help out and “do”; and I don’t know if I really remember if supervision brought that out, but oh then we had to type-up...oh I forgot about that part, typing up all the scripts from the counseling sessions. That helped a lot, I’d have to say, and then going over it with a professor. Because, to see all the “ums” that you said or the leading questions or how you worded things, that helped a lot because you didn’t realize you were doing that. You know, you pay more attention to how you word things and how you say things when you actually go over it with someone on paper. So that was very helpful.

When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Pamela responded,

Well, from having two different experiences now, one through my internship and then ________ provided a mentor to teachers and counselors for their first year, I guess the first and foremost is just to do an orientation of the rooms, the products in the room, what’s available for you, what has been used before, what’s expected, you know like a general job description and then a little bit of an orientation to the different teachers, who’s friends with who, who’s personalities; and I’m talking ideal-wise kind of supervision because a couple of things that I had wished that my mentor had gone over a little bit more with some of the school traditions, I came up with a school-wide awards program based on the I Care rules, only to find out that the middle school students already had character-based awards...so, or to know who does what when it comes to awards programs or plays and things like that because I like to be in the know so I know what to plan for.

In terms of supervision needs as a new professional Pamela commented,
Consistency, I would say. Um, if a person cannot make time for you, it’s not gonna help you; and it something that needs to be... I really like the way that __________ did it, where it had to be 2 hours a month. You know, it was set. It was something that had to be done. Obviously, I would want experience out of my supervisor. I was actually contacted by a student from __________ to be my intern for next year; and, as I was thinking about it, at first, I got kind of excited, because I was like “yay, they can actually have almost full-time with 2 people here”, I got to thinking, you know, “I don’t think I’m ready for that.” I think you should have been in the job for a few years before you’re a supervisor because there are so many things that I haven’t come across yet... One thing is I guess would have liked my supervisor/mentor this past year was a little bit better of a listener. Um, especially, there was one case where it actually ended up involving her nephew. She’d come in, for the first 15 minutes, just want to talk about him; and I would have questions I’d want to go over with her, so I almost ended up counseling her rather than having a session. So, they need to be open to what the new counselor needs. Because I always had a list and an agenda of what to go over...

When asked what needs have been met for Pamela she said,

In this past year, I would say maybe the listening one... I would have to say most of those were met... Um, it’s just my internship would be the only sour one where I probably didn’t have consistency, I didn’t have trust... probably none, really... at the high school, I did. I had my own office, but I didn’t have a lot of guidance on what to do. I think it was the first time for the supervisor ever having an intern... so I don’t think that they were 100% prepared. So, unless they know... if they’ve had an intern... maybe they would be more prepared; but, see, part of that also, not the guy, but the other, she was the head guidance counselor at the time... I would know, after talking about it with someone that she might have felt threatened by me, and definitely reasons why she sabotaged my internship. So, it comes down to the trust; and I don’t think a school should be allowed to doing supervisory, either internship or the 1st year, unless they have it written down, you know, in the job description in specifics. I think having things written down helps, and a check list of some sort helps people know what to expect; on the supervisor’s and on the supervisee’s end. Almost like a contract but they both agree on it.

In terms of unmet supervision needs Pamela shared:

I think sometimes, like coming in to a situation, when there’s things that are going on that maybe could be done differently, but you get the line ‘this is the way we do things’... I think sometimes you get the inability to change... so to have to work within a system; and sometimes I don’t always feel, you know, my voice is heard in terms of advocating for change, I guess. And it’s minimal. But there’s been a few things that just are like “why”; and my other new colleague I know
feels that way on some things... when supervising gets to be dictatorial, it can be a little rough sometimes. When it starts to be a matter of ‘this is how you need to do things’, when it’s not necessarily a need to-do, it’s a suggested to-do; but sometimes those suggestions can be ‘you have to do it this way’ because it’s coming from a supervisor. And so I think that’s the one area that can get complicated, and here it’s really not that bad... But there have been 2-3 moments that I could think of that I would have really liked to do something differently but I felt like my unofficial supervisors would not have supported that.

When asked about the advantages of receiving supervision Pamela said,

Well, I think that even a new professional that has been doing this for 10 years but maybe has a new job in a new building in a new school district. I think a supervisor/mentor is always beneficial in the sense that getting to know the staff, and I don’t just mean by names; but who does what on the side or academics or school council. Getting to know the school building itself. Who’s in charge of technical facilities, computers, those kinds of things. And the guidance part of this specific job, asking for advice in the guidance, even the community. The area that I was in, very German, very stubborn; and I am stereotyping, but it is probably 95% that way, and they’ll admit to it. They believe in “it stays in the family” and “gets taken care of in the family”. So then, when you have a kid you’re trying to work with, you have to approach it differently than maybe another area that believes in openness and getting help with things like that. So a supervisor with experience in the area can do those kinds of things for you. And a supervisor can also introduce you to people, you know, get you to know people in the community so that the community accepts you faster. I went to PTA meetings and things like that so I could get to know some of the more involved parents.

When asked about disadvantages in supervision, Pamela said,

Disadvantage I guess is that it does take time out of your schedule. There were a couple of times of coming towards the end of the month and we still needed a half hour, and I really didn’t have much to talk about because maybe I was just doing Taranova and didn’t really have much else going on. So, you know, we still had to use that half hour when both of us felt we could have been using it to do actual work. Another one would be it may be the experience of your supervisor. What I mean by that is ‘maybe they didn’t do such a good job as a school counselor actually’. So, you’re getting advice from them and they’re telling you things to do, when in actuality you find out through the grapevine that people really didn’t care for the way they did that.

Pamela was asked how she differentiates the roles of supervisor and evaluator.

She responded,
I see an evaluator as someone you may not get so much feedback from, and the principal did have to do evaluation, whether it was sitting in classroom...things like that. Obviously, she couldn’t sit in the room when doing small groups; and I might get a written questionnaire back with her thoughts, views, and suggestions. It wasn’t a bad thing, but it was more cold. I mean, there wasn’t the instant feedback or suggestions. There was no relationship there I guess, with an evaluator, is what I think. So, you don’t know if you can trust them or not. It’s almost like they’re a third person coming in. Kind of like the government and MEAP coming in...not that that’s a bad thing. You need that every once in a while because, you know, once you develop a relationship with a supervisor, there might be a bias there to give you the benefit of the doubt when really it’s something you need to change...In some ways they are similar, because they’re both supposed to be looking at what you’re doing, either on paper or your actual, as you’re doing it; and they’re both supposed to be evaluating how you’re doing. One is possibly for school contracts that have to be evaluated for your pay, or something; and the other one is more just to help you with your job and give you guidance.

Pamela was given an opportunity to add anything that she would like to our conversation about supervision as a new professional. She shared:

Uh, it’s a very important role. I hope it’s never taken away. I hope that the way things are going right now that there are enough experienced school counselors out there to be supervisors and mentors. It worries me about _________. I’m not sure how many other universities have that policy of having only LPCs being internship supervisors because I’m afraid they’re going to run out of people; and not because for lack of people but, you know, for lack of funding in schools right now. So, if the state were to ever turn around and suddenly hire everyone back, I think you’re going to have a lot of people out there with little experience trying to do the jobs because other people have already retired or gone on to different careers.
Grace's Supervision Experiences

Grace has completed her third year working as a full time middle school counselor with 6th, 7th, and 8th grade students. She has about 300 students on her case load. Her job includes activities that are similar to the delivery systems presented in the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance and Counseling Program (MCGCP). These activities include responsive services (e.g., individual counseling and small group counseling) and a lot of system support. The past few years she has been assigned the task of coordinating and running the MEAP testing. She described this assignment as unfortunate. Her district is in the process of working on a guidance curriculum that is aligned with the elementary and high schools, and she serves as a co-chair on this committee. She also recently updated the school's crisis response manual that had not been revised previously since 1997. With the exception of her role working with the MEAP testing program Grace indicated that she enjoyed her role as a professional school counselor.

Grace described the supervision that she received during her training practicum as provided by a "really good supervisor." She indicated that she thought this supervisor provided valuable feedback, although she thought the feedback in terms of the progress notes and treatment plans that she wrote for each client was lacking. In reflecting she added that she was not sure how valuable this was to her work as a school counselor. None-the-less, this was an area where she felt that she was "flailing" during her practicum.

In terms of her internship supervision, Grace reported that her on-site supervisor was very hands on. When Grace had questions, she described that she was able to
approach her supervisor. She recalled that she was helpful in these instances because she had a different perspective. In terms of her university supervisor, Grace reported that she found this supervision to be very weak. She indicated the following:

I didn’t get a lot of practical application from the kinds of things that we discussed. I don’t feel that he had a background in school counseling. Therefore, the unique circumstances that arise in school settings were not addressed. And there is so much that could have been addressed.

She compared the on-site supervision during her supervision with the supervision provided by the university during the supervision by stating the following:

For my on-site supervisor, it was a lot of less formal supervision. When problems come up, we would discuss it; and I found that she was always accessible. But then the university side of it was very structured in terms of time, definitely; and sometimes very irrelevant. You know, and I don’t think I was the only one who felt that way.

Grace described the supervision that she is currently receiving as follows:

I kind of see my administration as supervising me a little bit. I’m lucky enough to have a new building principal who came here in December who is a former guidance counselor; and it is very helpful to have somebody with a background with what I do feel like “okay, this situation is unique once again, I need to bounce it off somebody”. Um, I used her a lot. I use my partner a lot. I wouldn’t call him a supervisor, but I definitely run scenarios and situations by him. We do meet regularly. I meet with administration, my partner and myself meet with administration and talk about issues on a regular basis; so we are proactive in that sense. I mean, there’s a constant dialogue; but there’s always a situation that comes up that can’t wait, that, you know, you need to maybe get a second opinion on...and that’s when I access them. Sometimes we focus on student concerns; and there might be a student that there’s an ongoing...and I want to keep them up to date. I think I access my principal less than I accessed my supervisor during my internship. You know, I obviously have learned some things; but I am more comfortable in my own decisions and judgment calls. And often, even in supervision, my supervisor would say “well you know what to do”...but I just needed her to say “yeah, that’s what I would do”, even if it was the same.

When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Grace responded,
I think it should provide guidance when it comes to difficult situations or new situations that you might not know how to handle. That was probably the most important factor for me...every situation is different, you know, what would you do, and kind of learning how to respond to those kinds of scenarios with parents and students. I think that a supervisor kind of needs to have a plan, especially if you're going to a new school that you may not understand the set-up or how things operate, or the role that you're expected to fulfill. I think they need to kind of have a mentor-sort-of role where they've got kind of an agenda themselves, not just relying on the student to ask the right questions...there should be kind of a road map because I think sometimes you can waste a lot of time if you don't fully understand what the expectation is. You can waste a lot of time if someone else is maybe already doing that; and they know that, that happens a lot. In systems where it isn't outlined "my job, your job"...so I think it may need to be really intentional about "okay, this is what we do here...this is what..." I mean, I know we just developed a calendar for "okay, this is what happens in November...this is what happens in December...", so that if I were to leave or someone else is to leave, they would know what's expected; and I would think that a mentor or supervisor would have some more approach because your role does change depending on the time of year.

Grace differentiated the roles of mentor and supervisor by indicating that although they both serve as experts, the supervisor provides evaluation. She commented that she did not think that a mentor would have that role although they might have a hand in it.

In terms of supervision needs as a new professional Grace commented,

I think I needed direction. It's very easy to not be accessible to students. So, the practical means, "okay, how do I get in the classroom and do a needs assessment?" How do you make sure that you're doing all the things you're supposed to do? I mean, daily, I had a lot of questions about, even filing, like how do you file your group lessons versus your individual lessons, and do you have an overlap, and how do you know what is where. I had a lot of questions like that. I also had a lot of questions about daily planning, like how do you structure your day; and do you have a set time that you see individual students and then, you know, how many groups do you try to run at a time; and how do you communicate that to teachers...so the practical sort of day-to-day "well I give the kids a reminder note in the morning, and I do an announcement..." You know, those kinds of things were really helpful to me and were not addressed really except maybe in my school courses; but I needed that kind of guidance, like how to make it work with the schedule we have here at the school. I continue to need that dialogue with someone who is experienced. It is especially helpful to me that our principal, with the background she has, comes from a different school system; and so their systems and their ways of doing things are in some cases much stronger
than what’s ever been done here. So, that helps my program; and it helps me think “oh, okay, I need to send a letter to that family, I shouldn’t just talk to them on the phone...” She gives me...definitely a step up than what I’ve had before. I think she’s very strong on school law; and that’s not a strength of mine, not as a counselor.

When asked what needs have been met for Grace she said that she thought her needs have all been met. Grace continued by describing the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

I think just knowing that...gaining that confidence that we talked about and starting to get your own comfort level in different situations and that way it’s never the same situation. I think you become better at what you do. You need to know what you’re doing right away.

When asked about disadvantages in supervision, Grace said,

The only disadvantage I can think of is just it’s frustrating to travel and do your hour, which is required, and just feel like you’re jumping through another hoop that’s not valuable time when you know that you do have needs. The supervisor was very nice, it’s not that he was at all intimidating or at all unhelpful; but his expertise was not in the school setting. And so some of the responses that I got were not, I don’t know...they were limited in how helpful they were because it was like “okay, but that’s not really relevant”, and sometimes I knew part of the answer but wanted...like I was saying before with my on-site supervisor, maybe wanted to hear “okay yeah, that’s the right thing” or “you know, you may have tried this or this...” I think I needed an expert in school counseling? I think I needed someone with several years of just school counseling under their belt that could have shared that, another almost like an on-site person. Otherwise, it was kind of like... they were trying to cover too much, you know, and not really focused. I think that was the consensus, it was just hoops that we were jumping through. I mean, you could have a valuable conversation...it’s not as if there weren’t valuable topics...it could have been much more specific to what we were all doing.

Grace was asked how she differentiates the roles of supervisor and evaluator.

She responded,

I think that an evaluation is a specific performance sort of review; and supervision encompasses more than that, you know it’s the guidance piece, it’s the access to that expertise, maybe having a plan for what they think you should be, you know,
getting from your experience, your internship or your past experience, and to have more of a responsibility when it comes to that.

When asked if she received a formal evaluation, Grace responded by saying,

I’m supposed to. I did not receive one this year. I received like a verbal; and, for the first time, my new principal, who does this actual formal evaluation, written and conversation...she actually observed me working with students and with a classroom lesson; and that has never happened. Typically, it comes out of the blue. So, I didn’t receive a written one this year. I don’t know why that is, but I didn’t; but I did receive a verbal sit down “here’s how I thought you did” feedback almost immediately following the lesson, which was helpful.
Anne's Supervision Experiences

Anne has completed her third year working as a full time k-12 school counselor. She has about 154 students on her case load, and she described her responsibilities as quite varied. Administration in the building includes one superintendent and without a principal or assistant principal, Anne has a lot of administrative duties. These duties include coordinating all 504 plans, providing administrative representation at all IEP special education meetings, organizing graduation and Honor’s Night, facilitating field trips, and contributing to public relations.

After commenting that she went into the profession of school counseling to work with students, she added that her responsibilities with students included some individual counseling which she described as mostly crisis counseling but some relationship counseling as well. Although she has conducted groups, she stated that she gets to a point when she is running groups that she realizes that she will have to spend time on the weekends catching up because paperwork is 40 hours a week in her job. Anne also described that she provides college admission activities, including all scholarships. She also serves as the homeless liaison, and she handles all career planning connected with the career tech center. Anne indicated that she is out of the building about once a week to fulfill the variety of roles that she fills. She shared that she thinks she has a longer list of duties than she should have because she does not have as much time as she needs to spend with students.

In terms of her internship supervision, Anne reported,

That was, I think, a lot more similar to what is an LLPC, the supervision I would get from an LLPC, discussing different counseling strategies and methods that I
would be using with a student. That was a great experience. Like I said, we
would work all week in the school; then, if it was Thursday night or something,
we would meet just with our professor and maybe 4-5 other students to talk about
“this was the toughest case I had this week, and I had a really good session; and I
tried something new, and it worked”. So that was all about the people we were
trying to help, it was all about the students; and it was all about employing the
skills that we had just been acquiring for the last couple of years. So, it was a very
supportive environment. It was kind of a support group setting almost, and we
tried to do this job for the first time. So, it was a really good experience; but I
never got any indication of what it was really going to be like, because my
practicum and internship sites...and I think they were really trying to do the right
thing...but both the schools that I was in just let me be a counselor and referred
me a big list of students and said ‘help these kids’. They never had me do
documentation, and they never had me do registration; and they never had me do any
of those other things. So, I didn’t know what I was getting myself into probably.

Anne described the supervision that she is currently receiving as follows:

I wouldn’t say I’m getting any at all. There was a teacher who retired the year
before I started in my current school. She was like a home economics teacher.
They had eliminated the counselor’s position in the school because it was so
small, and they said “We’re just going to increase our administrative staff and
have a superintendent and a principal and an assistant principal; and we’ll just get
rid of the counselor, we really don’t need them.” Actually, it was a way to get rid
of a counselor that was really horrible that they wanted to get rid of; and they
didn’t know how to do it. So they did that maybe 5-6 years ago; but then they
found out, “you know, there are still so many tedious jobs like scholarships and
Awards Night and things that nobody else wants to do...” So, they gave this
home economics teacher an hour a day to kind of fill that role and take care of
some of those odds and ends. So, when they decided to reinstate the counseling
position and they hired me, so I was coming in where there hadn’t been a
counselor but they eliminated administration in the process; they said, “Well,
we’re just going to have this retired teacher...since she still lives in town, she’s
going to be your mentor and your supervisor...you can go to her for anything.”
The problem being, you know, I didn’t need a supervisor to say “Awards Night
should start at 7:00, and the program should be blue; and you should play this
music beforehand.” I mean, that wasn’t the kind of supervisor I needed. I needed
somebody to help me with the counseling role. So she hasn’t been able to do that
obviously because she’s not a counselor, she’s a home economics teacher; and
she’s never done any counseling. So, they assigned me a supervisor who could
say “We usually use this printer to do the program.” I mean, it’s nice for the
technical aspect of it; but I wouldn’t say I’m having any supervision whatsoever.
I have a superintendent who is extremely hands-off, who just says “I trust you, I
know you’ll do a good job. Let me know how it turns out.” And never checks on
me. So, very little supervision now.
When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Anne responded,

Well, I probably don’t have a very good answer for that because I haven’t had a good experience with supervision, I don’t think. In my first position, which was in a larger school in __________, it was just a high school, I did have a senior counselor who was my supervisor; and I shouldn’t say that was a bad experience because she was very, very helpful as far as giving me some idea of what school counseling is. I really thought I was going to be a counselor. I got my LLPC and did my Master’s in counseling; and I actually thought I was going to go into the school to counsel, which, looking back, just seems silly that I thought that, but I did. I had never seen a CA-60, for instance. When I started my first job, and they said “Why don’t you go pull the CA-60 on this kid…” I said, “A what? What’s a CA-something?” I had no idea of the workings of the school, I’m not a teacher; and so I didn’t have any grasp of how the school operates and really I guess what a school counselor actually does in reality. My first supervisor was really helpful in saying “you know what, you’re going to spend a lot of time on registration and class enrollment and dual enrollment; and these are the types of things you’d better learn, like right now” and taught me all kinds of things like that. So, she was helpful, not as a counseling supervisor, you know we didn’t discuss clients, we didn’t talk about kids’ cases or things I was struggling with in that sense but just teaching logistics of the job. So I guess I would imagine that the supervisory role…because during my practicum and internship, it was to talk about clients and cases and to say, you know, this is what is going on with Johnny and how could I handle it…and I’m not getting through with this kid; and I imagine that this was what supervision would be in the school, and I found out that it’s more of like being trained on any other job.

Anne differentiated evaluation and supervision activities by sharing the following:

I guess I feel like a supervisor is more, in my experience, even during my practicum and internship with things, was more of a supportive role, to kind of help the rookie, maybe, to try things out and gain some confidence and that kind of thing. And that’s how I’ve seen the supervisor role more. I guess I’ve never even thought of the supervisor as doing an evaluation, although, in my practicum and internship and things like that, obviously he or she did often give me the grade; but, in the actual school setting, in my first position, and I only spent a year there, but my supervisor, who was the head counselor, didn’t have anything to do with my evaluation. My principal and superintendent did that. So I never felt evaluated by my supervisor, I just felt helped and supported and encouraged. When I was in my first role in __________, after a year, I did have my first evaluation; and it just didn’t fit at all. It was a teacher evaluation. There was no counselor evaluation, and my principal called me in and just said “You know, we’re really happy with everything; and here’s your form, but it just doesn’t apply
because this is all about classroom observation, so none of it really fits, but just
sign the bottom. You did well.” And then I had a similar situation in my school
now, where I’ve been there 2 years; and I’ve asked, am I going to have an
evaluation at some point, and my superintendent says “Well, it just doesn’t really
apply to you...it’s a teacher evaluation, and we don’t have anything to evaluate a
counselor. You’re doing great, I’ll let you know if there are any problems.” I
haven’t really had an evaluation because everything is teacher-based, and nobody
has an evaluation for a counselor. So, I mean probably, if I had a little more time
on my hands, I would probably develop something and say “These are the areas I
think you should be measuring me in, and would you do so...”; but I just haven’t
done that, and nobody else has. Nobody seems concerned about it, so. A lot of
counselors, I think, just get kind of passed over because the teacher evaluation just
doesn’t fit us.

Anne described her supervision needs as a new school counselor by sharing,

I had outstanding professors, and I had a really good experience and a great cohort
and things like that; but...when did I finish there...gosh in 2004 I think...there
was no class called School Counseling or Counseling In The Schools or anything
related. You know, half of us in the program wanted to be in the schools; and the
other half wanted to work in Community Mental Health or Pine Rest or something
like that. We were all in the same program, and it was just a program to produce
LLPCs. So there was really no mention of school, no talk about school, no
anything with school. So, when we went into these practicums and we were in a
school setting, we were just thinking in terms of pure counseling and running
groups and working with clients and things. For going to a program like that,

Once you get into a position, I think you need to have a supervisor who not only
helps you with case studies but also says “In a school, this is kind of how things
operate; and this is who you would go to for this, and this is what parents expect
of you...” I think you need some kind of...if you haven’t had that in your
Master’s Program and you’re not a teacher...you know because a teacher would
have a lot better understandings of the comings and goings in the school and the
administration. For those of us in the program, we didn’t have teacher
certificates; and so we were kind of blind sighted, and we got in these positions
and, like I said, we’d never seen a CA-60, we’d never been to an IEP, we don’t
understand what a 504 is; and there are people saying “You know, you need to
dual enrollment on my kid, and you need to do this...” and we’re thinking, “What
are you talking about, I’m just here to counsel.” It was really overwhelming, and
we felt very unprepared, I think. When we first got into the schools, we said
“You’ve got to be kidding me, I’m supposed to be a what? I’m just here to help
kids and just talk to them.” So I think the perfect supervisor for somebody
coming into a school setting, especially somebody like half of my cohort was,
would be somebody who would really do both and say “When we say ‘dual
enrollment’, this is what we mean...these are the channels you go through to dual
enroll a student...and when you have somebody come into your office who is
cutting, this is what the school policy is on that...” Or you have a kid who is pregnant or suicidal or something like this, drug use, alcohol use, all the kinds of things that we said “Well you know, this is obviously confidential...” Schools sometimes have different policies, and you’re walking a really fine line...“am I following the school policy...am I following my own ethics...” I mean, it’s very difficult; and I think you need somebody who understands that and that’s not going to be a 65-year-old home economics teacher. I can’t say to her, “Well, I’ve got a cutter; do I need to report this to the parents or the administration.” She’s going to say “What, what?” She’s not an appropriate supervisor for those types of issues. I think it needs to be somebody who really understands both sides. In my first situation, it was. My supervisor had been in the school 15 years and understood school policy and things like that. She also ran a private practice in the evening, so she was a good qualified counselor. She could answer questions on both ends, but there just isn’t time. I think I had a lunch hour maybe once or twice this whole year. So, there is no time to sit down and have supervision. There is nothing all week to sit down and say “let’s just talk”. I mean, the phone is ringing off the hook. I counted one day, I said “I just can’t get anything done.” My superintendent said, “Well, are you being interrupted?” I said, “Well, lets count for the next 20 minutes; and I had 11 interruptions, either somebody coming through my door or my phone ringing...11 times in 20 minutes. It makes it very difficult to complete paperwork.”

When asked what needs have been met for Anne she responded:

Thank goodness I had a year where I did have somebody who could kind of show me the ropes and at least I got that 1 year in, training and understanding and learning about all the different things I had to learn about before I came up here because, to come into a situation with no supervision, which I’m sure lots of people do, if I had been thrown into and nobody had shown me the ropes, I think I’d still be there. I would say that first year was incredibly beneficial in retrospect.

When asked about the needs that have gone unmet for her in supervision, Anne said,

I would say a weekly sit-down would have been huge for me. I think that would have felt like a huge support, and I think 30-45 minutes or an hour uninterrupted where I could have met with my supervisor and gone over a list of questions. She tried to make time for me; but, like I said, there, I think we each had a case load of maybe 600 kids. So, we didn’t get any time off; and, the moment the bell rang, she left because she had this private practice. I could stay until 5:00 or 6:00 at night, but I couldn’t meet with my supervisor. So, she really could only be there during the day. So, I would say a weekly...that’s kind of what we were always told in the Master’s Program...you know, “you will meet with your supervisor an
hour a week...you will set aside this time, and you will get to have your questions answered; and you can talk about your toughest case of the week”. We thought, “oh”, you know, “cool”. I don’t know if that happens anywhere else, but it hasn’t happened for me. So, that would have been huge. We had offices next to each other, but a lot of times I would call because the door would be closed or I would be with somebody and would call with a quick question. So my supervision totaled maybe a total of an hour a week if I got 10 questions answered a day or something. It was never a sit-down. That would have been helpful... I mean, I don’t think in any way she tried to hold back or not tell me things; but I think, when you’ve been doing something 15 years, it’s hard to realize what the new person wouldn’t know. She kind of assumed I knew what an IEP was and what my role was there. So she never explained that to me, and so I said “You know, I don’t really understand why I need to go to these IEPs, what am I supposed to be doing...” and things like that. So, it wasn’t like she came forth with this list of things you should know as a new school counselor. She just kind of waited for me to ask. I remember in the very beginning there were things I didn’t ask just because I thought they were such stupid questions, like “how could you not know that, I mean you’re supposed to be a school counselor...you have a Master’s...you just graduated...we’ve hired you...” Actually, my situation was that I did an internship at the school where I first worked; so it just really threw me because, during my internship, I sat in this really cute little office and I saw kids all day long. I thought, “This is fantastic!” I got along with everyone in the school, and it was great; and then they had a counselor retiring, so I interviewed for his position; and I got it. So I came in, first day of school, thinking “This is so cool, I know these kids already; and I just get to sit here and counsel them.” And they said, “We won’t see each other for the next few days, you’ll just be in your office and have 25 kids lined up outside. You know, it’s a mad house...” I was like, “You’re kidding me, I thought I was here to counsel kids.” I thought I knew what to expect, and it was different; but, because I’d already been there for a semester and I knew people and I knew kids, they probably felt like I should know a lot more than I did; and I know that the lot of times I tried to figure things out on my own as far as...you know, kids with just simple questions. “Well, what kind of grade point would I need to get into ________?” And I could have asked the other counselors, but I would call ________’s admissions office and talk to them. To kind of try to figure it out on my own so that I didn’t have to ask silly questions and sound like I didn’t know what I was doing because I felt that way a lot that first year, like “I really don’t know what I’m doing; and I’d better not let anybody figure that out because they gave me this job.” It’s just, I wasn’t prepared for it.

When asked if she felt this way during her supervision that she received during her internship, Anne commented,
No, I always felt really comfortable asking those kinds of questions. I always felt like that’s what I was there for, I was there to learn and try to figure it out; and a lot of times, after a kid would leave, I would go to my supervisor and say “Do you have a minute? I want to tell you what just happened.” Then, I would always present a case at my internship night with my professors; and my buddies and my cohort we would email and call each other and say “you know, I had a really tough case today…” So, I felt really supported during that time and never felt afraid to ask or talk about it; and I still don’t, I just don’t have as many people around that I can talk to about that now. I don’t have a lot of other counselors around, I’m kind of an island now.

Anne described the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

I would say the biggest one is just building confidence and helping the new professional feel like they are competent and can learn the job. I think there’s a lot of doubt when you begin a career and it’s something that you truly don’t feel like you’ve been prepared for; and you kind of feel blind sighted, and I think that you need somebody there to say “no you’re doing okay” and “you should probably change this and try this again” and things like that. But I think you really need that support person.

When asked about disadvantages, Anne responded:

I think, in some cases, I was taught to do things incorrectly; so that would be a disadvantage. I mean, sometimes, I think when you figure it out on your own, sometimes you figure a better way. Sometimes, there’s resentment with the supervisor, you know when you’re working within your department. There were times when my supervisor taught me to do something, and I thought “well no, I’m gonna do it this way”; and there would be some resentment that you were kind of rocking the boat. That’s probably all I can think of.

Anne was asked if she had anything else that she would like to add about her supervision experiences and she replied,

I don’t think so…I think it’s important and I think, thank goodness, I got a little bit while I was still in ____________; but I really don’t think that most of us are getting enough. I think if I asked my buddies that I did my Master’s with that I’m still in touch with, “Did you guys get enough supervision, did you get enough help and support?” I think they would just laugh, I mean it’s like we’re kind of tossed to the wolves out there. Not that it’s a horrible job or it has been a horrible thing or anything like that, but it’s kind of like sink or swim.
Robert’s Supervision Experiences

Robert has completed his first year working as a full time elementary school counselor. He has over 900 students on his case load between the two schools. He spends three days working in one of the schools and two days in the other. Although he answers to both administrators in the buildings, one of them is assigned as his primary administrator. He described his roles and responsibilities as primarily serving at-risk students. He was also assigned the tasks of setting up Career Day and Red Ribbon Week.

Robert expressed that it was a challenge to come from a training program that encouraged implementation of a comprehensive guidance program when the primary focus of his training program was to focus on at-risk students since this is where the majority of funding comes from for his position. Robert did share that he was able to fit in some “other types of programming such as individual counseling, small group, and as much comprehensive guidance as possible, which, having started halfway through the school year, of January of this past school year, I was able to get in to some classrooms.”

In terms of describing his supervision during his internship Robert reported,

Well, I think supervision from the university was very helpful and just totally positive. Now, from my experience in the schools...that was a little bit different. I had a couple of different supervisors. Looking back, that is probably the one thing that I wish would be different...I met regularly with one, but she was at a different school. She worked at the middle school. I worked at the elementary. She did come over and observe me I think once or twice. I don’t feel, looking back, that that was sufficient enough. I know, when I went over there; and I spent some time working a little bit with the middle school kids, as we tried to work with different grade levels, I don’t think that was sufficient enough. The feedback that I got, I felt was good, as the documentation of the daily and weekly notes that I took, from my experiences...we went over that, got some good feedback, got some good insight from that daily documentation that I needed to provide. So, there were some concerns about it and some aspects that I wish were different.
Robert described the impact of the required documentation on his development by stating,

Well, certainly, it forces you to take the time to write down what you did; and I think, as you’re doing that, you’re trying to think of all the decisions that you made, choices that you made, how you interacted with a student or a parent or a colleague, a teacher, and so forth, and just kind of either reassures what you did was right or “maybe next time I should try it a different way...I didn’t get quite the results that I was hoping to get...maybe next time I can look at it or do it from a different angle or perspective”...so there was a lot of documentation, looking back. I think it was beneficial. I think if you leave it ‘a choice’, more than likely people aren’t going to do that documentation; so, as you’re doing it, you think “ah man”...but I think it’s well worth it. I think you’ve got to think on your feet a lot of times. For me, it’s either just validating what you did or second-guessing what you did and maybe “do I need to do it different”; and, as you go over all that documentation with your school supervisor or field supervisor, it gives you a chance to either get some feedback from them because basically they’re reading what your decisions and choices and actions were and so forth. So, I don’t know if that helps or not; I just think it’s a good thing.

When discussing feedback that he received during supervision from the university supervisor, Robert commented,

Even as a returning adult student, I still guess respect and appreciate feedback from somebody who’s been doing it for a while and has been in the field. So, I think any time that you’re working with a professional colleague in the same field, that feedback, to me, is important; and I think, if I didn’t feel that way, I wouldn’t be as effective as I think I am. I appreciate that, and it helps; and critical feedback and positive feedback is necessary until the day we retire. It shouldn’t go away. It helps us to remain accountable and work and achieve what we’re there for. I think when you have a supervisor who has been a counselor...not that I know but I suspect that most counselor educators have been actual counselors...and I think you have to (well I do) respect that experience that they bring to their position; and, again, the personality, the personableness, mixes up with the seriousness, the humor, and approachability. It was all there.

Robert described the supervision that he is currently receiving as minimal and insufficient. More specifically he described it as follows:

Well, you know, it wasn’t ever really scheduled or prearranged, it was just informal...walking by my office, stop in, “how you doing”. You know, they got their hands full. There is more and more programming, more and more things that
are being thrown on their plate. Their days are jam packed. I think they did as
good as a job as they possibly could to check in and make me feel comfortable. I
guess I was fortunate that the school district I’m at...they had two high school
counselors and one middle school counselor. So, I had those people to bounce
questions off, talk to, and so forth. As far as actual supervision, I didn’t really
have any. I guess I’ve got to kind of back up. This position that I took over was
vacant for the last 2 years. They had, I guess, some prior difficulties with two
previous counselors; and they just decided not to fill the position for the last, I
think it was 2-½ years or 1-½ yrs. Two of the other counselors, one high school
counselor and a middle school counselor, kind of held both at the elementary
schools. So, basically, I was just given a blank ticket and told “hey, here you
go...here’s what we want you to focus in on...otherwise do what you want...keep
us informed”. So, I didn’t really have any supervision. We had a few district
school counselor meetings and were able to get a little bit of, I don’t know,
supervision or guidance or whatever from them; but, otherwise, didn’t really have
any within the schools or within the district...we have good communication
among the school counselors. I have no problem, I mean, we all call each other
pretty much...not daily or weekly...but whenever need-be. So, again, there is a
professionalism; where, if we need to talk to somebody, we’re always there for
each other. From that aspect, it’s really assuring to know that.

When asked what he thought supervision should provide him as a new school
counselor, Robert responded,

Well, again, I guess something a little bit more than saying “work with the at-risk
kids”; I guess a little bit more direction. I just felt like I was just given the
minimal amount, what would I have liked for it to have looked like or been. Is
this maybe a scheduled meeting with the administrators, more consistent meetings
with the other school counselors? And I guess maybe I didn’t reach out and ask
for that myself. I don’t know, being only 3-4 months into it...it just seems like
you kind of learn as you go...it’s just like on-the-job experience; and I think that’s
unfortunate. So, I haven’t seen what good supervision would look like. I’m not
sure if that answers your question or not, but just something “hey, what are you
doing...what do you got planned...here’s some thoughts that I had from the
administrators...how are you doing with this group...here’s a group that I
think...” and some of that stuff can be taken care of with a MEAP survey; but I
don’t know. I guess I was just kind of left hanging...I guess maybe their
expectation is too, when you come onto the job, that you’re ready to go, ready to
hit the floor running. So, everybody is stretched out pretty thin time-wise,
responsibility-wise; and I don’t think anybody realizes...you know you get very
few people who kind of reach out and say “how you doing” and give you an “adda
boy” and that kind of stuff. From the administrative standpoint and school
districts, I don’t think they have anything in place that would give you that
supervision, at least I haven’t experienced it yet...I mean, there was a supervisor
at the high school, I believe for the counseling department; but he worked in the high school, he had a full plate. He wasn’t just a supervisor, per se, that didn’t have responsibilities or didn’t work with the students. That was just kind of a title, I believe he had, and did the best he could with it. Maybe have some designated time aside from all of the other responsibilities to maybe check in, go visit, shadow; and sure, when you come out of a program, you’re supposed to have that experience…but just getting acclimated with a new school district, especially like you said within the first three years…I think that would be helpful.

Robert differentiated evaluation and supervision activities by sharing the following:

I think they go hand-in-hand. How can you evaluate somebody if you didn’t supervise or at least observe? So, if I’m not being supervised…my evaluations were from my administrators. At one particular school, that particular administrator was kind of out and about more/saw me in the classrooms than the other one did. The other one who didn’t observe me very much…but my office was located next to his…so he saw me working with kids…we worked together on disciplinary stuff now and then…he also did as good of a job as he could. I mean, he had a really full plate. He had a lot of new teachers that would be working on their tenure and all their observations and so forth. So, as far as supervision and evaluation, what is the difference…well I think there is a big difference. You can’t do one without the other, that’s how I feel…it depends who is evaluating you. I didn’t have an evaluation done by a counselor/supervisor. My evaluations were done by my administrators. So, are they aware of the ASCA National Model? No. They’re making their determination based upon what they see and what they hear and the feedback they get. I’m guessing…maybe I shouldn’t even say that. But I’m sure…everybody talks…I would think that teachers would come up to an administrator…I’m not saying in my case only…you know this particular new counselor…good, bad, or indifferent. So, I would suspect that he received feedback from some of the staff…I would hope that he has.

Robert described his supervision needs as a new school counselor by sharing,

My supervision needs…I mean I’ve worked previously in the schools as a school social worker…so I have a little bit of background with that. My biggest supervisory needs…or I would almost call them fears…is I don’t feel that I’m following the ASCA Model…because of the job description that I have. So, I kind of worried about that…so here I am, I just went through this program, just ready to go…and I didn’t feel like I was doing what I was taught to do. That kind of weighed on my mind a little bit; but, again, the situation was they had, had two years where didn’t have school counselors, the two previous they had difficulties with and went 2½ years without one. So I think they were just checking me out
left and right, wondering if I was even going to be there the next day. So, I had to kind of contend with that. You have to prove yourself day in and day out. You need to just work with one kid before you’re able to work with one teacher before you’re able to get into one classroom. So, I was still working on that. Basically, I don’t think it’s much different in any other schools...you work with the teachers who are willing to work with you; and then they start talking in the staff lounge, and then hopefully you get into the other classrooms. That’s kind of the approach. It has been a struggle working in two different schools. That was kind of new to me. I have worked in other schools with 500 kids, and I was there 5 days a week. So, working in two different schools has been an adjustment. People have different levels of self-esteem; but you still go into a new position, and some people are able to jump in and just hit the floor running. Others, I would think that it’s kind of natural to have a little bit of self doubt. I think it’s just human nature, at least it is with me, to have some type of fear; and I think it’s good to, when you go into a new position, being a little bit nervous, not quite sure of how your performance is, and I think any type of quality supervision from a colleague at least, ideally, if not from an administrative person, could only be beneficial in my opinion. So, from my standpoint, that is something that I would like to see. I mean, it was a little bit different; but that was just the situation. You put your best foot forward, and things start to develop; and I feel that’s happening.

When asked what needs have been met for Robert he responded:

The administrators in each building, they’re there...they’re not ghost administrators...so they’re always there for any questions, thoughts, or concerns. So, if you make yourself available and access them, they’re always there. They step in and check in just to see how you’re doing and so forth. So, that’s been fine. But, as far as, again, going back to the actual counseling part and the whole schooling and the whole ASCA Model...and I know you can’t come in and just implement the whole ASCA Model in 4 months’ time. You just kind of take one particular thing and do the whole data thing and try to make people aware of that particular data to prove that what you’re doing is making a difference. So, that’s kind of where I’m at right now. So, it would be nice to kind of bounce off people some of that data and how you’re collecting it; but I was able to do a program and collect pre and post data. Now, I just need to make that available.

When asked about the needs that have gone unmet for him in supervision, Robert said,

Well, I don’t know. Realistically and ideally, I think if you’re a school counselor, you should be supervised by another school counselor. Somebody who has been trained...and I keep on going back to the ASCA National Model...I mean that’s what, at least I was trained in, that’s what I believe in, that’s what I think would be the most effective way to reach as many students as possible. Then, I think you
should be supervised or evaluated by somebody who is familiar with that so that you can get the actual feedback to help you with your actions and how you are trying to implement the ASCA National Model.

Robert described the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

Well, again... I don’t think we should ever get too complacent as far as getting critical and positive feedback, continuing to learn. I think that can only help; and, if we can start getting that when you first start, I think it can only help you become a better counselor. That’s the short and sweet.

When asked about disadvantages, Robert responded:

Depends on who is doing the supervision. If it’s somebody who shares the same values and same philosophy, I think everything will be fine. If it’s somebody that may think differently and think the ASCA National Model is just something that somebody drew up, you may just have to kind of go with it and still kind of believe in what you believe. So, again, I guess it would depend on who is doing the supervising. To me, maybe if it gets to the point... you know, you could have personality conflicts and so forth... somebody who just... I don’t know. There are some negatives, I guess I’m just kind of struggling with voicing them right now; but if it gets to the point where it’s too repetitive or it takes up too much of your time because everybody has a full plate, it should be kind of spread out and scheduled. That way, you can have your ducks in order and ask the questions you need.

Robert was asked if he had anything else that he would like to add about his supervision experiences, and he replied,

No, it’s a great profession; and I know that we don’t operate in the ideal world, and school districts are no different. Would it be nice to have smaller student numbers? Yes, but you do the best you can. There are people you can always call, whether it be professors or other people in school districts that you have contacts with, so. Sometimes, it may be up to you to have the initiative to almost supervise yourself. It’d be most effective.
Elaine's Supervision Experiences

Elaine has completed her first year working as a full time middle school counselor with students in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades. She has about 490 students on her case load, and she describes her responsibilities as covering the four different areas that are part of ASCA. She explained,

I’ve got academic responsibilities, and I help students with personal and social concerns. Like most counseling positions, I probably am involved in some more clerical or administrative type situations in regards to scheduling students, helping create the master schedule, scheduling individual students into classes, etc. I am also the standardized test coordinator for middle school appropriate standardized testing. I chair the child study team to help create academic interventions to help students be successful. I also go into the classrooms to assist with study skills, goal-setting, and those types of classroom-type lessons. We do some personal/social, like making that transition from the elementary school to middle school for 6th grade students. Not as much classroom lessons as I would like to, but starting in that direction. It’s kind of new, I think, for the building. I do career cruising, you know, typical career…I do planning for high school or beyond…any type of post high school training too I feel is important to address with the middle school students so that they start looking in that direction to help them select the appropriate type of path they want to take at the high school level.

In terms of her internship supervision, Elaine reported,

I feel fortunate, in that the university supervisor that I had…we met, I think it was like every week…had us do a lot of very practical types of activities that I think, at the time…most of us were not traditional-aged students of course, but we were professionals seeking a different type of route for our profession…I think maybe some of the participants felt like “why are we doing this…why are we role-playing this situation”; but, in retrospect, I think it was very helpful because I think the supervisor’s experiences realized a lot of situations we would be faced with and realized that a little bit of exposure in the practicum might at least give us a foot hold to draw upon if we found ourselves in a similar-type situation. So, that was very helpful. In terms of the field supervision…is that what you’re talking about? I think that could probably be increased or maybe at least to include maybe supervision of maybe a classroom presentation in one of the academic or personal, social, or career domains, that might be a good idea. I think most of my…they’re trying to work around your schedule; and you’re trying to work around their schedule. So, I think most of my field supervisions were involved with watching individual counseling situations, which was helpful in
terms of going over our listening skills and focused counseling, so that was helpful; but that is always a little bit stilted, I guess, so to speak, because no student is really going to open up and tell you something necessarily if there are lots of strangers sitting in the room. So, that was helpful. I know it’s very difficult to arrange but maybe even additional field visit’s might be helpful.

She described the supervision from her on-site supervisors as very helpful because I basically did almost a daily debriefing with one of the supervisors...I actually had two; and their assistance was invaluable in terms of being open to answering questions that I had, in terms of them trying to think of things that I might come across and how to handle different situations, in terms of explaining the transition, in my case from a classroom teacher to a guidance counselor, and also how relationships would change in regards to teacher/student versus counselor/student, how your relationships change with parents in the new role. So, they’re almost daily debriefing in review and question/answer sessions; and that’s immensely helpful.

Elaine described the supervision that she is currently receiving as follows:

Well, very minimal compared to...I guess the education field is like that. Right or wrong, you know, you are led to a certain point; and then you’re in the midst of it. Hopefully, you can draw on all the resources that you’ve been supplied with. I’m assuming that my first 3 years of counseling will be a lot like my first 3 years of teaching, where you’re trying to get your feet underneath you. A lot of work and a lot of, you know, struggle if we’re honest about it, and a lot of tired, fatigue; and then finally, after, you know... I’ll be honest, the first 3 years I taught, I think every August I cried to my husband, “don’t make me go back, I don’t want to go” because I knew I had 9 months of exhaustion coming up and trying to juggle the needs of my own children and the classroom; but I don’t think I’ll cry this August, largely because my own children’s needs have lessened. There were a lot of times this year when I was still working at 10:00 at night; and my husband was saying “I thought it was going to be different for a counselor.” But I think we’ve just come to the conclusion, not necessarily whatever job...I’ll probably always work that type of schedule just because I want to do a good job.

When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Elaine responded,

Well, you know, the field of education has, at least for the last decade or so, realized the importance of mentors for beginning teachers. I’m not so sure that the counseling field has that same type of manpower available to offer that mentoring role to new counselors. For example, I’m the only counselor in the building; so there isn’t a senior or seasoned counselor to provide that mentoring-
type of role. However, our district does provide all our counselors the opportunity to meet for a half day once a month. So, the other counselors in the district have fulfilled that mentor role by recognizing that I probably would have a lot of questions or concerns; so, they always allow me an opportunity to use time during that once-a-month meeting to pick their brain and run situations by them, talk about things in general. And I know that I can always e-mail or call the other counselors, too, with questions; but I don’t have an in building mentor, per se, somebody to bounce some of the daily things off of, which would be nice, especially you know when you’re first starting out and you run into some of those tricky personal/social situations. It would be nice to have somebody else in the building... I mean, there are other people in the building; but, if you want to keep confidentiality, not betraying confidence, I think it would be nice to have some other counselor more available at least on a weekly basis if not daily.

Elaine differentiated evaluation and supervision activities by sharing the following:

I see them as similar in terms of techniques and, you know, practices; but I also see supervision as more of guidance and steering in terms of helping a new counselor, like I say, direct a program to be more comprehensive guidance in terms of protecting, you know, the counselor’s role as serving students rather than meeting district needs so that they don’t have to hire as many true administrators or test coordinators. I didn’t receive an evaluation, actually. I thought my principal was going to do that. Unless he evaluated me without me knowing, and he’ll have me sign something in August, I didn’t receive any type of a formal evaluation. I don’t even know for sure how that process... I think that process is directed by our union contract as well. I know the administration has been frustrated with the fact that basically the principals aren’t allowed to basically drop in on teachers anymore, those types of things. However, I will say that I have always let my principal know what I’m going to be doing; and he has come in to observe my classroom lessons on occasion. He doesn’t stay for the whole time, and he doesn’t give me a written evaluation or anything like that; but, you know, he might say “good job” later, nothing really of an evaluation, he’s just more observation.

Elaine described her supervision needs as a new school counselor by sharing,

I ran into a few different situations where I had to contact the other counselors and get some assistance. The school ran into a situation where I had done something that I had assumed was my job as a counselor and part of my child-study team responsibilities. Teachers had expressed that they thought a particular child was maybe perhaps ADD or ADHD, and I distributed the Connors Rating Scale Form and collected that information and typed up the observations of the teachers and stated in a letter to the parent that these observations could be used if she chose to
seek some sort of follow-up...you know, if she wanted to pursue this with a doctor or something. This student ended up, you know, making a bomb threat; and the school district was in pursuit of maybe expelling the student. As a result of my doing the Connor's Rating Scale and documenting the observations of the teachers, this parent got an advocate for students of special needs; and, once that happened, then I came under fire a little bit in regards to...even though I got permission from my principal and sent him a copy of the letter before mailing it home...my personal records were asked for in terms of conversations I had with the teachers and the students and family. I wasn’t sure whether I wanted to turn over personal records...and we had to do some research, another counselor and I...I mean there were principles involved, in terms of confidentiality and whether or not, you know, my office could be a sacred place for people to share things. So, we had to do a little bit of research in terms of what constitutes personal records and what constitutes something that becomes the property of the school district, for example, those types of things. I needed input from other counselors and other people who know regarding how to handle situations like that. And there are some other situations, too, in regards to calling Child Protective Services. I never dreamed I'd have to make so many of those calls. I don’t know if you really can be prepared for some of those situations. Yeah, so I think some more supervision regarding sticky situations, shall we say, or situations that involve the law or personal liability of the counselor? That would be helpful.

When asked what needs have been met for Elaine she responded:

Well, when I received the job, last July, the principal had the foresight to contract the outgoing counselor for up to 20 days of training, so to speak, for me; and, so, I took advantage of that by using 10 days in the fall to assist with just basically what all my responsibilities were, to help me get through the initial distribution schedules and the open house and explain where some of the paperwork was kept, those types of things. However, I did opt not to use her in the spring for the remaining 10 days, which were supposed to be set up for scheduling. I opted not to use her services at that time, just kind of preferred to go it alone, basically because I think she wanted me to keep doing things the way she had always done things; and I was more interested in maybe creating a more efficient process, but the principal did give that some foresight in knowing that I would probably have a million questions the first month of school. Thank goodness I had that year where I did have somebody who could kind of show me the ropes and at least I got that 1 year in, training and understanding and learning about all the different things I had to learn about before I came up here because, to come into a situation with no supervision, which I’m sure lots of people do, if I had been thrown into ________ and nobody had shown me the ropes, I think I’d still be there. I would say that first year was incredibly beneficial in retrospect.

When asked if any needs have gone unmet for her in supervision, Elaine said:
Not really, supervision needs; I mean, there’s always...well, I would say that it would still be helpful, once you get a counseling job, to have some further assistance in helping to steer or direct a counseling program more to be comprehensive guidance counseling and how to approach administrators regarding that. I mean, that was touched upon in my courses maybe more than once; but, if you truly want to take a counseling program in that direction, I would say some continuing support in terms of how to do that would be a supervision need; and I haven’t found a way to meet that outside of that monthly meeting still, but they’re still all stuck down with some administrative types of duties, too.

Elaine described the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

Well, to reduce anxiety, of course, that natural anxiety that conscientious people feel and wondering whether or not they are doing the job well or heading in that direction and that would also be anxiety/stress-reducing. Other advantages, well...if you are doing something that might not necessarily be to the benefit of students...it would be good to know before it becomes an ingrained practice, you know, or a habit. When more than one head is together on a problem, it would provide more resources; and it would also help provide possibly solutions or alternative ways of approaching a situation that you hadn’t thought of, because we all get kind of trapped by our own perspectives.

When asked about disadvantages, Elaine responded:

Well, probably for the same reason why I didn’t choose to take on the offer of the other 10 days of the outgoing counselor’s coming in to help, in that a lot would depend on whether the supervisor was open and current or whether or not the supervisor was kind of stuck in a rut and not really open to new ways of doing things? You know, obviously, that could be a detriment if they insisted that, you know, you do things their way or not consider doing something that maybe would be beneficial for students or teachers just because it’s never been done that way before. You know what I mean? Well, you’d have to consider the personality of the counselor. Some might consider it babysitting, I guess; or maybe they feel that they don’t need it, per se. Maybe a time constraint. I think time would be a factor. Everybody is short on time.

Elaine was asked if she had anything else that she would like to add about her supervision experiences and she replied,

Well, there’s many times I felt alone and envious of the high school in the district where I work where there are two counselors. They only have about 75-100 more students than I, but there’s two of them. Plus, they have a full-time secretary. So, I would say...there were times I felt alone; but, many times, I was overwhelmed. Mmm hmm, and the overwhelming feeling too. To realize that, at the end of the
day, you did your best...you can’t solve every problem...you know, sometimes everybody just needs to hear that; and we’re in a profession where you can’t just share a lot of the things with other professionals. I will admit, though, I probably went home and told my husband things, you know, without names, of course; but you have to have somebody to talk to, unfortunately, because otherwise you’d probably be too hard on yourself or worried.
Tami has completed her third year working as a half-time middle school counselor with students in fifth through eighth grades. She has just over 600 students on her caseload, and she described her responsibilities as follows:

I’m going by last year because I don’t know what my schedule is going to be this year. I’m part-time, so it’s half-time; but I usually go in the mornings. First hour is considered my hour that I grab students usually that are at-risk, failure-kind of students. Second and third hour, I was teaching class; and then I had 4th and 5th hour that I would do counseling. Quite often, again, that would involve either taking out at-risk kids or I do a bullying program for 5th grade; or I have a puberty program that I teach the 5th grade as well, or I do small groups in divorce with changing families. I’ve done small groups in anger management, friendship groups, self-esteem, so that’s the time also that I would grab students and do groups. Then, lunchtime, quite often, I try to get some kind of a lunchtime depending on which lunches I get because we have four different lunch times here. So, I do like walking programs; or, Red Ribbon Week, I do something, I get in there and have a leadership team that I guide. So, the leadership team is involved in taking care of the Red Ribbon Week and the Service Week. There is a Week of Service, so no name-calling. We’ve been involved with service men and women overseas, collecting, those kinds of things. I try to do that at lunch and then, 5th, 6th, and 7th hours, I actually have classes.

She clarified that she does not do scheduling but there are times that she is briefly involved in the process. She commented, “For instance, if we’ve got an at-risk kid who needs to be changed for whatever reason, that’s where I would step in and talk to the parent and then bring it to the principal and say ‘can you change this’; but I don’t do any of the physical changing on the schedule.” She also explained that with the exception of monitoring students with make-up tests, she does not administer or coordinate the standardized testing in the building.

In terms of her internship supervision, Tami reported,

I was fortunate with the university part of it because we were the first ones through; and our particular group had, had a lot of people who were in the
situation that I was that were teachers who were going into a different program who maybe have had some experience already doing a teaching kind of thing. So, we formed a really good cohesive group; and I think the particular supervisors we had facilitated us to get a cohesive group together and e-mail each other and helped us do that kind of stuff. So, I think the supervision there was pretty good. They did the typical 2-visit kind of thing or whatever was required; and, if I needed something, yeah, they would have made time for me.

She described the supervision from her on-site supervisors as

The supervision at school...the school counselors are overwhelmed with the amount of students and jobs that they have to do. I felt I could always go to the school counselor, and he always made time for me; but did we sit down and were we able to go over “okay, what else can we do...what direction do we want to go in...you know, let’s do a needs-kind-of survey and see where we’re at”. I don’t feel like the time...there just wasn’t time.

When asked if supervision would have been helpful for her if there was time, Tami replied,

Where I was at, probably...I don’t know. Maybe, maybe not. I kind of had my head set...again, that’s the creativity thing that I try to allow for because I see where I was. I kind of had my head set about...where, being in the school district 10-12 years, I was pretty comfortable with looking at “okay, this is what we need to do” and, because I was pretty confident that I was going to be walking in as a counselor, they were going to open something up here. I kind of saw where we were headed. So, that was nice being in the district that I worked in. So I’m not sure, because he was always available if I did need him.

Tami described the supervision that she is currently receiving as follows:

I don’t have any supervision beyond the principal and vice-principal here, who are exceptionally supportive of having a counselor and myself; and we work very well together. So, I’m lucky there, in my understanding of some of the other problems that may be going on; but they’re wonderful, absolutely wonderful. I have tons of support here.

When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Tami responded,

I think they need an example, to start, you know in professionalism, especially students who don’t have a teaching background. They need to do school kinds of things so they need to know what school entails as a teacher, guider, counselor as
opposed to being a student in school. So, I think that’s the first thing they need. I think that it’s also really important to guide them but allow them the flexibility of their creativity. You know, I try really hard to say “this is the most important thing for today” or “this is the most important thing that we have going this week” and keeping everything student-centered, that’s another big thing; but I don’t want to stifle somebody and say “this is the only way ever”. One thing I think every counselor should have is a counselor list in an e-mail that they could say, “You know what, I’ve been approached with this problem; and I’m not sure what to do. Has anyone else had this problem? Can you help me? I think that’s something that would be easy to set up. I have that, just because I had a counselor who, it was so often that I kept e-mailing her, she put me on a list that she sends out to everybody; and she’s done a great job with that...Or even looking for “okay, this is what I’m thinking...what have you guys done in the past that has been successful...” So, you know, there’s no point in failing about the same thing that everybody else has done if they can say “oh, we tried that”; and this is what happens. You know, maybe that won’t always be the case but give you some more ideas. The other thing is, I really think there has to be something in a contract that even 1st-year or 2nd-year counselors have to be allowed to go to meetings; and it should be set in a contract that they must go to the meetings, like the school affiliate counselor meetings that are set up. Because you and I both know, something will always come up that you can’t go to a meeting unless it’s required in your schedule, you’ve got to go, and you have to do that. You know, something always comes up. Also, the administrators I think need to understand what needs we might have, like going to the meetings and being in touch with other counselors and making sure that we’re doing what we can do to help student achievement, that this is only going to benefit in the long run, even though we’re being taken out of the building for half a day. Like at the ISD, they have monthly topics; I think they have 3 meetings a year with the school counselors. You know, they have experts come in and talk about ADD in the classroom or bullying or anger issues or, you know, the obesity issue that we’re dealing with. There’s all kinds of...they just have topics that are here and now. Cutting. Cutting was a huge one, and they brought in a couple of experts to explain this to all of us who’ve all read the books; but now you’ve got an expert who has worked with the teenagers and says “this is, you know, what you need to go” and how to go about it.

Tami differentiated evaluation and supervision activities by sharing the following:

I see them as different. I guess I see the supervision as somebody who is overseeing what is happening, if some changes need to be made, or somebody for you to go to, a supervisor, and say “listen, I’m kind of stuck, can you help me out”, that kind of thing, as opposed to an evaluation is “where are you now” and somebody looking in and saying “this is where I think you are, these are things that we can do to improve. So I do see them as very separate.
She further described her experiences with evaluation as follows:

What I see the principal looking at is what are our needs in our building with our students first and then how are we addressing the needs. As far as what do we do with school counselors, you know the personal, social, and the academic, and the career, I don’t think they look at those tiers as much as they look at “this is our building, what do we need”. You know what I mean? So, I think they understand what we’re about; but, if it’s not really important for me, they feel, to hit careers in 5th and 6th grade, they’re gonna say “listen, you know, these are the kinds of groups that we need as opposed to that…” But, as far as knowing what school counseling’s model is about, no. I don’t think they’re real well-versed on it because they don’t see it as being a need, especially right here at the middle school level… I’ve had informal evaluations. My informal was this year. So, the informal ones, do I feel like I’m getting some good feedback…yes, because we sit down. Like I said, we have a really good relationship; and we’re able to sit down, and they talk to me and say “okay this is what’s going on, what’s happening…you know, what are you seeing…what do we need to do…” You know, we really put things together well.

Tami added,

I never feel like what I do is enough, that’s one thing with where I’m at. I never feel that. It’s never enough. You know, you always feel like you’re dog-paddling, trying to keep your head above water. You’re never quite there, because things come up constantly. It’s not like teaching English, I have a lesson, I have a lesson prepared, I teach it to the best of my ability, I take the students and I meet their needs based on where they’re at…because every student in here has a different needs for the counseling part.

Tami described her supervision needs as a new school counselor by sharing,

You know, this is the first time the middle school has had a counselor. So I felt a pretty heavy weight coming in, like “okay, I really need to do something big here because we need to get this rolling; and I want it rolling in the right direction”. That’s one thing. I wanted something that remains and is seen as the need that it is; and even a half-time counselor is just half-time, one person. So, I think that the supervision that I get and the support I get is great. I feel wonderfully supported in this counseling job. I know that the kind of person I am, too, is I reached out to a couple of people that I knew; and they were really persistent in helping me get established there. You know what I mean? If I want somebody that would reach out to somebody and just try to figure it out myself, that might not have been established; but I think when somebody walks out of the Master’s program, “listen, this is a database…these are e-mail addresses…if you get stuck, these are people you can contact who have maybe been there…“ and, if not,
contact and then get somebody that can put them in touch with somebody else so they’re not lost or just not on their own to start.

When asked what needs have been met for Tami she responded:

I do sometimes feel like because, and rightfully so, we’re always looking at the needs of the building and students within the building, “am I meeting all of the school counseling models?”, I don’t feel like I follow that to 100% of a degree, where maybe being in touch with counselors on a monthly meeting or something, you know what can we do to add careers to 5th and 6th grade without it having some big meeting because school time is short. And teachers don’t the kids out of their rooms, they can’t. The curriculum is hard.

When asked if any needs have gone unmet for her in supervision, Tami said, “I don’t know that they’ve gone unmet, because I’ve sought them out; but I wouldn’t say that they were standing here saying ‘listen, why don’t we get together and talk about this...’ I would have to seek it out.” When asked if she were not the kind of person who might naturally seek this out she commented, “It might be a problem. Someone should be checking in maybe, even if it is somebody from the university. You know, that would be great.”

Tami described the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

I think as a new school counselor, you’re always wondering “am I doing this right?” You want to make sure that you’re following some of the...you know...for instance...Protective Services. When you file a CPS form, “did I do this right...I have a question about something, who do I contact...or is this something I need to put in...you know I have an inkling about this; but, if you ask somebody next to me if they had an inkling it was a problem and they say no, then am I just calling and it’s a problem” because I’ve had some dealings now with CPS where I’ve had loved to have talked to other people that have dealt with them, where I’ve got one person telling me one thing and another telling me something different. CPS is a perfect example. I have one person telling me one thing, “yes, file the form”, and another person telling me “you can file a form, but nothing will happen with it”, so basically telling me it is a waste of my time and theirs. You know what I’m saying? So I’m getting some mixed signals. Okay, so what is the ethical thing to do? I go back and look in my ethics book and file the form anyways; and then I have some CPS workers who I create some doubt in their mind now about my integrity. So, I think it would’ve been nice to have a
supervisor say “these are the laws...these are the rules”, just reiterating...you know, in the back of my mind, they’re there, but reiterating to you and helping you say that you did the right thing even though somebody else might have a problem with it.

When asked about disadvantages, Tami responded:

I guess only if you had a supervisor who said “this is the only way” if it was a creativity kind of thing. That would be the only job that I think supervisors need to be pretty open to a great deal of personalities. You know, taking the strengths and running with them, and saying “okay, well, this is something we need to work on, but you know what, everybody’s got something to work on”...

Tami was asked if she had anything else that she would like to add about her supervision experiences and she replied,

I think supervision is a wonderful thing, especially for a new counselor starting out and somebody who hasn’t been in the school. But I think somebody who has been in the school and has the classroom management skills, they need more of a group supervision where they’re talking to other teachers and other professionals and bouncing things off, maybe even having a supervisor sit in on that group to help facilitate that; but I really think that school counselors who get together who have been in the classroom can add so much more just to build it, take it to higher levels.
Carol’s Supervision Experiences

Carol has completed her first year working as a full time elementary school counselor with students in kindergarten through fifth grades. She works with about 1,100 students, and she described her responsibilities as follows:

I do individual counseling. I have a little form that kids can fill out if they need to talk to me or if teachers refer, parents refer. I do group counseling. I usually have probably 4-5 groups at each building running at any given time, and I do the classroom lessons. Last year, I got in each classroom 3 times. This year, I hope to do much more than that.

She clarified that since they have a psychologist in the district that she does not do testing. She also explained that she does not administer or coordinate the standardized testing in the building.

In terms of her internship supervision, Carol reported,

I had 3 supervisors. I had my on-site supervisor who was a counselor at the school, I had an individual supervisor that I met with once a week, and I had a group supervisor that was a faculty member at the university. My on-site supervisor...I actually did two...I did my practicum and half of my internship in an elementary school. So, I was there 2 days a week for the whole year; and then the rest of my internship was in a middle school. My elementary supervisor was great. Had it not been for her, I would have been lost. My program didn’t prepare me so much as my internship did, as my program was more clinical-based. My individual supervisor was very good. She had worked in schools, currently in private practice, so she knew a lot about the age of kids that I’m working with. So, she was able to help me a lot as well. My group supervisor was not so much help. He was very clinically-oriented, only worked with adults; and I was the only person in my entire program that went into elementary counseling and did anything in elementary school. So, there wasn’t a whole lot of support there.

She described the supervision from her on-site supervisor in the middle school during her internship by commenting,

That wasn’t such a great experience, and that supervisor wasn’t so great. There wasn’t much autonomy there. I was required to check in with her frequently. They had me implement a program that took up like 90% of my time for the 3
days I was there for the one semester; and then, at the end of the semester, I was talking to them about how they would continue to implement it next year. And they were like, “well, we can’t do that next year, that’s not feasible for the school counselor to do.” And it was a great program while I was there, it was very academically focused. It was getting students to succeed who have been failing academically. This wasn’t really what I was looking for, and it was frustrating to know that I had put all this time and energy into this program that I could never duplicate because it wasn’t feasible. So that wasn’t such a great experience.

Carol described the supervision that she is currently receiving as follows:

Excellent. I have one “supervisor” for my LLPC purposes, and she is very good. She is somebody that I can call on when I have a question or that I need to bounce ideas off of. She has been in the district for a really long time, so she knows a lot of people and is able to help me out quite a bit. My mentor that the school assigned to me is actually a social worker, and she has been kind of a supervisor as well because she is in my building. My other supervisor is the middle school counselor. Our school social worker has done a lot of help, almost more than my actual supervisor, because she is right here in both of my buildings. She’s accessible, she knows a lot of the same kids, she knows maturity level/emotional level that I’m dealing with. The supervision for the LLPC is basically provided on an as-needed basis. We don’t have a set weekly meeting just because of my schedule and her schedule...that would never be possible. Uh, we do try to do working lunches once a month or so and talk about things; and we keep each other updated on e-mails, phone calls, that sort of thing, but no set meeting schedule. My supervisor will seek me out and say “How are you doing? Do you need anything?” We don’t sit down and talk about cases like I did when I was in my internship. You know, I can contact her if I have a problem; but it’s more on an as-needed basis than a regular basis.

Carol described the mentoring that she received from the school social worker as follows:

That was a big help, just, you know, the week before school started, checking in with me because I have 2 buildings and nobody knew who I was. It was a little intimidating; but, just knowing somebody, going in, and that she was kind of looking out for me was a big help. We tried to meet once a week for 10-15 minutes. There were weeks that we didn’t see each other at all. There were weeks that we spent a lot of time together working on certain cases. Then, the social workers, the psychologist, and I try to do lunch once a month. We’re very lunch-oriented around here. Just to talk about how things are going.
She compared her current supervision experiences with the supervision that she received in her Master’s program by stating, “The quality is the same. Because I’m on my own and don’t have to follow so closely, there’s not as much supervision; but I never feel like I don’t have somebody I can call on if I needed somebody.”

When asked what she thought supervision should provide new school counselors, Carol responded,

A sounding board, somebody to shoot ideas off of, someone to maybe suggest programs that have been done in the past that I might not have thought about, that I might want to implement; and then obviously somebody that I can call on if I have a question or any concerns and also kind of support, just as colleagues supporting each other in the things that we see and the things that we have to deal with. I don’t see my supervisor as someone who is, I guess, above me, although she is. We collaborate on a lot of things. Obviously, she has more experience, so she can give me ideas; but it’s not like in my internship where I was constantly checking in with my supervisor.

Carol differentiated evaluation and supervision activities by sharing the following:

They are kind of similar, in that...I’m evaluated by both of my building principals twice a year; and they give me things that I am doing well as well as things I need to work on. I don’t see it as being similar just because my supervisor doesn’t know what I do on a day-to-day basis, she’s not in the building with me. So, I would say that my principals would be able to give a more accurate representation of what I’m doing and how I’m doing it than my supervisor would. There’s a formal component to the evaluation. It’s formally written up. For my first evaluation, they each watched me in a classroom. For my second evaluation, the lower elementary principal watched me in a classroom; and then we’d sit down and talk about it. They’d collaborate to write it, and then we’d sit down and discuss it...It was funny because in the fall they said “Don’t be intimidated because it’s both of us sitting down talking to you”, and I was like “It never even occurred to me...why would I be intimidated?” This job has been a perfect fit for me. I’ve just been very comfortable.

Carol added that there is no communication between the evaluator and supervisor for evaluation or supervisory purposes that she is aware of. She went on to describe her supervision needs as a new school counselor by sharing,
I need an intern! As far as needs go, a sounding board, really. I am pretty confident in my counseling abilities and pretty independent as far as the actual counseling goes, but really just somebody that I can call on if a situation that I haven’t encountered comes up. This year, I had kids removed from Protective Services; so I didn’t know what I was supposed to do in those situations. We had a student’s parent died, so I just called their office and said, you know, “what do I do in this situation”.

When asked what needs have been met for Carol she responded, “I think that the biggest need that has been met is I feel I can call on various people, but especially my actual supervisor, whenever I need assistance.”

When asked if any needs have gone unmet for her in supervision, Carol said,

In a perfect world, it would be nice to be able to sit down, like I did in my internship, and say “this is what I’m doing with this kid” or “this is what I did with this kid”...“what do you think...was that good...what would you add to it...”; but, with 1,100 kids on my case load, I don’t have time to do that, she doesn’t have time to do that. I would love to be able to; but I don’t think it’s feasible, at least not until I have my head above water a little more.

Carol described the advantages of receiving supervision as follows:

That I have somebody that I can go to when I need help. Being the only counselor in 2 buildings, it gets really lonely. So, being able to talk to other colleagues and bounce ideas off of other people is huge. We also have a full-time social worker and school psychologist; but those 2 are in all four buildings, so the chance of us crossing in the halls is slim. I’m on the child study team, we call it the student support team; but they are mainly special education, so we don’t even really see many of the same students. I do the special education students that aren’t receiving social work services or on an emergency basis if the social worker is in a different building. Our teachers refer kids to the child study teams. So, there’s not a lot of strategy intervention before they get there; but then, once they’re there, we have a meeting once a month where we give them intervention ideas. But yeah, we collaborate a lot in those meetings and then working with those kids and those teachers afterwards.

When asked about disadvantages, Carol responded, “Time is always an issue, and it was difficult to find a supervisor because it has to be somebody that is an LPC with
supervision training, and that was difficult.” When Carol was asked if she had anything else that she would like to add about her supervision experiences and she replied, “No. I’m very pleased with the level and amount of supervision I’m getting. Even in my internship, I was very independent and just kind of did my own thing and checked in with my supervisor when I needed to so it’s just kind of a continuation of that.”
Appendix I

Member Checking Responses
Member Checking Responses

Jillian

1st paragraph: I consult with my supervisor/mentor everyday regarding academic and personal/social student issues, issues concerning parents and teachers, teacher related issues, school-wide issues and district level issues.

2nd paragraph: Transition from middle school including: academic, personal/social and career counseling.

4th paragraph: We set aside an hour a week (two half hours lunch sessions each week).

5th paragraph: It's not like a therapy session; however, it does bring up many "personal issues" I mean: things that are frustrating me, stressful situations, etc. Along with strengths and weaknesses please add: she does also help affirm what I am doing and that I'm making good decisions, using good judgment with my job.

6th paragraph: Being that I did my internship at this facility I was also my supervisor's student at one time, which may confuse the relationship at times.

7th paragraph: Regarding the dual relationship: It can be difficult to balance the coworker/supervisor/supervisee relationship at times. There is an equalitarian relationship with coworkers but at times, more of a one upmanship relationship with a supervisor/supervisee. Sometimes this can get confusing when you are working side by side with your supervisor.

Lena

The summary accurately reflects my experiences.

Danielle

I have recently begun the supervision process through my former internship supervisor. The sessions will be conducted in a group setting with 3 other counselors. We are at the planning stages, with our first “real” supervision taking place this month. I am very comfortable in this group setting and with a supervisor that I know and trust. I still see the whole supervision process as a hoop to jump through, but I always enjoy being able to share my experiences with other people who are in the same field and bouncing ideas off each other. I do not know if I would have ever received supervision if I did not have this connection with my former internship supervisor. The opportunity just presented itself so I am taking advantage of that. Without this particular person I’m not sure how I would
have found supervision, and if I would have been as comfortable with the process as I am currently.

Olivia

I cannot see any changes that need to be made on the summary—perhaps only to add that I am now going to be receiving group supervision. I'm glad that this study will be bringing this issue to the attention of the schools and licensing board.

Natasha

The summary for Natasha reflects what I stated in our meeting. I only wish that I did not say "gonna" for "going to." Believe me, that is something I am now very aware of when I say it, I am working hard to correct the bad habit.

Margie

Supervision has the opportunity to provide a new professional school counselor with guidance and support. A supervisor can also provide the new school counselor with a clear picture of the expectations, roles and responsibilities of the position. Having a supervisor provided me with the opportunity to develop a better understanding of how the Michigan Comprehensive Guidance program was (realistically) implemented. Supervision also allowed for an opportunity to communicate ideas and ask questions. Personally, if I was unsure of how to proceed in certain situations, I had a veteran colleague to ask. It helped me to recognize and appreciate different perspectives, as well as make more informed decisions.

A supervisor should serve as a role model and mentor. He/She should be a good communicator and be able to provide constructive criticism as needed. The supervisor should also be able to steer the new professional counselor toward the appropriate resources and meet with the supervisee on a weekly basis. Overall, to be completely effective as a supervisor, he/she should be trained in this area prior to supervising a new professional counselor.

I thought that it was beneficial to have a supervisor from the "outside" and one on the "inside." It provided a good balance...subjectivity versus objectivity. The feedback was different and helped me to look at issues/possible solutions in various ways.

I thought that my supervisory needs were met. I had a very good relationship with my supervisor. My on-site supervisor had never been trained to supervise a new school counselor; however, he was always willing to answer questions, clarify information,
describe the expectations/roles/ responsibilities of the position, provide constructive criticism and provide guidance as needed.

I think it would have been useful for my own supervisor to be trained, to assure that it was done so effectively. Since I am evaluated by my school’s administrators, I definitely believe that they should be trained as well.

I think that the importance and benefits are priceless. It’s difficult to imagine not having supervision, since the lives of children are being affected. I’d question any program’s legitimacy if it didn’t require supervision.

Ben

Your summary does a good job representing my thoughts on the topic.

Jackie

This summary does a good job describing my experiences. No changes.

Pamela

It looks good to me.

Grace

The only thing I would add is that I do not share confidential information with my principal regarding students unless it is necessary. I do consult often without using names or share updates on students in terms of progress, teacher feedback, and grades. I don't think I clarified that when I was talking about "bouncing ideas" off from her.

Anne

Other than the horror of discovering that I say “like” constantly, and speak in run-on sentences consistently, I would say it's accurate. My comments and experience have been accurately portrayed in this summary.

Robert

Everything looks fine, the content of the summary can remain as is.
Elaine

The content of the summary accurately reflects the thoughts I shared.

Tami

The summary accurately reflects my thoughts on my supervision experiences.

Carol

I think the summary looks good. As far as I remember, it is accurate.