

Running head: EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

EXPLORING THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF APPLIED AND PROFESSIONAL  
PSYCHOLOGY'S SCHOOL PSYCHOLOGY GROUP SUPERVISION PROGRAM  
THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

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# EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

## ABSTRACT

This study explored the perspectives of key stakeholders in the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology's (GSAPP) school psychology training program regarding their group supervision experiences. The American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) revere supervision as essential to the practice of school psychology and the professional development of school psychologists (McIntosh & Phelps, 2000). The Principal Investigator used Grounded Theory to explore student and supervisor perspectives of the program's group supervision program through a one on one interview between the Principal Investigator and participant. The PI interviewed 22 students and four supervisors using a semi-structured interview protocol consisting of 19 question items. Strauss and Corbin's (1990) qualitative approach was employed in coding interview content across a three-step process of categorical analysis: open coding, axial coding, and selective coding. The PI used Scott and Howell's (2008) conditional relationship guide to form categories during open and axial coding phases. During the last phases of coding, selective coding, the PI referred to the reflective coding matrix (Scott & Howell, 2008) to integrate all of the interpretive categories of the analysis to explain the story line and evoke theory. Through using these two interpretive instruments, important questions were addressed in relation to the structure of the central phenomenon and the nature of the dynamic process (Scott & Howell, 2008). Interview data provided valuable qualitative evidence of student and supervisor experience and perceptions of the supervision program in the following areas: supervisor prior experience and current involvement factors; purpose and importance factors, structural factors, experience and processes in group supervision, evaluative factors, impact factors, and points for programmatic consideration. These data serve as a preliminary evaluation of the group supervision program and

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may inform necessary programmatic modification or amendment of current practices.

Recommendations are made for the stakeholders to consider.

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To my parents, who have modeled a steadfast discipline, drive, and grit in achieving their goals, no matter the setbacks. You have taught me to embrace the inevitable challenges life brings, and that an enduring perseverance can manifest what begins as only an idea. Mom and Dad, thank you for fostering in me a mentality that I can do and be anything. Thank you for your unconditional support, encouragement, and most of all for the gift of a life full of opportunity that has allowed me to live out this dream.

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## DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to the late Dr. Karen Haboush. Karen was the heart and soul of GSAPP. She was a nurturing, warm presence who had a genuine connection with so many. Among many passions and contributions, Karen was invested in the research and practice of supervision. She was wholeheartedly dedicated to GSAPP's school psychology group supervision program. It is my hope that this dissertation contributes meaningfully to a legacy she began. May Karen's memory keep her loving spirit alive and unceasingly inspire us to connect with each other, have compassion for ourselves and others, and help GSAPP continue to grow.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Supervision: An Important Professional Activity

Supervision is widely thought of as an important professional activity throughout the career span of a psychologist across the varying psychological disciplines. Beginning in training programs for graduate students, through the later refinement of clinical practices for the seasoned psychologist, supervision is an activity that permeates all levels of professional development in the field of psychology. The activity of supervision has assumed many definitions over the decades, as it is an intricate interactional process occurring across a number of settings, in varying styles, for a wide range of goals and objectives. The American Psychological Association (APA) and the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP), take the position of supervision as essential to the practice of school psychology and the professional development of school psychologists (McIntosh & Phelps, 2000). Given this patronage, it is surprising that supervision is not more widely researched, as there are a myriad of research avenues and questions in this multifaceted psychological practice.

Specifically, for graduate students in training, supervision can be disseminated both individually and in groups. Group supervision is used commonly in training at the university, internship, and post-doctorate level. Group supervision is accompanied by a number of unique elements such as group composition and dynamics, confidentiality, supervisory style, level of structure, feedback processes, etc. As group supervision is a common approach in training programs, empirical research of these important content areas is necessary and critical in better understanding the effective methodologies and practices in this mode of supervising trainees.

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Context: The Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP)

The Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology (GSAPP) is a psychology training program at Rutgers University for doctoral and masters level psychologists. Within the doctoral level training program, there are programs for both school psychology and clinical psychology. This study will focus exclusively on group supervision within GSAPP's school psychology training program. In accordance with APA training standards, the school psychology program provides opportunities for trainees to engage in individual and group supervision during their time in the program. Supervision experiences take place within the program and in field placements associated with the program. This study will focus solely on group supervision provided within the program by paid faculty.

School psychology students in GSAPP's doctoral training program are required to take five semesters of group supervision for course credit before their final internship year. Group supervision begins the second semester of the first year through the second semester of the third year. Group supervision called "Practicum Group Supervision" (18:826:506) in the course catalog listing begins the second semester of the first year and meets on a bi-weekly basis for two hours and 45 minutes. Students concurrently begin a school-based practicum during the second semester of graduate training. Students receive one course credit for this semester requirement. The listed description says, "Biweekly group supervision addressing issues that arise in practicum settings." Group supervision continues into years two and three as "Advanced Supervision in School Psychology" (18:826:605, 606) in the course catalog, and meets on a weekly basis for two hours and 45 minutes. Students receive three course credits per semester for this four-semester requirement. The listed description says, "Provides for personal and professional growth and development through small-group supervision by faculty and peer

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group. Focuses on the integration of coursework with the professional, ethical, and legal issues encountered in school practicum placements.” The Advanced Supervision groups consist of a mix of second and third year students. During the second year of training, students remain in a school-based practicum as a requirement, and may assume additional practicum experiences if they choose. During the third year of training, students have the opportunity to partake in practicum training opportunities outside of schools, such as clinics, counseling centers, hospitals, research settings, and community based programs.

### GSAPP's School Psychology Group Supervision Program

At the present time, there are two Practicum Group Supervision groups consisting of only first year students, and four Advanced Supervision in School Psychology groups consisting of a combination of second and third year students. Generally, groups are made up of six to eight students to keep the size appropriate and conducive to that of a small group. There are a total of four faculty supervisors who have instructional responsibility for the Practicum Group and Advanced Supervision groups in the program. The program secretary disseminates group assignments before the semester begins. Students in Advanced Supervision remain in the same group with the same supervisor for the duration of the academic year (fall and spring semester). Students are enrolled in a different group with a new supervisor for the second year with some exceptions.

The group supervisors hold discretion to lead and structure the group according to their training and model of supervision. Therefore, supervision groups have historically varied in nature somewhat. There has been a recent initiative, before the 2017-2018 academic year, to streamline requirements across Advanced Supervision groups in the program. This initiative included the creation and dissemination of a uniform syllabus across the four groups during the

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Fall 2017 semester. Although Advanced Supervision is a three-credit requirement, it does not require an equivalent level of rigor as other academic courses that students are enrolled in concurrently. A pass or fail is assigned at the end of each semester, in place of a letter grade. The Advanced Group Supervision syllabus provides the following sections: course description, rationale, learning objectives, assessment of learning objectives including grading criteria, required text, collaboration and safety, self-awareness, format, APA standards on training in supervision, technological devices, goals of advanced group supervision, professional development plan, and attendance. The following are the general goals outlined for advanced groups:

1. To enhance the professional development of students as future doctoral level school psychologists and supervisors through the acquisition of knowledge, skills and attitudes gained from group discussions, readings and written tasks.
2. To familiarize students with the process of planning for and conducting group supervision.
3. To increase students' ability to utilize self-reflection as a tool in working as a professional psychologist and supervisor.
4. To identify factors impacting the interpersonal relationship between supervisor and supervisee and to describe steps to promote development of an effective supervisory relationship.
5. To utilize the process and format of the supervision group as a vehicle for learning about group theory and group process.
6. To enhance group members' ability to work collaboratively as a model for functioning on professional teams as a school psychologist.

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7. To develop awareness of challenges and supervision issues that occur in the supervision of psychologists in school settings.
8. To develop an awareness and sensitivity to gender and multicultural issues in the supervisory relationship.
9. To recognize ethical issues in supervision and to apply ethical decision-making when presented with ethical dilemmas in practice.
10. To demonstrate and develop effective oral communication skills, including listening to diverse perspectives and presenting ideas, policies and research.

### Purpose of Study

The purpose of this dissertation was to explore perceptions and experiences of some key stakeholders of the group supervision courses within the Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology's school psychology training program. Through semi-structured interviews, the PI gathered feedback from students enrolled in supervision courses and the supervisors that led the courses. This feedback is thought to be critical in revealing some important aspects of the program's dissemination of an important professional practice, and ensure that goals are being met. The interview data provided valuable qualitative evidence of student and supervisor experience and perceptions of the supervision program. This data serves as a preliminary evaluation of the group supervision program and may inform necessary programmatic modification or amendment of current practices.

The PI was first introduced to clinical supervision by the late Dr. Karen Haboush. Dr. Haboush took a unique approach to clinical supervision, viewing it as a secure attachment base in which graduate students can foster their resilience, self-compassion, and clinical skills in a safe, nurturing space. The PI not only experienced Dr. Haboush's warm supervision style within



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the group context, but worked with Dr. Haboush closely during her first year of graduate training on a poster entitled, “ Enhancing self-compassion and resilience through clinical supervision and psychotherapy training: an attachment theory perspective.”

The PI became further interested in this research area as a current student and consumer of the supervision within GSAPP's school psychology training program, having completed five semesters of group supervision with three different supervisors. In addition, the investigator was motivated to explore both student and supervisor perspectives of the supervision experience for a more comprehensive evaluation. As a current upperclassman in the program, the PI had encountered varying perspectives and attitudes among peers on supervision experiences at GSAPP. Thus, the PI took an interest in learning about a myriad of aspects relevant to the group supervision process. It was important to enter into the study without a predetermined hypothesis, but rather let the interview content evolve naturalistically.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Clinical Supervision

The American Psychological Association in its *Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology* (2014) defines supervision as:

A distinct professional practice employing a collaborative relationship that has both facilitative and evaluative components, that extends over time, which has the goals of enhancing the professional competence and science-informed practice of the supervisee, monitoring the quality of services provided, protecting the public, and providing a gate keeping function for entry into the profession. Henceforth, supervision refers to clinical supervision and subsumes supervision conducted by all health service psychologists across the specialties of clinical, counseling, and school psychology. (6)

Supervision may be thought of as a cornerstone practice in the preparation and professional development of health service psychologists at becoming and maintaining competence in their specified field (APA, 2014). There is a vast amount of research on various aspects of supervision and a multitude of facets within the practice that make it abound with further opportunities for empirical research and clearly delineated guidelines.

Clinical Supervision in School Psychology

Coming to a consensus on a definition of supervision within school psychology has proven to be a challenge over the decades (Fagan and Wise 1994). McIntosh and Phelps (2000) supported this claim and attempted to develop a definition of the current state of supervision in the context of school psychology:

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Supervision is an interpersonal interaction between two or more individuals for the purpose of sharing knowledge, assessing professional competencies, and providing objective feedback with the terminal goals of developing new competencies, facilitating effective delivery of psychological services, and maintaining professional competencies.

(33)

McIntosh and Phelps (2000) note that the term 'supervision' is used somewhat generally in the literature and refers to a number of varying supervision settings that are often left for the reader to determine. However, it is important to note that the setting may influence varying aspects of the supervision such as the type, process, and outcomes. A further look at the setting and type of supervision is warranted to parse apart particular aspects that make supervision effective in a unique setting. NASP (2011) defines supervision in school psychology as follows:

Supervision in school psychology includes both professional and administrative supervision. It is provided through an ongoing, positive, systematic, collaborative process between the school psychologist and the school psychology supervisor. This process focuses on promoting effective growth and exemplary professional practice leading to improved performance by all, including the school psychologist, supervisor, students, and the entire school community. (1)

Both McIntosh and Phelps (2000) and NASP's (2011) definitions highlight supervision as a collaborative professional endeavor in which growth and competency are continuously achieved. APA and NASP's professional guidelines determine that supervision is a life-long practice, which should be attained not only for psychologists in training, but throughout the life of the career. NASP's (2010) recommendation for interns, and beginning school psychologists, is two hours of supervision per week. For other professionals, supervision should be attained at a rate

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that continues to ensure professional development. APA (1981) employs a more rigid recommendation, calling for all non-doctoral level school psychologists to be supervised continuously throughout their career by a doctoral level school psychologist. Although both psychological associations differ in their recommendations, it is clear that the practice of supervision is critical, and should be taken seriously to advance one's professional development and growth.

Although the practice of supervision is clearly conveyed as a critical activity in the field of school psychology, research has shown that rates of supervision practice do not corroborate this among practicing school psychologists (Zins et al., 1989; Ross and Goh, 1993; Chafouleas et al., 2002). There are alarming rates of professionals who do not receive adequate supervision in accordance with the NASP and APA guidelines. Of those that receive supervision, a limited percentage found that it enhanced their service delivery and professional skills (Zins et al., 1989).

### Group Supervision in School Psychology Training Programs

As supervision is a cornerstone activity within the school psychology discipline, one would assume that training programs have an important responsibility to foster a foundation of understanding and appreciation for the practice. To the contrary, many training programs fail to provide courses on supervision thus producing school psychologists who have not developed a model of how to provide their own supervision to supervisees and trainees in a training program context (Falender et al., 2013; Haboush, 2003). Thus, a majority of supervisors have not received a formal level of training in supervision (Falender & Shafranske, 2004).

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### *Supervisor Competency & Alliance*

Supervisor competency is a critical piece to the dissemination of effective supervision, which is why it is a startling truth that APA (2015) points out that to a large degree supervisor competency is assumed, and little attention has been paid to defining, measuring and evaluating supervisor competence (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014; Falender et al., 2013). The supervisory alliance is an area that has surfaced in the research as a core piece to effective evidence based supervision practices (Falender et al., 2014). Supervisor behaviors and character traits of warmth, empathy, genuineness, respect, flexibility, transparency, and a nonjudgmental viewpoint were identified as important to garnering a strong alliance (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). In addition, supervisors are more likely to form and maintain effective relationships and enhance self-efficacy in trainees by using a number of identified supervisory skills, which they would arguably gain from formal training (Falender & Shafranske, 2004). Goodyear (2014) proposed four learning strategies of modeling, feedback, direct instruction, and self-directed learning through reflective practice, arguing that their effects are mediated by the quality of the supervisory relationship.

### *Supervision Group Processes*

McIntosh and Phelps (2000) claim that supervision within school psychology training programs tends to be more hierarchical in nature, and employ an educative focus when compared to other supervision settings. To this point, Westervelt & Brantley (1981) found, in their activity analysis study, that there was a strong focus on technical information related to assessments and interventions. Ward & Brantley (1981) examined supervisor and supervisee perceptions of group supervision, finding that behaviors labeled as ambiguous, nondirective, lacking positive feedback and storytelling were identified by students as detrimental supervisor behaviors. In addition,

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supervisors viewed students who were assertive, prepared, considered feedback and presented themselves clearly contributed to a quality group supervision experience. A group supervision format is often used in training programs which is, by nature, equipped with its own dynamics and challenges. A supervisor who is aware and knowledgeable about group theory is critical to the healthy and effective functioning of a group (Haboush, 2003). Research on the processes within supervision in school psychology training programs is generally based on small sample sizes, and has provided somewhat preliminary qualitative outcomes. Although many studies are preliminary and not empirically-based, outcomes have provided a strong foundation for continued research in the area of supervision processes within training programs.

Along with the formal and technical nature of supervision, latent aspects of supervision are an area that has received some attention. Eshel and Koriat (2001) assert that there are latent aspects of training programs that surface through the informal messages delivered to its trainees. These messages are a reflection on the program's model of training and effect the supervision provided to the students. Eshel and Koriat coin two methods of supervision they call 'directing supervision' and 'enabling supervision.' The modes of supervision differ in their dissemination of knowledge as a supervisor shares their own problem solving methods in 'directing supervision' by which supervisees may internalize and essentially mimic in similar situations that they encounter. 'Enabling supervision' encourages trainees to build upon their own model of problem solving for issues they may encounter instead of being provided with a solution suitable to the supervisor. It is evident that there are fundamental underlying differences between the two methods; which therefore provides latent messages about how a training program expects its trainees to develop competencies. Haboush (2003) explored latent aspects of group supervision in a training program through an attachment and object relations perspective. Haboush likened

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supervision to a secure attachment base in which students can return to before going about their clinical work.

### *A Competency Framework*

The first push toward defining concrete competencies in psychology emerged roughly fifteen years ago. In November 2002, a *Competencies Conference* was held in Scottsdale Arizona, with representatives from various psychological groups, to discuss and reach agreement on areas of competency within supervision. Five key factors were identified as essential, and integral to all areas of the psychology profession, beginning with training (Falender et al., 2004). The five identified areas below are extracted directly from the consensus statement (Falender et al., 2004) following the conference:

1. Recognition that that acquisition of supervision competencies is a continual, developmental process that extends beyond competence (775)
2. Recognition that attention to diversity relates to all aspects of the supervision process and requires specific competence (775)
3. Recognition that attention to legal and ethical issues is essential (775)
4. Recognition that training is influenced by professional and personal factors including values, beliefs, interpersonal biases and conflicts that are considered to be sources of countertransference (776)
5. Recognition of the necessity that both self- and peer assessment occur regularly across all levels of supervisory development (776)

### *APA Guidelines for Supervision in Training Programs*

Although supervision has long been a requirement for developing professionals in training programs, recently, the American Psychological Association created a task force to

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develop guidelines for supervision in training programs (2014). The Guidelines on Supervision were established as a guide to inform competency-based supervision practices in training programs and promote seven key domains: (1) supervisor competence, (2) diversity, (3) relationships, (4) professionalism, (5) assessment/evaluation/feedback, (6) problems of professional competence, and (7) ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations. APA posits that supervision that is competency based requires a specific framework and methodology to not only initiate, but also to develop, execute, and assess process variables and outcomes of the supervision. In this way, competence becomes the measureable criterion-based standard in which to assess trainees (Falender et al., 2004). There has been a move toward this competency-based assessment for some time as various APA guidelines and principles address practicing within ones competence and training students in terms of competencies (Falender et al., 2004). As competencies and guidelines are defined in the context of supervision, the focus moves toward the way in which these competencies can be measured and assessed.

NASP (2011) strongly recommends and highlights the importance of the training and evaluation of supervisors of school psychology students. In addition, NASP encourages the evaluation of the program of supervision in its promotion of professional development and effective service delivery.



CHAPTER III

METHOD OF INVESTIGATION

Rationale for the Qualitative Methodology: Grounded Theory

This study was approached and conceptualized using the qualitative analytic methodology driven by Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). In this way, the PI examined stakeholder perceptions and experiences gleaned from the interviews in a systematic manner. Walker and Myrick (2006) astutely point out that qualitative research has the unique capability to “create rich descriptions and understandings of social life” (p. 549). They highlight that qualitative analysis aims to filter this information into themes or essences, which then can be worked into theory (2006). The PI transcribed all interview data to allow for qualitative analysis using Grounded Theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded Theory analysis uses a complex ordering process beginning with basic description, to increased conceptual ordering, then finally to theorizing (Patton, 2002). Within this process, the coding of data is thought to be fundamental, and what transforms the data from “transcript to theory” (Walker & Myrick, 2006, p. 549).

Participants

*Supervisors*

All group supervision course supervisors in the GSAPP School Psychology training program were invited to participate in the study. A total of (4) supervisors were provided informed consent and interviewed using the Supervisor Interview Protocol and the Supervisor Interview Response Sheet (see Appendix). Supervisors were required to currently supervise a supervision course for cohort years one, two and/or three within the training program to be eligible participants for the study. Exclusionary criteria were applied to supervisors who have supervised GSAPP School Psychology group supervision courses prior to 2018.

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### *Students*

Student participants (22) included doctoral psychology students in cohort years one, two, and three of the GSAPP School Psychology training program. Some students entered the program as “advanced,” meaning they have received prior graduate training before enrolling in GSAPP. In some cases, advanced students are able to waive certain didactic course requirements; however, advanced students are required to enroll in group supervision while participating in practica. The number of enrolled students (both typical and advanced) varies per cohort; every student received a request for their participation in the study. Participants were provided informed consent and interviewed using the Student Interview Protocol and the Student Interview Response Sheet (see Appendix). Students were required to be currently enrolled in cohort years one, two, or three of the School Psychology training program and be enrolled in a group supervision course for credits. Exclusionary criteria applied to students in their internship year of training. Students on internship are provided other supervision experiences that are not the focus of this study.

### Measures

#### *Interview Protocols*

The PI used the Student Interview Questionnaire and Supervisor Interview Questionnaire to serve as a guide to the interview process (see Appendix). Both the Supervisor Interview Questionnaire and Student Interview Questionnaire consist of a set of 19 question items. Items vary in response style, with three items requiring a numerical rating type response, and 16 items requesting verbal elaboration. Question items were formed to examine the nature of supervision activities and experiences, group dynamics, competency development, feedback, supervisory style and effectiveness, and personal perceptions of the overall supervision experience.

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### *Interview Response Forms*

Participants recorded numerical responses for the three aforementioned items on the corresponding Interview Response Sheet. One item provided a five-point Likert type scale ranging from (1) All Positive to (5) All Negative. Another item asked the participant to allocate percentages of time spent on various topic areas. A final item provided a list of supervision competency domains and asked participants to rate the frequency of focus on a four-point Likert type scale ranging from (1) Never Focus to (4) Frequent Focus.

### Procedure

Participants were solicited using a convenience sampling method. The PI distributed a recruitment email to students in cohort years one, two, and three of the School Psychology training program asking for their participation in the study. The PI distributed a separate recruitment email to current group supervision supervisors in the School Psychology training program asking for their participation in the study. In addition, to elicit further recruitment responses, the program secretary disseminated the email to students. The Principal Investigator also made an oral announcement in three supervision groups and one academic class to elicit recruitment responses from students.

Interviews took place at a time and location mutually agreed upon by the PI and participant. The PI provided informed consent, and obtained consent to audio record and transcribe interviews, before engaging participants in the study. Subjects participated in a single one-on-one interview with the PI, in person or over the phone, lasting approximately 30 minutes in duration. The PI informed the participant that regardless of completion of the interview, consent to use interview responses in the study and/or audio record the interview, the participant

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would be eligible to win a \$25 Amazon gift card from a lottery of study participants upon study completion.

With the consent of the participant, audio files were transcribed and saved as electronic documents on the PI's personal computer. All research data, including hard copies of protocols, audio files, and data files, will be retained for three years following the end of the data analysis. During the time prior to study completion, all data will be stored in a lock box securely in the PI's home. Upon completion of the study, data transcription files, audio files and written notes will be destroyed. Paperwork will be shredded, audio files will be destroyed and transcription electronic files permanently deleted. At no time will individual study data be available for public review.

### Interviewer's Background

The PI was a current third year student in GSAPP's School Psychology training program at the time of the study. She was a twenty-seven-year-old, Caucasian, Catholic female. It was acknowledged that the PI may know some of the study participants and may have had supervision experiences with some of the participants and supervisors involved in the study. However, because the PI was an upperclassman in the program, she does not personally know the majority of participants in cohort years one and two. Given the voluntary nature of participant involvement and the exploratory, general nature of the interview content, the interviewer's prior exposure was not thought to be a detriment to the study.

### Data Analytic Plan

The PI followed the Grounded Theory analytic procedures aligned with Strauss and Corbin (1990) which follow a constant comparative method divided into three distinct phases: open, axial, and selective. In open coding, the researcher engaged with the data in an "analytic

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process through which concepts are identified and their properties and dimensions are discovered in the data” (p.101). Similar data was grouped together and conceptually labeled. In axial coding, the researcher was tasked with putting the dismantled data back together in meaningful ways by creating new categories and sub categories and understanding the relationships between each (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Finally, in selective coding, the researcher integrated the data in a way in which a theme, story, or hypothesis emerged which contributed and created theory (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To do this, core categories were created, which related to other categories, and tied other categories together (Walker & Myrick, 2006). The PI used Scott and Howell’s (2008) conditional relationship guide to form categories during open and axial coding phases. During the last phases of coding, selective coding, the PI referred to the reflective coding matrix (Scott & Howell, 2008) to integrate all of the interpretive categories of the analysis to explain the story line and evoke theory. Through using these two interpretive instruments, important questions were addressed in relation to the structure of the central phenomenon and the nature of the dynamic process (Scott & Howell, 2008).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Results I: Factors Impacting Supervisor Prior Experience and Current Involvement, Purpose and Importance, Structure, Experience and Process in Group Supervision, Evaluation, Impact; Points of Programmatic Consideration: Coding Phase I

During the first phase of data analysis using Grounded Theory, the Principal Investigator analyzed participant responses to interview question items using open coding. During this phase, the PI broadly categorized response data into seven categories, then within categories, deciphered a number of overlapping themes emerging from participant response data. The following categories were identified: Supervisor prior experience and involvement factors, purpose and importance factors, structural factors, experience and process in group supervision, evaluative factors, impact factors, and points of programmatic consideration. Themes emerged within these seven categories during the first phase of coding. Some themes were specific between supervisor or student participant groups, and some themes overlapped across the participant groups.

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### *Supervisor Prior Experience and Current Involvement Factors*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors that influenced supervisor involvement in the GSAPP school psychology group supervision program and prior supervisory experiences and training. Within this category, supervisors shared similar factors, which translated to overlapping themes during data analysis. Supervisor responses converged on the following experience and involvement factors including: direct supervision training, previous supervisory experience, and preexisting relationship with faculty.

#### *Direct Supervision Training*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants identified having training in supervision during their graduate education, with 75% reporting they participated in a GSAPP supervision course that is no longer included in the program. When asked further about this course, one supervisor stated, "I think it's been folded in, because there are so many more requirements now, according to APA, and I know that's one of the ones they had to get rid of." The supervisor who did not have GSAPP graduate training explained her supervision training, "We had what I would call scaffolded experiences. Second and third years would supervise a less advanced student, then our supervisor would observe and give us feedback on our supervision."

Seventy-five percent of supervisor participants indicated they seek out continuing education credits through professional development in supervision. One supervisor discussed a dual license in New Jersey and Pennsylvania stating, "In Pennsylvania it's a requirement that if you are doing any supervision at all, you have to have a certain number of CEs in supervision every time you renew your license." Another supervisor discussed obtaining continuing education through her job in a school stating, "I've done a lot of professional development mostly through my role as director of special services, not through GSAPP."

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### *Previous Supervisory Experience*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants identified having other supervisory roles and experiences prior to supervising in GSAPP's school psychology group supervision program. Supervisors had a range of experiences in varied settings. One supervisor participant discussed previous experience running an outpatient program at a local hospital stating, "I ran two or three weekly group supervisions there, and I also supervised the students individually." Two supervisor participants worked in schools for a majority of their careers, becoming directors of special services. Another supervisor participant had prior supervisory experience in assessment.

Supervisor participants ranged in the amount of time they supervised prior to coming to GSAPP, ranging from seven point five to 25 years, with an average of eighteen years prior supervisory experience. Supervisor participants also ranged in the amount of time they have supervised in GSAPP's school psychology group supervision program, ranging from one year to ten years, with an average of five point twenty-five years.

### *Preexisting Relationship with Faculty*

Seventy-five percent of supervisor participants were recruited to become group supervision supervisors because of a connection with a faculty member. The 75% of participants are GSAPP alumni that had continued ties with the program and preexisting relationships with faculty members. Of the 75%, supervisor participants mentioned faculty members, Ken Schneider, Lew Gantwerk, and Karen Haboush, reaching out to them because of a sabbatical opening or supervising opportunity at GSAPP. One supervisor stated, "Karen Haboush asked me. I began teaching here about three or four years ago when Anne Gregory went on sabbatical...and I ran into Karen and she said they needed another supervisor for the fall for group supervision and that's how I became back involved here." Another supervisor stated, "Ken



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Schneider reached out to me and asked because there was a professor going on sabbatical, so he asked me to teach one of the courses... then Susan Forman came in and took over and she kind of reassigned me to the advanced supervision group.”

### *Purpose and Importance Factors*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors related to the significance of supervision as a professional activity and the supervisory role. Within this category, supervisor and student participants reported similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes within groups and across groups during data analysis.

Supervisor participant responses converged on the following purpose and importance factors including: challenge of being removed from the site, gatekeeping responsibility, desire to continue learning and changing, and continual balance between structure and responsiveness. Student participant responses converged on the following purpose and importance factors including: Lacking explanation of supervision activity and mixed attitude toward group supervision. Student and supervisor responses converged on the following factors: Varied attitudes toward amount of group supervision provided and supervisor personal account and opinion.

### *Challenge of Being Removed from the Site*

Fifty percent of supervisor participants discussed the challenges of being removed from the various practicum sites where students work. One supervisor stated, “I’m not on site, so the kind of supervision I can provide is very different than a site supervisor could...because the site supervisor can actually see them in action, while I can just only know about what they tell me...when I did it on site, in the district, I felt I had more understanding of when they needed help, when they didn’t. When you’re supervising off-site, you’re counting on their presentation

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to be accurate.” Another supervisor addresses this difficult off-site dynamic, reporting, “It’s hard, because I always say that I’m their supervisor here at GSAPP, but technically what they’re doing in their practicum, they’re responsible to that supervisor on site.”

### *Gatekeeping Responsibility*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants viewed it their role and responsibility to give feedback to students regarding their professional competence. Seventy-five percent addressed this responsibility in the context of their supervisee’s responsibility for the mental health of other people and conducting themselves competently in clinical settings. One supervisor stated, “Sometimes the responsibility of that feels overwhelming...the immediate responsibility of what they’re [the students] doing now that impacts their clients, their students.” Another supervisor unequivocally stated, “it’s 100% my responsibility. I guess I take it pretty seriously in terms of the fact that we’re turning out professionals who are responsible for the mental health of other people, and so, if I have concerns about something, if I notice something, it’s my responsibility to, not just for the student, but for every client they’ll ever have, or every professional work setting they’ll ever be in, it’s my responsibility to contribute to their development in a positive way.” Another supervisor more generally stated, “I feel that I can hopefully say it in a nice way that they can hear it, because if they repeat some of this behavior outside of the supervision group, they could be given feedback in a not so gentle, constructive way. It’s never to be mean spirited or character assassination, but I know that what happens here is a microcosm of what happens in the world, and I want to be able to see if I can help with that too.”

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### *Desire to Continue Learning and Changing*

When discussing how supervisors have changed over time and areas for improvement, 75% discussed a desire and need to continue learning and changing in the future. Fifty percent discussed a reciprocal relationship they experience by learning from the students they supervise, as well as a motivation to stay up to date and current on issues in psychology. One supervisor stated, "I always think I can improve, I always want to improve...what I love about supervision is that even though I've been practicing a long time, I still love learning, and I love learning from what you and your cohort are doing. I find I'm constantly learning, and I love that piece." Another supervisor commented, "There's changes within the field, keeping up with that, sometimes I feel I learn a lot from my students and that's always a great thing, but you know, sometimes I feel pressured to be bringing in more current practices, and this is why I like that I work in the field because I can bring that to GSAPP."

### *Continual Balance Between Structure and Responsiveness*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants discussed their efforts around implementing some structure in their groups as well as being responsive to student needs. One supervisor stated, "I think I like the fact that I've become more structured, it gives me a sense of security in that I'm providing the students with something more tangible. But I don't want to do it to the degree that I'm not being responsive to their supervision needs...so it's a balancing act. Each year it's different. The balancing is different depending on where the students are placed and what their backgrounds and goals are." Another supervisor found balance with a different level of structure, with the same goal of responsiveness in mind. "I would say I've become less structured, and more responsive to student needs...first semester I was more structured, so we were following a course outline, we had a specific topic each week. I felt that it was forced, and

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didn't contribute to the most participation...It was my first time supervising at GSAPP so the structure was something that I used to feel prepared. But what I found was that it just didn't flow. So I really dropped a lot of that structure toward the end of the first semester, and I felt that was actually better for supervision.”

### *Lacking Explanation of Supervision Activity*

A total of 40.9% of student participants across cohort years indicated a lack of and/or unclear explanation of the professional activity of supervision.

In the first year cohort, 66.7% or 4 of 6 first year participants demonstrated a confused understanding of the professional activity. Two students made unclear parallels between group supervision and group therapy. One student stated, "...That definitely wasn't explained, that it was going to be a group therapy thing, because it definitely wasn't. It felt like another lecture in which we also shared our experiences, but not shared with each other, shared with [supervisor], and the others listened...which isn't group therapy to me.” Another first year commented, “[Supervisor] said what [group supervision] wasn't. [Supervisor] said ‘this is not group therapy,’ and [supervisor] actually said ‘it's not gonna be like a class, it's gonna be more of your experiences,’ but it wasn't...so I'm still confused. I still don't know what it's supposed to be.”

In the second year cohort, 25% or 3 of 8 second year participants indicated a lacking understanding of the importance of supervision. One student indicated, “I think people question the meaning or the purpose.”

In the third year cohort, 62.6 % or 5 of 8 third year participants indicated this lacking understanding. One third year student stated, “Never once was [the process and importance] touched upon.” Similarly, another third year student commented, “Nobody ever really explained the importance of it. It was almost, I guess, understood.” Finally, another third year reflected, “I

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don't recall anybody ever sitting us down and saying this is why we do supervision, this is the reason. I don't think that ever happened.”

### *Mixed Attitude Toward Group Supervision*

Overall, across cohort years, the student attitude toward group supervision is mixed as evidenced by 54.5% of student participant responses. Another 27.2% indicated negative attitudes toward group supervision, and 18.2% indicated positive attitudes.

More specifically, in the first year cohort, 83.3% reported a mixed attitude, 16.7% reported a negative attitude, and zero percent reported a positive attitude. One first year student grappled with other student's usage of the time stating, “I find that unfortunately some people don't take it seriously and are wasting time on their laptops or whatever, and I find that often students use it as more of a rehashing of the week's events, entertaining experiences that happened. There is a time and place for that, but the question is whether supervision is the place for that...I'm not sure how much of it was purposeful or how much could have been addressed to friends or family, as opposed to colleagues and the professor.”

In the second year cohort, 50% reported a mixed attitude, 25% reported a positive attitude, and 25% reported a negative attitude. One second year student commented, “I think most student's don't appreciate it so much. It's just the sense I get, like people don't really think it's constructive.” Another second year stated, “I think there's kind of a general feeling of people saying ‘it's a waste of time,’ or ‘it's long,’ or ‘we spend a lot of time doing it’...and kind of questioning what they are really gaining from it.”

In the third year cohort, 37.5% reported a mixed attitude, 37.5% reported a negative attitude, and 25% reported a positive attitude. One third year student stated, “I think it's very casual, I think people kind of see it as a time to relax and just chat about what's going on at their

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sites...which I haven't found to be a problem...but I think it can be improved and I think people can take it more seriously...and then depending on what supervisor people have it's like 'oh yea it's a joke, or it's something I actually have to go to.'"

Across cohort years, 13 of 22, or 59.1% discussed attitudes toward group supervision relative to the supervisor. One student discussed several aspects related to the group's supervisor commenting, "I think it's dependent on who the supervisor is...so I guess it depends how the supervisor utilizes it. I think in groups where the supervisor really uses the time wisely, and can address student concerns that were coming up in practicum, are the groups where students really benefitted and had a positive attitude."

### *Varied Attitudes Toward Amount of Group Supervision Provided*

Student opinions regarding the amount of group supervision provided were variable, generally contingent on multiple factors including the amount of individual and group supervision provided in practicum sites, whether the supervisor uses the whole supervision time, and the quality/structure of the group. Fifty-four point five percent of students indicated the amount of group supervision was adequate, 31.8% deemed it excessive, and 13.6% felt it was inadequate. Although the majority of responses indicated the amount provided is adequate, 31.8% of students, including some that reported the amount as adequate, couldn't easily parse apart the quantity from the quality. These students discussed the need for attention regarding quality and structural factors across the groups. For example, one first year stated, "It would be adequate if it was structured or framed differently. Some of it was helpful. I find it valuable. When I spoke I made an effort to make it more purposeful and use it as a valuable time to reflect and discuss matters related to practicum. As a whole, I find that it leaves much to be desired." A second year student stated, "I think it's adequate, but I think I would like if it was better

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structured, if there was a better use of time.” A third year student similarly stated, “I think it’s adequate as long as the supervisor is really utilizing the time appropriately and being productive with it.”

Supervisors discussed more globally the amount of supervision students receive over time within the program. One-hundred percent of supervisors indicated they believe students feel overly supervised, and take that into account in the way they run their groups. One supervisor stated, “My sense is that they feel excessively supervised. Especially as third year students, when they’ve already had two semesters of Advanced Group Supervision during their second year. I think, my sense of things is, GSAPP students feel like, ‘oh another supervision class.’” Another supervisor indicated, “I’ve had really difficult groups, where I feel like students are not at all interested in supervision. I call it ‘supervision burnout.’ I feel like sometimes students are getting so much supervision it’s like beating a dead horse. They’ve talked about this case in practicum, in an assessment class, in individual supervision, in group supervision, they’re just so done talking about these cases.”

### *Supervisor Personal Account and Opinion*

The theme, supervisor personal account and opinion, was discussed by both student participants and supervisory participants, creating a converging experience, reflected in the interview response data. Supervisors shared their own personal accounts and beliefs about supervision within their groups. Seventy-five percent of supervisor participants indicated they view supervision as an ongoing professional activity and make efforts to demonstrate this in their supervision groups, thereby modeling a career-long engagement to their students. One supervisor stated, “It’s an ongoing growth process, so we really try to look at supervision as something not that you just have to jump through to get through GSAPP, but building a skill that you’re going

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to use throughout your whole professional career.” Similarly, another supervisor commented, “It’s not something that you just take as a class and it ends, but supervision, I think should be a part of every psychologist’s professional development.” Another supervisor discussed the implications of failing to pursue continued supervision after licensure stating, “I truly believe, and I convey this, that people that don’t get supervision, even after they’re licensed, are flirting with some unethical kinds of issues. I think everyone really should throughout their lives, make sure they are in peer supervision groups if nothing is provided at work. I feel really strongly about that because none of us have the answers to everything. We need other people’s perspectives and thoughts.”

Forty point nine percent, or nine of twenty-two students, also discussed this experience of supervisory modeling within their group supervision experiences. One student stated, “It was definitely legitimate, because they do the same thing in their professional life, which is nice...I understand from their point of view why it’s so important.” Similarly, another student recalled, “When I first had [supervisor A], it was explained, and [supervisor A] always speaks about [supervisor A’s] own peer group, and so does [supervisor B], like the importance of continuing to have supervision.”

### *Structural Factors*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors related to the structure within and across supervision groups. Within this category, supervisor and student participants reported similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes within groups and across groups during data analysis.

Student participant responses converged on the following structural factors: varied structure and expectations across groups, less assessment coverage than students desire, and



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venting and negativity. Student and supervisor responses converged on the following structural factors: responsiveness to student needs and informal guidelines around electronics.

### *Varied Structure Across Groups*

Forty-five point five percent, or 10 of 22 students, discussed the varied structure across different supervision groups. Students discussed differences such as how supervisors managed group dynamics, used the allotted time, and were responsive to needs. Students generally indicated a certain supervisor or style that did or did not fit for them personally. One student pointed out large differences between two supervisors stating, "I don't think [supervisor A] had enough structure, because I never quite knew what we were doing. I just remember playing that game and being like 'why are we playing a game.' [Supervisor B] almost had too much structure, it wasn't structure, it was more like lesson plans. I would say [supervisor B] had a little too much." Another student discussed a particular group's dynamics and the supervisory relationship stating, "It's been great except for last year's group. That was not good. It was too much storytelling, not enough sharing was happening. So I didn't really get too much out of it in terms of case examples, and how to work with different types of students. I didn't feel close to [supervisor] or connected in any way."

### *Less Assessment Coverage than Students Desire*

Thirty-one point eight percent of students indicated a desire to spend more time during group supervision specifically discussing assessment related topics. Students generally noted that they felt they could have requested more of this topic area specifically or felt that it was not the supervisor's area of specialty. One student indicated, "I would've preferred if we had spent a day talking about an assessment battery, like let's talk about how we would present this to a parent, what are you going to say?" Another student stated, "I personally, and I guess this is my fault for

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not saying I wanted to discuss assessment, but I could have used a little more guidance with assessment, like writing recommendations and interpretation.”

### *Venting and Negativity*

Twenty-seven point three percent of students discussed venting and negativity in their groups as something they would have preferred less of. One student discussed this stating, “It usually ended up being negative when people talked about things going on at GSAPP or the way the clinic was run. At the same time, I do recognize that people kind of need to let out steam sometimes, and it’s a space for it, and it’s an important space for it. For me personally, I didn’t feel it as much, but I understood the need for other people.” Similarly, another student commented, “I felt like it got very negative. When it’s GSAPP supervision, it becomes this place where people go and complain...it got negative very quickly, and if that was the tone that day, then that’s what people were doing. Even if I didn’t have a bad week, I left feeling like I did.”

### *Responsiveness to Student Needs*

The theme of responsiveness to student needs was discussed by both student participants and supervisory participants, creating a converging experience, reflected in the interview response data.

Thirty-six point four percent of student participants discussed feeling like supervision groups were student directed and supervisors were responsive to topics of interests and student’s needs. One student discussed this dynamic, “...They started off very open, they said ‘this is your time’ and gave a general idea about what we were going to be doing, and at the same time said, ‘what would you want us to be doing or covering?’ I think that got a lot of buy in...I think the students really appreciated that...I think because of that it was largely beneficial for everybody.” Similarly, another student discussed this responsiveness in how the supervisor structured the

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group reporting, "I think [supervisor] got our input on how we wanted to utilize supervision...what we wanted to incorporate in some of the sessions...[supervisor] really got our input, because [supervisor] wanted to make it a meaningful experience for us."

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants discussed the importance and emphasis they place on student input and needs in defining their group structure. One supervisor stated, "I think my role as a supervisor is to respond to what the students are bringing in. I don't have a personal agenda for supervision, my area of interest and expertise is assessment, so if I could talk about assessment for three hours I would, but I don't necessarily think that's what the students are looking for...so, I think it's my job to be responsive to what students bring in from the field." Another supervisor discussed how each unique group of students helps define the structure stating, "I need to get the layout of the students in the group. I've been very fortunate having great students that kind of help me figure that out. I want to balance providing didactic information along with not having too much structure so people can bring in whatever else is going on for them. Another supervisor discussed the unique structure of the group, which allows students the opportunity to do additional research on a relevant topic area arising in their work. "If it comes up, I ask if they are interested in doing some research, and every single student has said 'yes.' The feedback I got from them was that they like that component because it was something that was pertinent to them, what they were facing in their work."

### *Informal Guidelines Around Electronics*

The theme of informal guidelines around electronics emerged through responses of both student participants and supervisory participants, creating a converging experience. One-hundred percent of supervisor participants discussed a unique style in addressing electronics in their groups, generally somewhat loose and informal. One supervisor explained, "I ask them not to. I

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do it in the beginning and if it comes up I try to use a little bit of humor. I'll say, 'your input is too important.'" Another supervisor takes an even more lackadaisical approach. "The first time it was happening, I didn't do much with it...because I kind of run my groups like you guys are adults and you want to make use of this." Another supervisor stated, "I'm very mindful that technology is here to stay. I did not find it a problem in my group this year or last year. I've given out an article for everyone to read about what happens with multitasking, when you're on technology and social media."

Students also discussed electronics usage during group supervision. Fifty-four point five percent of students discussed loose or non-existent guidelines around electronics usage in group supervision. Thirty-one point eight percent discussed negative experiences within group supervision regarding electronics usage, specifically indicating a change in the environment and group dynamics. One student speaks to this atmosphere stating, "It bothered me when students were using computers or iPads or whatever because obviously if they were looking something up that was being discussed it was fine, but if it was consistent over the whole time then it was distracting. [Supervisor] didn't say anything about it." Another student spoke to this dynamic stating, "You don't want to hear someone tapping away the keys on their laptop, you want to be respectful of each other. I think often in classes, there's still a lot of indirect disrespect. If someone is offering their opinion in class and you hear tapping away you know you don't have everyone's attention. It can be a little discouraging, people may not feel like they want to open up and share because they may feel like they aren't going to be heard anyway."

Another student provided a detailed account of her experience with electronics usage in group supervision. "People were full on responding to emails, searching through Facebook. I know we do that during class, it happens, we shouldn't, but we do it, it's fine. But supervision is

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a time when people are sharing things they are having a difficult time with...more so, it's confidential...you can easily click on Facebook and message or text through your computer and be like 'this person won't shut up' and all of a sudden any confidence you have in the group process and being able to turn to those people for help disappears and it completely changes the atmosphere. This student went on to explain she brought up this issue to the group supervisor openly one group and recalled being met with a response akin to 'I don't care'. She subsequently stated, "I found it extremely frustrating because it is a big deal...It totally changed it because at one point I was like 'well I need to do work, maybe I'll just bring my work [to group supervision]."

### *Experience and Processes in Group Supervision*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors related to the experience and group processes within supervision groups. Within this category, both supervisor and student participants reported similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes within groups during data analysis.

Student participant responses converged on the following experience and process factors: Generally positive experience and increase in engagement and feedback ability over time. Supervisor participant responses converged on the following experience and process factors: Mixed cohort dynamics, different type of engagement expected than in didactic class, and group dynamics addressed through redirection and individual feedback.

### *Generally Positive Experience*

Despite reported variability and inconsistencies across groups in other areas, when asked about their overall experiences in group supervision, students generally felt positively. Sixty-eight point two percent of student participants rated their experiences in group supervision as

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'mostly positive.' Eighteen point two percent rated their experience as 'all positive.' Thirteen point six percent rated their experience as 'neutral.'

A third year student stated, "It hasn't been completely, fully always a positive experience, some days have been a bit slow, or a supervisor isn't perfect, but for the most part I've had pretty good experiences in supervision. Especially talking with other individuals through my problems and about their problems...having different perspectives, the peer component." A second year reported, "I've had almost exclusively positive experiences, however, there have been times, whether it be myself, or just the group is running long, and there will be times where I'm bored, or not wanting to pay attention. But then conversely, there are times when I'm super engaged and focus and really appreciating everyone else's experiences. So I think it's not only how you're going into it, but also what everyone's bringing to the table." A first year student stated, "I feel like it was a really good experience, I was able to hear a lot about my classmates experiences, which helped me to gage what's going on with me and how I can maybe modify my experience...overall it felt very positive."

### *Increase in Engagement and Feedback Ability Over Time*

Of the group of students who were nearing completion of their group supervision requirement within GSAPP, 77.8% discussed how they felt their participation changed over time. These students discussed how it took some time to get used to the expectations and etiquette of this new activity. As time went on, they went from passive participant to active participant, with an enhanced ability to engage and provide meaningful feedback to the less advanced students. One student indicated, "I think I was definitely more engaged in it by the time I got to my third year. I guess because I knew more of the purpose of it, I'd gained more knowledge over the semesters, and was able to apply more to my own issues and other students. So I was able to be

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more active in it, and felt like I could kind of help out my peers. So overall, I was more engaged in the process the further along I got into it.” Similarly, another student stated, “I think I felt like, first and second year I was looking toward the people above me for advice...then by third year it was like now I have to provide that...like I’m the person that should have an answer, rather than bringing a bunch of problems. So I think the combined aspect made it feel like you’re progressing through group supervision from a participator to an advice giver.”

### *Mixed Cohort Dynamics*

Supervisor participants discussed some group processes related to the mixed cohort composition of the advanced supervision groups. Fifty percent of supervisor participants discussed the challenges of balancing varied cohort needs. One supervisor discussed the difference in the work students are involved in across cohort years stating, “I think it’s a tough group...I find that if we’re dealing with a lot of clinical issues one session, then the students who aren’t seeing clinic cases or are not assigned to a clinical setting...we kind of lose them a bit. So it’s harder, it really is.” Another supervisor speaks to this dichotomy stating, “I try to make sure that I balance something that will keep the third years engaged and peak the interest of the second years...something that isn’t too low for the third years but not too advanced for the second years. A year makes a big difference in the program. By third year, you’ve finished your school-based practica. Second years have a school-based practica, and some of them have a second practica too. So it’s trying to find enough overlap so that everyone is interested.”

The other 50% of supervisors discussed a beneficial interrelation and balance between cohort years. One supervisor speaks to the aforementioned difference in settings stating, “You would think that sometimes the third years might kind of dominate, just because they’re a little further, and they have more knowledge...but it’s a really nice balance. I think the only time the

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difference is kind of apparent is most of the younger cohort are doing school-based, whereas some of the advanced students are in more clinical settings. But it's a really nice balance in terms of hearing different cases, and having the third years support...they've kind of been there, been through it, and can offer some different suggestions. It really has not been a negative issue."

Another supervisor spoke to the dynamics between these students similarly stating, "I think generally speaking, the advanced students are more confident. Especially during the first semester, I expect more of them in terms of being able to provide feedback to other students, being able to reflect on their own practice, contribute to group...I think with the more junior cohort it's sort of recognizing where they're at and really trying to build their confidence and competence. I use the third years to help with that...I think having the second and third years be able to relate to one another, and the third years kind of model growth and confidence is really unique and helpful."

### *Different Type of Engagement Expected than in Didactic Class*

Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed a different type of engagement expected of students in group supervision, marked by an increased level of group collaboration, feedback, and self-reflection. One supervisor touches on this self-reflective element stating, "It's more self-revealing...I welcome it because that's part of supervision that's very different than a course. You're expected to kind of do a lot of soul-searching and looking at your work in that kind of way." Another supervisor discussed a unique way of setting the group up for this dynamic, stating, "I encourage them to put computers down, we look at each other. The students are so used to kind of being instructed, and that's why in the beginning of every supervision year I talk about the difference between teaching, supervision, and therapy...so that they know with supervision, that the information goes across, it's not just me disseminating information."



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### *Group Dynamics Addressed Through Redirection and Individual Feedback*

One-hundred percent of supervisors acknowledged they have experienced a range of group dynamics in their supervision groups. All supervisors discussed instances in which they've provided individual feedback to certain trainees outside of group, however this varied in terms of frequency and style of feedback. Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed how they first intervene within the group, using redirection, before resorting to an individual conversation. One supervisor stated, "The most difficult thing is that we have the two ends of the spectrum, sometimes that makes it difficult. We have the person that hardly ever talks or says anything, and then we have the one that dominates a lot. Those have definitely been issues that have come up...It's really just redirecting the group to equalize how people are participating...I always start with trying inside the group. There's only been maybe one or two times I've had to talk to a student outside of class, like a follow up." Another supervisor similarly uses redirection within the group when certain students are dominating conversation, before talking to students individually. "I would address it subtly within the group by trying to redirect, or trying to redirect or move the conversation along, or takes breaks at certain points, or ask specific questions to get the student to move on. At the end of the year, which was too late, I addressed the dynamic with both the person who was dominating, and with the student I felt handled that in an unprofessional way." Another supervisor stated, "I wanted to sit back and watch before I jumped in there. This is what happens in groups...how to be able to give feedback and to be able to receive it...I wanted to see it play out as long as it didn't go down the rabbit hole...I will often reach out to students one-on-one, either via phone or email, if I can't talk with them face to face, to be able to reflect what I'm aware of, and to be able to see if they are aware of it too."

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### *Evaluative Factors*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors related to grading criteria, and student and supervisory competency and feedback. Within this category, supervisor and student participants reported similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes within groups and across groups during data analysis.

Student participant responses converged on the following evaluative factors: Supervisory support and feedback, lacking student knowledge of supervision competencies, informal student reflection on clinical growth. Supervisor responses converged on the following evaluative factors: Attend physically and professionally and need for increased competency-based feedback. Supervisor and student responses converged on the following evaluative factor: APA supervision competency domains.

### *Supervisory Support and Feedback*

Sixty-six point seven percent of first year students discussed their positive experience receiving extra feedback and support outside of the supervision group from their supervisor, through emails, phone calls, and in-person interactions. This was generally around situations students were not comfortable discussing in the group context or logistical issues around their practicum placement. One first year had an issue at the practicum site she discussed with the supervisor individually. "I ran into a problem, and I approached [supervisor] about it. [Supervisor] was very helpful to me. You know we kind of worked it out...we met and spoke about it outside of supervision. That was helpful for me." Another first year spoke with the supervisor following an incident at practicum in which she needed support outside the supervision group. "[Supervisor] was incredible with me personally. [Supervisor] spoke to me on

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the phone following a concerning incident at practicum with my site supervisor. So [supervisor] spoke to me on the phone about it...it was really helpful.”

Forty-five point five percent of students discussed their supervisors providing adequate amounts of feedback verbally within group, in the form of case input, praise, encouragement, and positive statements. One student discussed a very positive experience with a supervisor's feedback style stating, “[Supervisor] definitely gave pointed feedback, like very practical. [Supervisor] didn't just jump right in and give answers, [supervisor] wanted to hear what we had to say first, but then, especially if people didn't cover something important, [supervisor] would always give very pointed feedback, which was relevant, especially based off of [supervisor]'s experience.

### *Lacking Student Knowledge of Supervision Competencies*

Sixty-eight point two percent of students indicated that they either did not know there were supervision competencies or vaguely knew of them generally, but knew nothing specific. One student stated, “I feel like I know of that. I know they exist, I don't know specifically what they are. I think we may have gone over it, but I don't remember anything.”

Thirty-one point eight percent of students reported they knew the professional psychological organizations have supervision competencies, but when asked further about it could not identify any specific competencies. One student indicated, “I definitely learned it in group supervision...I also work in [professor]'s lab, so sometimes I learn about more broad program things...so I think it has come up in conversation with [professor] as well...but I don't know the specific competencies or how they read.”

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### *Informal Student Reflection on Clinical Growth*

Students discussed an informal reflection about their growth as clinicians, over any formal tracking or assessment based on competency attainment in supervision. Eighty-one point eight percent of students indicated they did not track their progress and/or attainment of specific supervision competencies over time. Rather, some of these students discussed informally noticing and/or reflecting on progress over time in some clinical areas. One student stated, "I can't say I evaluated myself. I'd say at the beginning of first semester this year, and beginning of second semester, I did kind of reflect on the changes since the previous semester. I guess at the beginning of the year I had reflected on how much I had learned and gained in practicum."

Of the 18.2% of students that discussed a more formal reflection process, they indicated it was prompted by a goal setting activity within their group in which they identified goals and periodically reflected on progress toward reaching those goals. Goals generally seemed to be derived around practicum experiences, with no required grounding in supervision competencies. One student spoke to this, "We always wrote goals in supervision. But they were always goals for practicum. I've tracked those, like possibly through the process of supervision, but they were never goals for supervision itself."

### *Attend Physically and Professionally*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants discussed the current evaluation system generally boiling down to student's attendance and participation resulting in a "pass" for group supervision. One supervisor stated, "Honestly, if you're participating and coming from a good place and you're really looking to learn and support others, you're going to pass." Similarly, another supervisor commented, "It would be very difficult for someone to fail supervision. They

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would basically have to not participate and be disruptive.” Another supervisor put it simply, “I think it’s not just showing up physically, but showing up professionally.”

### *Need for Increased Competency-Based Feedback*

One-hundred percent of supervisor participants discussed the need to provide students increased feedback around competencies. One supervisor stated, “I think building in a little bit more accountability could be nice. It’s also good for feedback for the students because if we did do more competency-based, they would see exactly where they’re kind of falling short. There would be more concrete feedback that they’re getting from the supervisors.” One supervisor proposed a new student evaluation system stating, “I think it should be having pass/fail along with competencies. I think to operationalize it more so that the students know when they’re going into group supervision, why they’re there for 30 weeks a year, times two, plus the practicum group supervision. I think it would be great having the competencies, to make it transparent...so they know what these competencies are, and the skills, so people feel it’s a worthwhile experience spending all this time in group supervision.” Another supervisor similarly discussed the utility of competency based feedback in terms of student’s motivation throughout their time in group supervision, “I think a rating system based on specific competencies would be good, and would lead to differentiation among the students in terms of grades. I think it would also help with student motivation...in terms of the attitude toward supervision.”

### *APA Supervision Competency Domains*

Supervisors and students provided ratings for the frequency that the following seven APA supervision competency domains were addressed within group supervision: supervisor competence, diversity, relationships, professionalism, assessment/evaluation/feedback, problems of professional competence, and ethical/legal/regulatory considerations. Ratings were based on a

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likert-type scale ranging from one to four. One (1) indicated 'never focus,' two (2) indicated 'infrequent focus,' three (3) indicated 'moderate focus,' and four (4) indicated 'frequent focus.'

Supervisor ratings for supervisor competence ranged from two to four, with an average rating of three. Supervisor ratings for diversity ranged from three to four, with an average rating of three point twenty-five. Supervisor ratings for relationships ranged from three to four, with an average rating of three point five. Supervisor ratings for professionalism ranged from two to four, with an average rating of three point five. Supervisor ratings for assessment/evaluation/feedback ranged from two to three, with an average rating of two point five. Supervisor ratings for problems of professional competence ranged from two to four, with an average rating of three. Supervisor ratings for ethical/legal/regulatory considerations ranged from two to four, with an average rating of three point five.

Student ratings for supervisor competence ranged from one to four, with an average rating of three point two. Student ratings for diversity ranged from one to four, with an average rating of two point nine. Student ratings for relationships ranged from one to four, with an average rating of three point one. Student ratings for professionalism ranged from one to four, with an average rating of three point three. Student ratings for assessment/evaluation/feedback ranged from one to four, with an average rating of two point seven. Student ratings for problems of professional competence ranged from one to four, with an average rating of two point eight. Student ratings for ethical/legal/regulatory considerations ranged from two to four, with an average rating of three point three.

Results appear to vary per competency, as evidenced by the range of ratings for each competency. Of all the competencies, it appears that both supervisors and students rated the

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assessment/evaluation/feedback similarly, as the domain addressed the least in group supervision, somewhere between an infrequent and moderate focus.

### *Other Evaluative Factors*

Other responses were associated with evaluative factors, but were not supported by other students in a larger overlapping way. These factors included: more directive input from supervisors and lacking feedback on personal/professional growth.

Twenty-two point seven percent of students indicated a desire for more directive input from supervisors, such as more of their professional opinion on cases and examples of how they have handled things in practice. One student stated, "I think at times, I would've liked a little more guidance from the actual professional, who has been in the field, and knows kind of what is right and wrong when it's that type of scenario. I feel like at times [supervisor] didn't share an opinion when that could have been valuable...I think it's helpful to hear from each other, but if [supervisor] was more part of the discussion and feedback session it could be more helpful."

Eighteen point two percent discussed lacking feedback on their personal/professional growth. A third year student commented, "Every year they've asked me to write my goals, and I've gotten kind of a brief response or no response at all. So following up or talking with me by email or in person about that would've been really nice all three years. I think it would've helped me see my growth too."

### *Impact Factors*

The principal investigator defined this category as factors related to the larger effect and/or influence of group supervision on students. Within this category, student participants reported similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes during data analysis. Student participant

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responses converged on the following impact factors: Relationship building, learning from peers, interest in future supervising, and desire for further supervision.

### *Relationship Building*

Thirty-one point eight percent of students discussed how their group supervision experience in GSAPP has allowed them to build relationships with peers and supervisors that they may not have, had they not had this experience. Some students indicated they feel these bonds create a larger sense of community. One student stated, "I would say I gained peer relationships, as well as cultivating a relationship with the supervisor. So you know, you sort of envision it as a community you can always go back to for feedback on something...you've built that bond with people." Another student similarly commented, "I view them [supervisors] as people I can go back to, as well as the people in the group. I understand their perspectives and areas of interest. I feel like I can go to these people if I need some kind of information. You learn people's strengths, and given the community aspect of GSAPP, I think that's valuable."

### *Learning from Peers*

Sixty-eight point two percent of students discussed group supervision as a place in which they've learned from hearing about peer experiences in the field. Students often spoke about learning what else is possible in the field, or vicariously learning how to navigate a situation that a peer went through, even if the setting or experience was dissimilar to their own practicum experience. One third year student stated, "I've only been in two placements over those five semesters, so I got to experience other people's practicum sites vicariously through them, so it kind of broadened my experience...it broadened my eyes to what they were learning about and what else is out there in psychology...I recognized that my experiences weren't the only experience and there was a lot more to learn." Another student commented, "I thought it was



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helpful hearing other people's experiences...so I feel I have learned a lot because we all have really different experiences. Even though my site supervisor is a non-traditional psychologist, I learned so much about the traditional roles through other people."

### *Interest in Future Supervising*

Twenty-seven point three percent of students spoke of an interest in being a supervisor in their careers. Of these students, half spoke to their experience in GSAPP group supervision providing them a model for a future supervisory role. One student stated, "I think it's going to help me navigate how to be a supervisor myself by seeing how [supervisor] modeled supervision, and [supervisor]'s approach with it. So when it comes my time to supervise individually or a group, I have a better understanding of how to approach that and how to be a supervisor." Similarly, another student commented, "I would love to be a supervisor...This experience has thought me a lot about the different ways to approach this...what works for some people and what works for others. It's important to consider the different perspectives and styles."

### *Desire for Further Supervision*

Eighty-six point four percent of students discussed feeling supervision is important and useful, and they would continue using supervision in their careers. A first year student stated, "I love hearing other people's ideas because for me, one of the things I've struggled with...I form my own opinions, but sometimes I don't look at it from every angle. So I love talking to people and getting their opinions, asking what they do and how they approach a situation. My peers are so innovative and creative and I really like hearing what they do. So I definitely feel like the type of person who will use supervision forever throughout my career." A third year student spoke to the importance of seeking out other perspectives, "As we learned, you might have a certain

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perspective on one thing, but when you present it to a group, very often people have other perspectives on it, and almost always it deepens your understanding of situations and presents you with other options that you might not have thought of on your own.”

### *Points For Programmatic Consideration*

The principal investigator defined this category as student and supervisor proposed areas in need of further program attention. Within this category, supervisor and student participants reported some similar factors, resulting in overlapping themes within groups during data analysis. Student participant responses converged on the following points: Variable quality across groups and issues around length of time. Supervisor responses converged on the following points for consideration: Need increased program support and concerns around level of prescription.

### *Variable Quality Across Groups*

Students discussed a range of supervisory styles and structure within the supervision groups, generally viewing this variability as beneficial and a modeling opportunity of various supervisory styles. However, in spite of these inherent supervisor stylistic differences, 27.3% of students discussed the variability in quality across groups, generally relating to supervisor engagement, expectations, and use of time. One student discussed this stating, “Last year in my supervision group we got let out an hour and half early, so personally I felt like supervision was kind of a waste, because we could’ve been using that time to actually go over things that were important to us. I think my supervisor wasn’t necessarily taking supervision seriously since [supervisor] wasn’t even utilizing the whole time...I know there’s another group where people don’t even go to it...like they’ve missed a lot of supervision because it’s not really productive...I think a lot of it depends on how your supervisor runs the group, and what their expectations are

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of it.” Another student pointed out differences in expectations across groups, “In the other group I was super lax by the end of it. I thought I had to follow certain rules and do certain things because that’s what we had to do in [supervisor]’s group. So when I started that other group, I was like ‘oh I’m gonna have to do XYZ’ and then by the end I was like ‘oh I don’t have to do s\*%t if I don’t want to.” This same student spoke further to differing requirements within two different groups stating, “Groups should at least be consistent, supervisors should be required to complete certain things, like have expectations be the same. It’s unfair one group does a paper and the other doesn’t.” Finally, another student, who had not experienced this first-hand, stated, “I don’t think groups should be uniform, I don’t think all supervisors should have to be the same, but I do think that there should be more expectations for the supervisors. It sounds like some supervisors don’t take supervision seriously from what I’ve heard.”

### *Issues around Length of Time*

Fifty-four point five percent of students discussed issues around the two hour forty-five minute length of time of group supervision. Many students felt this amount of time was too long and afforded a looser, unproductive structure. Other students discussed a large variability among the way supervisors use this time block, some supervisors allowing students out with half the time to spare, and others using every minute of the allotted time each week. One student shared, “I think people felt frustrated because when there wasn’t anything to talk about we just sat there and it was uncomfortable. [Supervisor] wouldn’t let us leave just a half-hour early.” Another student commented, “[Supervisor] is more like, as long as conversation is moving and productive let’s keep going, but there’s no reason to hold us for two hours and forty-five minutes when we aren’t talking, which I think is what supervision should be.” Another student spoke to the dynamics this expectation can create. “In all honesty, I know we got out early, so I think

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sometimes I felt bad to bring stuff up if we were sort of at a mid point, because I knew if I brought it up and started a whole conversation about it, then we would be there for another half hour when we were about to leave early...I didn't want to be the reason that everyone was there another half hour. But I do think that it felt like we were being treated more like colleagues than like kids, like 'oh we keep you here until whatever time is whether we have stuff to discuss or not.'"

### *Need Increased Program Support*

Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed a need for more program support, although in varying ways. One supervisor discussed a need for the program to provide more support and guidelines to the practicum sites where the students are training. "I really think there needs to be a closer connection between GSAPP and the practicum sites. I've heard from fellow directors of special education, people that know I do this work...they say to me they don't feel they have gotten clear guidelines from GSAPP on what the expectation is for experiences and for their supervision, and I feel GSAPP doesn't really have a good idea of what is going on at the sites...so I think the communication...I think if people that are here now think they don't have the time then I think they might need to think about getting someone on board who is responsible for that connection." Another supervisor discussed a desire to receive more direct support from the program. "I do think we need a little bit more support from GSAPP. I don't know that we're recognized, sometimes I feel like it's the second-class citizen type thing. I don't even have a key to a room. It's frustrating to work there and I can't even open my own door. It's hard to find an office space when you want to meet with a student individually. Those little things are frustrating." Finally, another supervisor, in discussing electronics usage, felt there was a need for a larger program change in terms of the culture. "It's a chronic problem. I've discussed with

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other supervisors and other professors that maybe we should have a no laptops, no electronics policy. I think that it would actually be helpful. Then, we're talking about changing the culture, and I think that's definitely something that needs to be addressed...It would be nice if it was just a universal thing, that I just enforce."

### *Concerns Around Level of Prescription*

Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed concerns around the level of prescription required of them as a result of the new standardized syllabus. One supervisor stated, "We went from nothing to being almost completely prescribed. So it felt like having complete autonomy, with no support from GSAPP, to basically being told what to run in our supervision groups, which I did not like at all. Supervision is so unique depending on your group that I feel like some structure would be very much appreciated, but not being micromanaged." Another supervisor discussed the recent increase in support. "We've gotten better guidance. In the beginning when I started doing this it was really just no direction at all...but I think it's gotten better, over the years it's gotten better in terms of what we're expected to accomplish and the topics you're supposed to address and how to do supervision. It's gotten better. I don't want it to be too tight because I want it to be responsive to what students are dealing with at their sites, at their placements. If we start saying, 'we have to spend 10% on this, 10% on ethics...one year ethics may need to be 50%.'" Finally, another supervisor discussed how the implementation of a structured syllabus impacted the engagement in one group. "First semester I was more structured, so we were following a course outline, we had specific topics each week. I felt that was forced and didn't contribute to the most participation."

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### *Other Points for Programmatic Consideration*

Several other points were raised for programmatic consideration, but were not supported by other students and supervisors in a larger overlapping way. These factors included: increase support for first year cohort, size and composition of groups, and time of day groups run.

One supervisor spoke of the program's model of providing first year students the least amount of group supervision when they seemingly need it the most. "It's their first time in a school situation...they could use as much supervision as they can get, and they're the least trained and they get the least amount of supervision." First year students corroborated this through their interviews, speaking about a desire for increased support. One first year stated, "I like the three hours, but maybe it would be helpful to do an hour and half each week versus three hours every other week. I think the frequency of checking in is important because of the time lapse of having an issue at practicum...if it happens the day after you have supervision, you don't see the group for two weeks, that's the hardest part." Another student expressed a desire for the group to run as long as practicum lasts stating, "Supervision ends in May, our practicum school year goes through June, and that's really when I had a lot of issues, when stuff started to come up for me, and I wish I had someone to talk to...I would've found it really beneficial those last few weeks."

Some students spoke of the group size, composition, and time of day groups run. One student stated, "I think smaller groups are the way to go. Even if it's like five or six, instead of eight or nine. I understand the cohorts are getting larger, but I think a smaller group would increase the quality, it would be richer than it would with more students." A student commented on the group makeup, "I think they pair us kind of randomly, but putting people in groups based on orientation, or setting, either similar or dissimilar, however they wanted to do it, so people are

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hearing the opposite or have someone that understands what they're talking about. I think that would've improved it for me." Some students spoke to the time of day supervision groups typically run. One student commented, "Supervision goes on in the evening, a lot of people are tired, the time of day is tough...I thought the amount of time was excessive having it at night. It was killer...we were burnt out. I remember my first year it was in the morning...it was very different because of the time of day. We walked in fresh faced, it had a more positive spin on it I would definitely say."

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Results II: Factors Impacting Supervisor Prior Experience and Current Involvement, Purpose and Importance, Structure, Experience and Process in Group Supervision, Evaluation, Impact; Points of Programmatic Consideration: Coding Phases 2-3

In phases two and three of coding, the principal investigator used the Reflective Coding Matrix to aid in understanding the relationships and interactions between the categories of supervisor prior experience and involvement factors, purpose and importance factors, structural factors, experience and processes in group supervision, evaluative factors, impact factors, and points for programmatic consideration. Furthermore, the Reflective Coding Matrix helped guide how the natural consequences, or core categories, of each larger category are best understood in order to reach theoretical saturation. The principal investigator examined core category descriptors including the properties, processes, dimensions, contexts, and modes for understanding the consequences (Scott & Howell, 2008). This method of analyzing the core categories allowed the principal investigator to construct a comprehensive, sound storyline of the central phenomenon.



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### *Core Category Analysis: Supervisor Prior Experience and Current Involvement Factors*

The principal investigator analyzed this category, earlier defined as factors that influenced supervisor involvement in the GSAPP school psychology group supervision program and prior supervisory experiences and training. Recurrent “natural consequences” emerged and were examined further to create “core categories” and storylines. The following core categories emerged within Supervisor Prior Experience and Involvement Factors: Reconnected to GSAPP, continued supervisory training, and reinforced professional relationships.

#### *Reconnected to GSAPP*

The core category “reconnected to GSAPP” was identified as a natural consequence to supervisor involvement at GSAPP, using the Conditional Relationship Guide. Further exploration of this core category, using the Reflective Coding Matrix, exposes actions and interactions therefore producing a coherent storyline. Three of the four supervisors discussed their graduate education at GSAPP and consequent reinvolvement in the program through faculty requests. This reinvolvement allowed supervisors to reconnect with their alma mater by giving back to the program through aiding in a current program need. Based on these processes, it is apparent that current GSAPP supervisors may be sought out by program faculty members in an effort to reinvolve them in the GSAPP community during a time of need.

#### *Continued Supervisory Training*

“Continued Supervisory Training” was identified as a natural consequence to the overall category based on coding analysis. All four supervisors discussed prior direct supervision training through their graduate programs, the GSAPP alums mentioning a GSAPP supervision course that was “folded in.” Three supervisors discussed their continued training and professional development in supervision. One supervisor discussed how it is a requirement to

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obtain continuing education credits in supervision to maintain a license in one of the two license-holding states. The other two supervisors discussed seeking out professional development more on their own terms or through another establishment. In each of the cases, supervisors are receiving continued training in supervision while they supervise groups at GSAPP.

### *Reinforced Professional Relationships*

During initial coding, “reinforced professional relationships” was identified as a natural consequence using the Conditional Relationship Guide. The GSAPP alumni supervisors discussed faculty members reaching out to them when there was a program opening, sometimes due to a core faculty sabbatical. The GSAPP faculty appear to look within the GSAPP network of alumni to fill program needs, perhaps based on prior professional connections. Based on these processes, professional connections are seemingly reinforced as a result of reinvolving GSAPP alumni.

### *Core Category Analysis: Purpose and Importance Factors*

Purpose and importance factors, earlier defined as factors related to the significance of supervision as a professional activity and the supervisory role, was analyzed by the principal investigator to examine natural consequences. The following core categories emerged for students within the larger category of Purpose and Importance Factors: Students lack understanding of supervision activity and lack of student buy in and engagement. The following core categories emerged for supervisors: Supervisor feedback constrained by student presentation, collaborative learning environment, and group makeup helps define structure. The following core categories emerged for both students and supervisors: Supervisors model ongoing growth process.

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### *Students Lack Understanding of Supervision Activity*

“Students lack understanding of supervision activity” was established as a natural consequence to purpose and importance as captured in the Conditional Relationship Guide. Across cohort years, students explained supervisors provided an incomplete or lacking explanation of the importance of supervision to their supervision groups. Specifically, in the first year cohort, students demonstrated misguided parallels between group supervision and group therapy. Students subsequently remain unclear and confused regarding basic structure of what the experience should look and feel like. Second and third year cohorts discussed the purpose and importance of supervision being seemingly “understood” and not explicitly explained or even touched on by supervisors. This lack in explanation has left students questioning the meaning or purpose even after several semesters of group supervision.

### *Lack of Student Buy In and Engagement*

Another natural consequence that emerged within the larger category is “lack of student buy in and engagement.” Students demonstrated a lacking understanding of the purpose and importance of supervision, as well as a mixed attitude toward group supervision. Through narrative content, students indicated that they believe group supervision is generally not taken very seriously and there is a shared mentality that the requirement can feel like a waste of time and the time could be better spent. Participant responses uncover a persistent belief that the time is not viewed as constructive or purposeful, therefore students are not as bought in and engaged in the activity.

### *Supervisor Feedback Constrained by Student Presentation*

The Conditional Relationship Guide captured another natural consequence to purpose and importance factors, “supervisor feedback constrained by student presentation.” During

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interviews, supervisors discussed some challenges from being removed from supervisee training sites. They highlighted the fact that students are responsible to a site supervisor who can observe their clinical work more directly. Supervisors also discussed their perception of the gatekeeping responsibility involved in being a supervisor to students in training. They pointed out that they see their role being critical in monitoring and providing feedback if there is a concern in the way a trainee is conducting themselves, as it can directly impact the mental health of others. Consequently, due to this indirect positioning to the training site, as well as the limited opportunities to observe a trainee doing direct clinical work, supervisor feedback is naturally constrained and impeded by the way the student presents themselves and their work in the group supervision setting.

### *Collaborative Learning Environment*

“Collaborative learning environment” was established as another core category, or natural consequence, through open coding analysis. Supervisors discussed a desire to continually learn and change, and emphasized how they also learn from the students they supervise in their supervision groups. During group supervision students share information about their training sites, clinical experiences, and current practices being taught and modeled in their sites. As a result, supervisors may encounter new practices and ideas that encourage them to continue learning and adapting to the newest or most current practices in the field. In this way, group supervision is a collaborative, reciprocal learning environment in which supervisors and students share information and work in collaboration with each other.

### *Group Makeup Helps Define Structure*

Initial coding yielded another important core category, “group makeup helps define structure.” Supervisors discussed their efforts and awareness of the need for structure in their

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groups, while still maintaining a responsive openness to student needs. Supervisors explained that this can be like a “balancing act” and that it inevitably varies group to group because of student interests, placements, and needs. Some supervisors are more comfortable relying on a structure and feel they are providing a better experience when using more structure, and others felt that more structure was a hindrance to student participation. Regardless of supervisor structural preferences, they all indicated that the needs and background of the individuals in the group were important in determining structural aspects of the group, including what gets discussed and how group flows.

### *Supervisors Model Ongoing Growth Process*

The core category, “supervisors model ongoing growth process” emerged during open coding using the Conditional Relationship Guide. Narrative data showed supervisors shared their own personal experience and beliefs about supervision within their supervision groups. Further, supervisors reported they view supervision as an ongoing professional activity and make efforts to model in their supervision groups. This inherent demonstration of a career-long engagement to the professional activity models an ongoing growth process to students. Students were receptive to this modeling, discussing how they understand the importance of continued supervision from the supervisor’s perspective, therefore making the experience feel more “legitimate.”

### *Core Category Analysis: Structural Factors*

Structural Factors, previously defined as factors related to the structure within and across supervision groups, was analyzed by the principal investigator to elicit natural consequences and identify core categories. Recurrent structural consequences were identified and further analyzed to create core category storylines. The following core categories emerged for students from the overall category of Structural Factors: Inconsistent experience across groups, desire for more

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assessment coverage, and venting and negativity hinder experience. The following core categories emerged for both students and supervisors: Supervisor responsiveness yields student buy in and engagement, and electronics use breeds disengaged and untrustworthy environment.

### *Inconsistent Experience Across Groups*

A natural consequence of structural factors, “inconsistent experience across groups” emerged using the Conditional Relationship Guide. Students discussed varied structure across supervision groups depending on how supervisors managed group dynamics, used the allotted time, and how they responded to student needs. Students generally spoke of supervisor styles either negatively or positively, tended to compare supervisors to one another, and usually stated which supervisor’s style worked the best for their needs and preferences. As a result of these varied styles and structure, students subsequently had an inconsistent experience across the different supervision groups.

### *Desire for More Assessment Coverage*

Another natural consequence within the larger category of structural factors is “desire for more assessment coverage.” This core category was captured using the Conditional Relationship Guide. Interview response data indicates that students rated the percentage of time spent on assessment lower than some other content areas covered in group supervision. Students discussed feeling that assessment was not a topic area covered very often or with very much depth. Students specifically indicated they would have liked to spend more time talking about assessment interpretation, recommendations, presentation to parents, and pathways to pursue evaluation in their career. Given the limited coverage in these areas of interest, students desire more opportunity to focus on assessment within group supervision.

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### *Venting and Negativity Hinder Experience*

The natural consequence “venting and negativity hinder experience” emerged as another core category within Structural Factors. Student interview response data evidenced a mutual feeling that group supervision is a place where some students vent about the program and issues they have with program processes and the clinic. This discourse has the ability to create a negative energy in the group, which affected subsequent discourse and mood amongst group members. Students felt this negative shift had an impact on the experience and that it did not feel personally beneficial to them to use the time to vent and hear negative discourse about GSAPP from group members.

### *Supervisor Responsiveness Yields Student Buy In and Engagement*

The core category “supervisor responsiveness yields student buy in and engagement” was derived as a natural consequence through initial coding of supervisor and student narrative data. Supervisors discussed how they view student input as critically important in defining their group’s unique structure. Supervisors feel they balance a number of competing demands, such as their own area of interest, syllabus guidelines, and student needs and interests, but they ultimately rely on the group of students to help them navigate the appropriate level of structure and balance necessary for the group. Students indicated when supervisors were open and responsive to student interests, goals, and needs, students were appreciative and felt it was a more beneficial, meaningful experience. Therefore, students felt a greater level of buy in and engagement in the group supervision experience when they felt this responsiveness from the group supervisor.

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### *Electronics Use Breeds Disengaged and Untrustworthy Environment*

“Electronics use breeds disengaged and untrustworthy environment” emerged as a natural consequence, or core category, through analysis of supervisor and student narrative data. Both students and supervisors discussed generally informal, loose guidelines around electronics usage during group supervision. Supervisors discussed their unique approaches to discussing the topic with students initially, and then subsequently addressing it later if it becomes a problem. Interview response data evidences supervisors take a more indirect, casual approach to the matter and address it if it's a repeated issue in which students are presenting as distracted and disengaged. Supervisor response data did not support this being viewed as an issue in need of attention, in fact, they generally evidenced an acceptance of technology and a respect for students acting adult-like and making use of the time in a way that they choose. Students similarly reported loose guidelines around electronics use in group, but indicated a negative change in the group dynamics and environment as a result of unregulated use of devices in group supervision. Students spoke of experiences in which they felt guarded, discouraged, and lacking trust in the group supervision space when peers were visibly disengaged and not being respectful of the sensitive nature of the space.

### *Core Category Analysis: Experiences and Processes in Group Supervision*

Experiences and Processes in Group Supervision, previously defined as factors related to the experience and group processes within supervision groups, was analyzed by the principal investigator to elicit natural consequences and identify core categories. Recurrent consequences emerged and were analyzed further to create core category storylines. The following core categories emerged for supervisors: Advanced students model growth and confidence, student engagement dependent on content, inherent reflective process, and supervisors address student



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indiscretions in variable ways. The following core category emerged for students and supervisors from the overall category: Cohort dynamics allow for in-vivo supervisory experience.

### *Student Engagement Dependent on Content*

A natural consequence that emerged in this category, "Student engagement was identified as dependent on the content," was examined further using the Reflective Coding Matrix.

Supervisors indicated a challenge in the mixed cohort makeup of supervision groups largely lies in the different training sites students are placed. Specifically, second year students are still placed in a school based practicum, and third years are generally in more clinically oriented sites. This difference subsequently affects the content discussed by students of different cohort years, thereby affecting the level of engagement within the group. Supervisors are aware of the large difference a year makes in training, and note that they try to compensate for this by balancing content that is accessible and engaging to the ranging needs and interests of the students in the group.

### *Inherent Reflective Process*

An inherent reflective process was identified as a natural consequence to the experiences and processes within group supervision. Supervisors discussed the different type of engagement expected of students participating in group supervision. They explain group supervision as a unique process marked by an increased level of interpersonal communication, collaboration, feedback, and opportunities to "soul search" and reflect on one's clinical work in some self-revealing ways. These unique processes inherently require students to engage in reflective processes around their work, in a way they otherwise may not have, had they not had the structured space to do so.

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### *Supervisors Address Student Indiscretions in Variable Ways*

“Supervisors address student indiscretions in variable ways” was identified as a natural consequence to the supervision experience and processes using the Conditional Relationship Guide. Supervisor narrative data indicated all supervisors experience a variety of group dynamics that caused them to respond both within the context of the group and outside of the group on an individual level. Most supervisors first allowed dynamics to “play out” naturally, before intervening through redirection. When supervisors felt it necessary to intervene individually, they did so using different frequencies and feedback styles. One supervisor discussed how by the time the individual feedback was provided at the end of the year, it felt too late. Other supervisors indicated they provided feedback more promptly than the end of the year, through various mediums including phone, email, or in person if the student was able to meet one-on-one.

### *Cohort Dynamics Allow for In-Vivo Supervisory Experience*

“Cohort dynamics allow for in-vivo supervisory experience” emerged as a natural consequence upon further analysis. Advanced students, or those nearing completion of their group supervision requirement, discussed a change in their participation and engagement in group supervision over time. More experienced students discussed how it took some time to adjust, understand the expectations, and get comfortable with the activity of group supervision. As they continued in group supervision and gained more clinical experience in their training sites, students discussed going from a passive, listener role, to an active participant over time. This active role is marked by an enhanced ability to engage and provide meaningful feedback to the students with less experience clinically and in group supervision. Advanced students evidenced this change over time is associated with a feeling of responsibility to provide

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feedback, and pull from prior knowledge to provide some type of engaged, helpful response to other students, seemingly taking on a natural supervisory role. Consequently, this inherent growth process affords advanced students the ability to practice supervisory skills such as feedback, within the group process, as the group supervisor observes the group processes and is able to track any skill deficits in interpersonal communication and feedback ability. Supervisors corroborated this growth and confidence modeled by advanced students, indicating how they view the interrelation between the cohort years as a beneficial process in which the supervisors expect the advanced students to contribute more, at least initially, to model and help build the confidence and competence of the less experience students in a seemingly supervisory manner.

### *Core Category Analysis: Evaluative Factors*

Evaluative Factors, previously defined as factors related to grading criteria, and student and supervisory competency and feedback, was analyzed by the principal investigator to elicit natural consequences and identify core categories. Using the Conditional Relationship Guide, recurrent consequences were identified and analyzed further to create core category storylines. The following core categories emerged for students: Students feel adequately supported and praised by supervisors, students lack knowledge of supervision competencies, and students lack targeted reflection and self assessment of supervision competency attainment. The following core category emerged for supervisors from the overall category: Disconnect between current grading system and need for competency-based feedback.

### *Students Feel Adequately Supported and Praised by Supervisors*

“Students feel adequately supported and praised by supervisors” emerged as a natural consequence of the larger category Evaluative Factors. Student narrative data evidenced a general feeling of support from the group supervision supervisor both within and outside of the

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group, through in-person interactions, emails, and phone conversations. The outside support usually occurred around situations students identified they were not comfortable speaking about in the larger group context or a logistical issue with their practicum. The within group support was evidenced by students identifying adequate amounts of supervisor verbal feedback, in the form of case input, praise, encouragement, and positive statements. Consequently, students felt the group supervision supervisors provided adequate levels of support and praise.

### *Students Lack Knowledge of Supervision Competencies*

Students lack knowledge of supervision competencies was identified as a core category within Evaluative Factors. Students were largely unaware of APA supervision competencies. Students indicated that they either did not know there were supervision competencies or vaguely knew of them generally, but knew nothing specific. They indicated they thought they had heard of the competencies or learned of them at some point in their training, either in supervision or another setting, but could not identify anything further. Consequently, students were essentially unable to readily name APA supervision competencies.

### *Students Lack Targeted Reflection and Self Assessment of Supervision Competency Attainment*

Another natural consequence of the Evaluative Factors category, “students lack targeted reflection and self assessment of supervision competency attainment,” emerged along with student’s lacking competency knowledge. Because students were largely unaware of APA supervision competencies, it was apparent that any self-reflective process regarding their progress was general and/or more oriented around their clinical experiences in their practicum sites, not regarding the supervision process. Further, when students were asked to create supervision goals at the beginning of the year, student narrative data revealed that they often derived goals grounded in their clinical work and aspirations, such as a counseling or assessment

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related goal at their site, rather than a supervision specific goal. If and when supervisors encouraged students to track these goals at various points, students were assessing attainment of clinically oriented skills, rather than attainment of supervision competencies. Based on these processes, it is apparent supervisors were not providing a scaffolded supervision specific goal setting activity rooted in APA supervision competencies, rather, students reflected individually and generally on personal and clinical goals.

### *Disconnect Between Current Grading System and Need For Competency-Based Feedback*

The natural consequence, “disconnect between current grading system and need for competency-based feedback” arose within the category and was further analyzed using the Reflective Coding Matrix. Interview response data evidenced the current grading system for group supervision simply targets a student’s attendance and general participation resulting in a pass or fail. Supervisors spoke to how difficult it would be for a student to fail. However, they allude to the lackadaisical attitude this casual grading system can breed in students, especially when students have a general feeling of being overly supervised. Although supervisors generally agreed with the current pass/fail evaluative system, they spoke to a need to provide students more competency specific feedback. With this competency specific feedback, supervisors believe there would be an increase in student motivation and accountability, therefore making group supervision feel like a more transparent, worthwhile experience for the amount of time invested in the requirement.

### *Core Category Analysis: Impact Factors*

Impact factors, previously defined as factors related to the larger effect and/or influence of group supervision on students, was analyzed by the principal investigator to elicit natural consequences and identify core categories. Using the Conditional Relationship Guide, recurrent

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consequences were identified and analyzed further to create core category storylines. The following core categories emerged for students: Sense of community, vicarious learning environment, students internalize supervision experience for future supervisory roles, and continued supervision engagement in career.

### *Sense of Community*

“Sense of community,” was identified as a core category within the larger category of Impact Factors. The Reflective Coding Matrix was used to further flesh out the core category and reveal a natural storyline. Students discussed how their group supervision experiences in GSAPP have allowed them to meet and form relationships with supervisors and students of other cohort years that they otherwise may not have. Some students spoke to this relationship building aspect of group supervision as something that creates a larger sense of community, and students feel they can go back to people within the group for information or feedback as a result of creating these connections and bonds.

### *Vicarious Learning Environment*

“Vicarious learning environment” emerged as a natural consequence of Impact Factors. Through analysis using the Reflective Coding Matrix, a natural storyline arose. Interview response data reflected students feel group supervision is a place where they learn from hearing about peers experiences in the field. Students felt they learned what else is possible in the field of school psychology by learning about their peer’s training sites or vicariously learning how to navigate a situation that a peer went through, even if the setting or experience was different than their own practicum experience. Thereby, group supervision provides a vicarious learning environment in which students can seemingly experience various clinical situations by hearing about them through peers.

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### *Students Internalize Supervision Experience for Future Supervisory Roles*

“Students internalize supervision experience for future supervisory roles” was identified as a core category within Impact Factors. Students spoke of their interest and desire to be in supervisory positions in their careers, perhaps supervising practicum students, or leading group supervision. They indicated the significance of the GSAPP group supervision experience in providing them a model of various perspectives and styles to internalize when they are in supervisory roles in the future. Students discussed feeling like they were able to identify what worked for them, or identified with in their supervision experience, and how they will carry that with them into future endeavors. In this way, GSAPP group supervision is a critical formative experience in which students internalize models and supervisory styles that they will extrapolate from in the future.

### *Continued Supervision Engagement in Career*

Continued supervision engagement in career emerged as another natural consequence of the Impact Factors Category. Students largely indicated they plan to continue to seek out supervision in their career, in order to continue seeking out others opinions and broadening their perspectives on various clinical situations they may run into. Many students discussed being a part of their own peer supervision group, similarly to their GSAPP group supervision supervisor. Consequently, students seemingly internalized the importance and significance of the clinical activity and will continue to seek it out, beyond their training.

### *Core Category Analysis: Points for Programmatic Consideration*

Points for Programmatic Consideration, previously defined as student and supervisor proposed areas in need of further program attention, was analyzed by the principal investigator to elicit natural consequences and identify core categories. Using the Conditional Relationship

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Guide, recurrent consequences were identified and then further analyzed to create core category storylines. The following core categories emerged for students: Need for quality control across groups, and attention needed around time implications. The following core categories emerged for supervisors: Further program support desired and consider impact of syllabus.

### *Need for Quality Control Across Groups*

“Need for quality control across groups” emerged as a core category upon further analysis. Students discussed a range of supervisory styles and structural factors within the supervision groups, generally viewing this variability as a beneficial modeling opportunity of various supervisory styles. However, in spite of these natural supervisor stylistic differences, students discussed the variability in quality across groups, generally relating to supervisor engagement, expectations, and use of time. Some students felt their supervisor did not take the nature of the group very seriously by having lax, loose expectations and requirements, using electronics themselves during group, or not putting stricter electronics policies in place when the discomfort was brought to their attention. Furthermore, there were large differences across supervision groups in terms of the amount of time actually spent in the group, despite the two hour forty-five minute allotted time block. Students spoke to the time actually spent in group in relation to supervision quality and supervisor seriousness. Given these varied group processes, students revealed the range in quality they have experienced across groups, and pointed out a need for program intervention in holding supervisors accountable to a quality standard.

### *Attention Needed Around Time Implications*

“Attention needed around time implications” emerged as a core category. The principal investigator examined this further using the Reflective Coding Matrix. When analyzing the process domain of the Reflective Coding Matrix, a natural storyline emerged. Students spoke



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extensively about the time implications around group supervision. Students indicated several challenges, including the time of day groups run, the required length of group supervision feeling excessive, and variability across groups around time actually spent. In terms of time of day, some students noted the challenge of having group supervision at night, after a full day of practicum or class. For some, it was a notable challenge to stay engaged and motivated for the entirety of the session, given the time of day. One student recalled a completely different experience when the supervision group was held in the morning during, marked by freshness and increased engagement. A majority of students noted that the two hour forty-five minute time block is excessive and should be reduced down to an hour and a half, or two hours maximum. Some students already currently experience an abbreviated version of group supervision in which their supervisor reportedly uses about half the time block, allowing students to leave once conversation has markedly decreased. Other supervisors use the entirety of the time block, planning backup activities or didactic instruction rather than allowing students to regularly leave early. Students are aware of this variability in required time, and have expressed that these disparities across groups feel “unfair” and have implications for the way students perceive the supervisor and experience. Some students indicated they feel they are treated more like colleagues, than kids, when the supervisor allows the group to organically unfold and end when there is a natural end to the conversation. Other students spoke to a dynamic that occurs in which they experience hesitancy to speak or suggest a new topic when the group is approaching this natural break in conversation. Students are seemingly aware of the unspoken expectation to leave early and do not want to bare the burden of keeping the group longer. Given the multitude of thoughts, opinions, and dynamics around these unaddressed time implications, program attention is needed to address these current processes.

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### *Further Program Support Desired*

“Further program support desired” emerged during coding analysis as a natural consequence, and core category, within Points for Programmatic Consideration. Supervisors discussed this desired support in a variety of ways. One area of further support was around an apparent need for the program to provide more support and guidelines to the practicum sites where the students are training. This supervisor spoke of an evident disconnect in communication between GSAPP and the training sites, in which the sites are unclear on expectations for the practicum student, and GSAPP lacks understanding of what is occurring at the sites. Another supervisor spoke to the need for more program support and backing for the group supervision program and supervisors. Specifically, small logistical items such as providing keys to rooms and providing some office space for meetings would seemingly contribute to a feeling of consideration, importance, and belonging for supervisors within the program. Another item that arose was the need for the program to address electronics policies in classes and supervision as a larger cultural, climate initiative, rather than the responsibility of a chronic issue falling solely on the group supervision supervisors.

### *Consider Impact of Syllabus*

A final core category that emerged from the larger category, “consider impact of syllabus” was examined using the Reflective Coding Matrix. Upon interview narrative analysis, supervisors infer the newly instituted syllabus, an attempt to standardize group supervision, has created some challenges, mostly notably around implementation of the critical balance of structure versus responsiveness. Supervisors note they feel the program is stepping in more than in past years. This support is welcomed and appreciated, however, supervisors recognize a challenge in implementing the same structure across diverse groups – one size does not fit all.

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Supervisors noted a sense of pressure they experience in implementing the syllabus in their groups, while remaining sensitive and responsive to their group's unique needs. Supervisors do not wish to feel micromanaged or undermined in their methods of covering information and addressing competencies. The demands of the syllabus may evoke these feelings when under pressure to accomplish what supervisors perceive to be somewhat rigid, uncompromising weekly requirements.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this dissertation was to gain understanding of stakeholder experiences and perceptions of the GSAPP School Psychology group supervision program. Group supervision is a five semester, 13-credit, requirement for School Psychology students in the GSAPP School Psychology program. This study aimed to provide a qualitative analysis of keys aspects of the program requirement, so as to inform areas in need of programmatic consideration. Guided by a qualitative approach using Grounded Theory, the Principal Investigator conducted semi-structured interviews with group supervision supervisors and school psychology student participants. Analysis of qualitative narrative data unearthed themes, core categories, and a central phenomenon that reflected important information about supervisor prior experience and involvement, purpose and importance, structure, experience and processes, evaluation, impact, and points for programmatic consideration. Critical program feedback was gleaned from student and supervisor narrative data, which may guide initiatives for amending or changing current processes and procedures.

Interpretation of Findings

*Supervisor Prior Experience and Current Involvement Factors*

Results indicate several common factors influenced supervisor involvement in the GSAPP school psychology program. Additionally, some elements of supervisory training and experiences overlapped among supervisor participants.

According to narrative data, all supervisors had training in supervision included in their graduate education, whether directly through a course or by way of scaffolded practice experiences. The supervisors who graduated from GSAPP all took a supervision course, which

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has now been “folded in” to accommodate other requirements. Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed continuing training in supervision throughout their career by way of continuing education credits and professional development. One supervisor indicated seeking this continued training for licensing requirement purposes, while others indicated doing so for professional and personal interest reasons. Consequently, supervisors received initial graduate training in supervision and continue training in supervision over time. Supervisor training has received increased attention in the literature (Fleming & Steen, 2012; Falender & Shafranske, 2017). Historically, supervision has been considered a “post-qualification activity,” leaving training in supervision models and skills until later in an individual’s career. Around 2004, this view was challenged, as training programs were increasingly incorporating training and competency in supervision within the “pre-qualification” period, or during the individual’s time in graduate training (Fleming & Steen, 2012).

One hundred percent of supervisor participants indicated prior supervisory experiences and roles before coming to supervise school psychology student supervision groups at GSAPP. These experiences ranged, including varied settings, such as outpatient hospital programs, schools, and private practice. The amount of time supervising in the field prior ranged from seven point five to 25 years. The amount of time supervising GSAPP school psychology groups ranged as well, from one year to 10 years. Seventy five percent of supervisors, or all of the supervisors who graduated from GSAPP, indicated they were recruited to become group supervision supervisors because of a prior connection with a faculty member. Consequently, for these alumni supervisors, they reconnected to the program by accepting this role. Additionally, they reinforced the connection and professional relationship with GSAPP faculty.

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### *Purpose and Importance Factors*

Supervisors and students indicated a number of important factors related to the significance of supervision as a professional activity and the supervisory role.

One-hundred percent of the supervisor participants' narratives highlighted the critical gatekeeping responsibility involved in being a supervisor. They discussed this responsibility in terms of their role in giving feedback to supervisees regarding professional competence, as well as the supervisee's clinical skills in treating the mental health needs of others in clinical settings. One supervisor illuminated this gatekeeping role stating, "It's 100% my responsibility. I guess I take it pretty seriously in terms of the fact that we're turning out professionals who are responsible for the mental health of other people, and so, if I have concerns about something, if I notice something, it's my responsibility to, not just for the student, but for every client they'll ever have, or every professional setting they'll ever be in, it's my responsibility to contribute to their development in a positive way." The literature corroborates the monitoring of client care as a critical function of supervision. In one study, researchers assert this is a supervisor's "paramount" responsibility (Loganbill et al., 1982). Fifty percent of supervisors discussed challenges of being removed from the training sites of the supervisees in their groups. This removal from the training sites poses implications for supervisors in effectively carrying out this critical gatekeeping role. The indirect positioning to the training site, as well as the limited opportunities to observe a trainee engaging directly in clinical work, causes supervisor feedback to become naturally inhibited by the student's presentation in group and perception of his or her clinical ability and performance in the field. One supervisor effectively captured the challenge stating, "I'm not on site, so the kind of supervision I can provide is very different than a site supervisor could...because the site supervisor can actually see them in action, while I can just

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only know about what they tell me...when I did it [supervised] on site, in the district, I felt I had more understanding of when they needed help, when they didn't. When you're supervising off-site, you're counting on their presentation to be accurate." The literature addresses some of these challenges as potential disadvantages to group supervision. Less confident or weaker trainees may feel uncomfortable or even defensive in a group format, thereby preventing them from openly discussing mistakes (Fleming & Steen, 2012).

Another purpose and importance factor 100% of supervisor participants highlighted in their narratives was the continual balance between structure and responsiveness. Supervisor narratives yielded important information about efforts around implementing a group structure, while simultaneously being responsive to student needs in general, and on a weekly basis. Supervisors were most concerned about this balance between structure and responsiveness yielding the highest level of student engagement. One supervisor spoke to the level of structure she found preferable in the group stating, "I would say I've become less structured, and more responsive to student needs...first semester I was more structured, so we were following a course outline, we had a specific topic each week. I feel that it was forced, and didn't contribute to the most participation...It was my first time supervising at GSAPP so the structure was something I used to feel prepared. But what I found was that it just didn't flow. So I really dropped a lot of that structure toward the end of the first semester, and I felt that was actually better for supervision." Roth and Pilling (2008) outlined supervisor competences for conducting supervision in the group format, including: an ability to induct supervisees to group supervision, to act as a group leader, to structure sessions, and to manage group processes. More specifically within these competences, supervisors should identify what the supervisee would like to gain

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from the group, agree with group members on a level of structure and functioning of the group, and ensure supervisees feel adequately supported in the clinical work they are assuming (2008). A consequence of balancing these aforementioned competences naturally results in variability between groups because of differences in student interests, placements, and needs. Supervisors commented on the fact that their structure and topic breakdown may vary group to group, year to year, depending on the unique makeup of the supervision group and the needs of the students. Regardless of supervisor's own preference for structure or topics, 100% of supervisors indicated that the needs and background of the individuals in the group were important in determining structural aspects of the group, including what gets discussed and how group flows.

Seventy-five percent of supervisor narratives revealed a desire and need to continue learning and changing as time goes on. Fifty percent discussed a reciprocal relationship that occurs in group supervision by which the supervisors learn from the students they supervise and are therefore motivated to stay current and informed of current issues in the field of psychology. This dynamic results in a collaborative learning environment in which information is shared multidimensional between all parties involved. According to Proctor and Inskipp, supervisees perceive a good supervisor to be open to learning, transparent about mistakes and successes, mindful of group needs, open to collaboration, and able to provide quality feedback (2009).

Student narratives exposed critical factors related to the purpose and importance of group supervision. A total of 40.9% of student participants across cohort years (66.7% of first years, 25% of second years, and 62.6% of third years) indicated a lack of and/or unclear explanation of the professional activity of supervision. First year cohort students demonstrated a confused, misguided understanding of the professional activity, inappropriately comparing it to group therapy and maintaining a general confusion of group supervision structure and purpose. Second



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year students generally lacked understanding of the meaning and purpose of group supervision. Third year students spoke about how across three years of group supervision, the purpose and importance was essentially never explicitly explained, rather there was an assumption that it was implicitly understood. A natural consequence of this phenomenon is that across cohort years students lack understanding of supervision as a professional activity. There is confusion, misunderstanding, and misguided perceptions of basic structural components, and the purpose and importance of the professional activity.

Supervisor (75%) and student (40.9%) narrative data revealed a converging theme, unearthing the method supervisors use to demonstrate the importance and ongoing growth process of supervision to their groups. Supervisors often shared their own personal account, opinions, and beliefs about supervision within their groups. Supervisors discussed their own peer supervision groups and possible implications of failing to pursue continued supervision in one's career. This approach creates a model of career-long supervision engagement, demonstrating an implicit ongoing growth process to students.

Another theme that arose across cohort years of students was a mixed attitude toward group supervision. Fifty-four percent of student narratives indicated a mixed attitude, 27.2% indicated negative attitudes, and 18.2% indicated positive attitudes. Of the first year cohort, 83.3% reported a mixed attitude, 16.7% reported a negative attitude, and zero percent reported a positive attitude. Of the second year cohort, 50% reported a mixed attitude, 25% reported a positive attitude, and 25% reported a negative attitude. Of the third year cohort, 37.5% reported a mixed attitude, 37.5% reported a negative attitude, and 25% reported a positive attitude. Across the cohort years, 59.1% discussed attitudes toward group supervision relative to the supervisor. A narrative of one student emphasizes this idea, "I think it's dependent on who the supervisor

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is...so I guess it depends how the supervisor utilizes it. I think in groups where the supervisor really uses the time wisely, and can address student concerns that were coming up in practicum, are the groups where students really benefitted and had a positive attitude.” A naturally occurring consequence of this generally mixed attitude toward group supervision is a lack of student buy in and engagement. Students generally indicated a belief that group supervision is not taken seriously, the requirement can feel like a waste of time, and the time could be better spent. Participant responses uncover a persistent belief that the time is not viewed as constructive or purposeful, therefore students are not as bought in and engaged in the activity.

Both student and supervisor narrative data revealed varied attitudes toward the amount of group supervision provided within the program. Fifty-four point five percent of students indicated the amount of group supervision was adequate, 31.8% thought it was excessive, and 13.6% felt it was inadequate. These responses were contingent of multiple factors including amount and quality of individual and group supervision provided within training sites, amount of time supervisor requires group to attend, and the quality and structure of the group. One-hundred percent of supervisor narratives revealed a global opinion that supervisors believe students feel overly supervised, and therefore supervisors take this into account in the way they run their groups. A supervisor explicitly stated, “I call it ‘supervision burnout.’ I feel like sometimes students are getting so much supervision it’s like beating a dead horse.”

### *Structural Factors*

Supervisors and student narratives indicated a number of important factors related to the structure within and across supervision groups.

Participant narratives indicate one of the most prominent structural factors among group supervision was supervisor’s loose and informal style in addressing electronics in their groups.

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One-hundred percent of supervisors discussed a unique style in addressing electronics usage in their groups. Fifty-four point five percent of students discussed loose or non-existent guidelines around electronics usage in group supervision. Generally, supervisors did not speak of electronics usage as an issue of major concern. However, student narrative data revealed a different experience. Thirty-one point eight percent of students discussed negative perceptions and experiences regarding electronics usage specific to a change in environment and group dynamics. A student detailed her experience bringing this issue to the supervisor's attention and was met with an unhelpful, apathetic response. In one instance, a student recalled an experience in which she regularly observed the supervisor's disengagement while this supervisor was using [supervisor's] phone to play games of Candy Crush during group supervision. Students evidenced feeling guarded, discouraged, and lacking trust in the group supervision space when they experienced disengagement and lack of seriousness regarding the sensitive nature of the space. As one student described, "...All of a sudden any confidence you have in the group process and being able to turn to those people for help disappears and it completely changes the atmosphere."

Another prominent structural factor identified by both student and supervisors was responsiveness to student needs. One-hundred percent of supervisors discussed the importance they place on student input and needs in defining the group's unique structure. Supervisors viewed it their role to be responsive, over that of fulfilling their own agenda or desires for the group. Thirty-six point four percent of students felt supervision groups were student directed and supervisors were responsive to student needs and topics of interest. These students felt this responsiveness was effective in getting students to buy-in to the group and experience it in a beneficial way. As a natural consequence, if students perceived their supervisor to be responsive

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to student needs, students felt appreciative, and viewed group supervision as a more meaningful, engaging experience.

Forty-five point five percent of student narratives revealed a varied structure across supervision groups in the program. Differences in perceived structure were related to supervisor management of group dynamics, responsiveness to student needs, and use of allotted time. Given this experience, students consequently had inconsistent experiences across groups. Students often spoke of this variability and inconsistent experience in terms of supervisor structure and styles, typically deeming a certain style, structure, or supervisor as positive or negative. Across cohorts and supervision groups, 31.8% of students indicated a desire to spend more time during group supervision on assessment related topics.

Twenty-seven point three percent of student narratives exposed a preference for less time spent on venting and negativity during group supervision. These students recognized that some people need a space to “let out steam” and express themselves in such a way; however, for them it did not feel like a beneficial use of time. Further, students described a group process of negativity spreading, whereby one or more students set the tone for the group, and this mood spreads to others who did not enter the group feeling this way. Consequently, this style and tone of discourse has the ability to create a negative energy in the group, which can negatively affect the mood and experience of other group members.

### *Experience and Processes in Group Supervision*

Both supervisor and student participant narratives revealed important themes that emerged during coding of the response data.

For supervisors, the most prominent theme that emerged was a mutual experience of a range of group dynamics within supervision groups. One-hundred percent of supervisors

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discussed certain scenarios in which they had to provide individual feedback to a trainee outside the group. Seventy-five percent of supervisors discussed a style of first trying to intervene within the group, by altering the conversation or a dynamic through redirection strategies, before intervening on an individual level outside of group. As a result, it appears supervisors handle student indiscretions in variable ways. Although supervisors discussed similar strategies of redirection and outside individual conversations, supervisors carried out interventions in variable ways using different frequencies and feedback styles. Some supervisors provided feedback promptly through a variety of mediums, while others allowed time to pass before providing feedback at the end of the year in a more formal way.

Seventy-five percent of supervisor narratives revealed a more nuanced type of engagement expected of students in group supervision over a didactic course. This engagement was labeled by increased levels of group collaboration, feedback, and self-reflection processes. Consequently, these specific types of engagement create an inherent reflective process unique to the supervision experience. Roth and Pilling (2008) highlight the importance of self-reflection, or “self-appraisal” as a central component of adult learning. This includes the ability to be open and aware as one presently engages in an experience, as well as revisit and review after the experience has occurred. This reflective skill allows an individual to shift from dependency to a place of self-directed learning (2008).

Supervisors also discussed group processes related to the mixed cohort composition of the advanced supervision groups. Fifty percent of supervisors discussed the dynamic in terms of the challenges of balancing varied needs of students in each cohort. For example, these supervisors discussed the dichotomy that emerges in the placements of students. Third years are generally placed in a more clinical setting, while second years are all placed in school-based

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practicum settings. Supervisors are aware of the differences across cohort years in training and make efforts to compensate by balancing content that is accessible and engaging to the ranging needs and interests of the students in the group. The other 50% of supervisors discussed a beneficial interrelation and balance that occurs between second and third year students. These supervisors spoke of relying on the increased experience and confidence of more advanced students to help model, provide feedback, and support for more novice students.

Advanced students spoke to this aforementioned dynamic. Seventy-seven point eight percent of students completing their final semester of group supervision discussed how they felt they changed in their participation in supervision over the course of the five semesters. Students described this change over time as a shift from a passive participant to an active participant, with an increased capability to provide helpful, productive feedback to more novice students.

Advanced students assumed this responsibility naturalistically, realizing this is an important role, and their time to essentially be an “advice giver” rather than a participant “bringing a bunch of problems.” As a natural consequence, this cohort dynamic creates an in-vivo supervisory experience for students. Advanced students are afforded an embedded opportunity to practice supervisory skills such as feedback, within the natural group process. Novice students are provided opportunities to receive various styles of feedback and internalize the modeling provided by advanced students through their presentations of clinical insight, professionalism in the group, and general confidence in themselves. The literature corroborates this process.

Fleming and Steen (2012) indicate, “Group supervision provides opportunities for supervisees to develop their own supervisory skills by observing the supervisor modeling supervision with other group members and, in the more participative group formats, to have opportunities to try out some of these supervisory skills in a safe forum” (p. 168).

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Overall, students reported experiencing group supervision in a generally positive way. Sixty-eight point two percent of students rated their experiences as 'mostly positive.' Eighteen point two percent rated their experience as 'all positive.' Thirteen point six rated their experience as 'neutral.'

### *Evaluative Factors*

Supervisors and students provided valuable information regarding factors related to grading criteria, and student and supervisory competency and feedback.

Regarding supervisor input, the most prominent themes were around the current evaluation system and a need for increased competency based feedback. One-hundred percent of supervisors discussed the current grading system essentially consisting of a student's attendance and participation. These basic components result in a "pass" or "fail" for group supervision each semester. Supervisors discussed how it is basically impossible to fail supervision, and if a student is at risk for failing they would be informed well in advance in order to make changes to their performance. Supervisors generally expressed a level of comfort with this system, although 100% of supervisors acknowledged a need to provide students increased feedback around competencies. Supervisors felt building in competency-based feedback would enhance student motivation, engagement, accountability, and attitude toward group supervision. Consequently, there is a gap between the current grading system and the need for competency-based feedback.

Student narratives highlight a striking deficit and gap in student knowledge of supervision competencies and awareness of their own attainment of these competencies. Sixty-eight point two percent of students indicated they did not know there were supervision competencies or vaguely knew of the competencies, but could not specifically identify any of them. Thirty-one point eight percent of students reported they knew the professional psychology

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organizations have supervision competencies, but could not identify any specific competencies.

Further, student narratives highlighted an infrequent, informal, and general reflection around their growth as clinicians versus any formal tracking of competency attainment over time.

Eighty-one point eight percent of students reported they did not track their progress of specific competencies over time. Of the students (18.2%) that did endorse a formal reflection process, they discussed this process as prompted by a group supervision goal setting paper. Goals were generally based around practicum specific desires, rather than derived or oriented around specific supervision competencies. A student described this stating, "We always wrote goals in supervision. But they were always goals for practicum. I've tracked those, like possibly through the process of supervision, but they were never goals for supervision itself." Falender and Shafranske highlight the importance of "metacompetence," or "the ability to know what one knows or does not know" (2007). They discuss the importance of metacompetence in clinical supervision for both the supervisee and supervisor. Self-reflectivity and self-assessment are large components of metacompetence, which allow the individual to accurately assess their skills and performance, as well as identify areas in need of attention (2017).

Students discussed their experiences and perception of supervisor support and feedback. Overall, forty-five point five percent of students across cohort years felt their supervisor provided adequate amounts of feedback verbally within the group. This feedback was generally described as input on a case, praise, encouragement, and positive statements. Further, 66.7% of first year students discussed the support and feedback they received outside of group through emails, phone calls, and in-person interactions. These students spoke of specific practicum related issues they were either not comfortable discussing within the group context or that required additional logistical support.



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Students and supervisors provided competency ratings for the frequency the following seven APA supervision competency domains were addressed within their current supervision group: supervisor competence, diversity, relationships, professionalism, assessment/evaluation/feedback, problems of professional competence, and ethical/legal/regulatory considerations. Ratings were based on a likert-type scale ranging from one to four. One (1) indicated 'never focus,' two (2) indicated 'infrequent focus,' three (3) indicated 'moderate focus,' and four (4) indicated 'frequent focus.' Generally, students and supervisors displayed some level of difficulty understanding the domains, asking clarifying questions or admitting to making their best guess for a rating. This may be due in part to a lack of program discourse and engagement in regular evaluation activities around these competencies. Results varied per competency. Most notably, both supervisors and students rated the assessment/evaluation/feedback domain as the area addressed the least in group supervision. Student ratings averaged a rating of 2.7 and supervisor ratings averaged a rating of 2.5 for this domain, qualitatively somewhere between an infrequent and moderate focus.

### *Impact Factors*

Students spoke to a number of themes that related to the larger effect and/or influence of their experience in group supervision.

Most prominently, 86.4% of students indicated an opinion that supervision is important and useful and they would continue to seek out supervision in their careers. Students spoke of the many positive, impactful elements of group supervision such as acquiring other perspectives and hearing people's creative and innovative approaches. One student eloquently captures this stating, "As we learned, you might have a certain perspective on one thing, but when you present it to a group, very often people have other perspectives on it, and almost always it deepens your

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understanding of situations and presents you with other options that you might not have thought of on your own.” Many students indicated they would like to be part of a peer supervision group, similarly to their GSAPP group supervision supervisor. Consequently, students seemingly internalized the value and significance of group supervision and report they will continue to seek it out through their career.

Another prominent theme that emerged from student narratives was learning from peers. Sixty-eight point two percent of students discussed group supervision as a setting in which they learned vicariously through the experiences of peers in their group. Students identified learning what else is possible in the field and learning how to navigate situations vicariously through peers. Consequently, group supervision provides a vicarious learning environment in which students can seemingly experience various clinical settings and situations through peer presentations. The literature addresses these phenomena, revealing the vicarious learning opportunities, and exposure to a broader range of clients and experiences, inherent in group supervision (Bernard & Goodyear, 2004). One student spoke to this stating, “I’ve only been in two placements over those five semesters, so I got to experience other people’s practicum sites vicariously through them, so it kind of broadened my experience...it broadened my eyes to what they were learning about and what else is out there in psychology...I recognized that my experiences weren’t the only experience and there was a lot more to learn.”

Similarly, students discussed the relationship building aspect of group supervision. Thirty-one point eight percent of students indicated that group supervision allowed them to meet and build relationships with peers and supervisors. This process results in a naturally consequential sense of community. A student spoke to this, “I view them [supervisors] as people I can go back to, as well as the people in the group. I understand their perspectives and areas of

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interest. I feel like I can go to these people if I need some kind of information. You learn people's strengths, and given the community aspect of GSAPP, I think that's valuable.”

Lastly, 27.3% of students spoke to an interest in assuming supervisory roles in their careers. Approximately half of these students explicitly spoke of their supervision experience at GSAPP providing a model for them to draw on in the future. Consequently, group supervision in training is a significant formative experience in which students internalize models and supervisory styles that they will draw on in future supervisory endeavors.

### *Points for Programmatic Consideration*

Students and supervisor narratives revealed important proposed areas in need of further program attention.

Students largely spoke of several issues around length of time of group supervision. Fifty-four point five percent of students discussed issues around the two hour-forty-five minute required length of group supervision. Most students felt this amount of time was unnecessarily long, and afforded a looser, unproductive structure. Other students discussed the large discrepancy across groups in how this time was utilized, some groups using about half the time each week, and others always using the full length of time each week. This processes naturally created expectations and group dynamics. Some students indicated they felt they were treated more like colleagues than kids when the supervisor did not keep the group unnecessarily long. Others discussed a dynamic this created by which they experienced a hesitancy to begin a new topic or pose a question to the group when the group expected to leave by a certain time. Overall, students suggested the amount of time should be reduced down to an hour and a half, or two hours maximum. In addition, other students indicated a challenge regarding the time of day groups generally run. Some students discussed the challenges associated with going to GSAPP at

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night for a supervision group, after a long day of practicum or class. For some it was a noteworthy struggle to stay motivated and engaged for the full length of the group session. Given the host of current processes and opinions around time implications, including required length of time, time actually spent in session, and time of day groups run, program attention is required.

Students also discussed quality control across supervision groups as an area in need of attention. Twenty-seven point three percent of students indicated variability in the quality across supervision groups, related to supervisor engagement, expectations, and use of time. One student stated, "I don't think groups should be uniform, I don't think all supervisors should have to be the same, but I do think that there should be more expectations for the supervisors. It sounds like some supervisors don't take supervision seriously from what I've heard." Students generally viewed a range of different supervisory styles and structures as a welcomed modeling opportunity to learn from and internalize. However, among this variability, students noted inconsistency and discrepancy in supervisor seriousness, quality, and expectations. There is an apparent gap in controlling for quality across groups that requires program attention.

Supervisor narratives exposed a concern around the level of prescription being imposed on them by the uniform group supervision syllabus. Seventy-five percent of supervisors indicated a concern around the initiative to seemingly prescribe the dissemination of topics and structure across groups. Some supervisors fear this prescription will negatively impact and undermine their ability to be responsive to the unique needs of their supervisees, and consequently decrease student engagement. As one supervisor noted, "First semester I was more structured, so we were following a course outline, we had specific topics each week. I felt that was forced and didn't contribute to the most participation."

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Finally, 75% of supervisors spoke to a need for more program support and initiative for varying items including relationships with training sites, group supervision supervisor needs, and program climate. One supervisor called for a closer connection between GSAPP and the training sites. This supervisor discussed a lack in guidelines and support for the site supervisors so they may best serve the training needs of the students. Another supervisor pointed out a need for support and recognition for group supervision supervisors in terms of recognition and logistical support, such as having a key to the room, and office space for meetings. Lastly, a supervisor spoke to the pervasive issue around electronics usage and it's negative impact on the climate. This supervisor called for a program initiative to address the problem, whereby supervisors can enforce the initiative, rather than attempting to create and drive the initiative on their own.

### Limitations of the Study

#### *Recruitment Method*

Participants for the study included 22 student participants and four supervisor participants. The Principal Investigator disseminated the initial recruitment information through email to students and supervisors. Additionally, the program secretary disseminated the recruitment email to students. Subsequently, in an effort to recruit more participants, the PI made an oral announcement in three supervision groups and one academic course. Due to the PI's positioning in the program, coercion was avoided through use of an incentive lottery in which five randomly selected participants were gifted a \$25 Amazon gift card.

#### *Participant Characteristics*

Participants were all current students and supervisors of the GSAPP school psychology program. One supervisor was a committee member of the current study. This may be perceived as a dual relationship, however, the nature of the study posed no more than minimal risk to

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participants and the supervisor voluntarily participated in the study and as a committee member on the dissertation. Because this committee member is involved in the group supervision program at GSAPP, and other supervisor participants know and have a professional relationship with this person, there may have been a level of bias introduced, including social desirability, as supervisors were aware this person would collectively review the interview data.

### *Interviewer Effects*

The PI, a current student in the program, and participant in group supervision, had a prior relationship with some student participants and supervisors in the context of group supervision. In some cases, the PI conducted interviews with students that she had been in group supervision with prior or currently. While no students objected to this, and volunteered freely, it is possible this dynamic may have introduced a level of response bias.

### *Method of Analysis*

There may be a level of bias introduced to the study due to the fact that the PI used a mono method qualitative approach to gather data, rather than a more robust multi-method methodology. In addition, the PI was the sole person who conducted the analysis, rather than using a second rater to reduce the level of bias inherent with a single rater. It was not possible to assess and provide reliability ratings in the current study. Readers should use a level of caution in the interpretation of findings.

### Implications and Future Research

Information regarding the experiences and perceptions of students and supervisors of GSAPP's school psychology group supervision program are of paramount use to the program in consideration of future planning for the group supervision courses. Additionally, other program

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stakeholders in similar psychological training programs may glean insight into processes related to group supervision at the graduate level.

The PI proposes the following recommendations to the program in consideration of student and supervisor perceptions and experiences in group supervision:

### *Implement Competency Based Practices at Multiple Levels*

There is a clear present need for competency based practices and evaluation across multiple levels, including students, supervisors, and supervision courses. Currently, students, supervisors, and the supervision courses are not evaluated based on APA supervision competencies.

Students are generally evaluated based on attendance and participation. In some supervision groups, students engage in unstructured goal setting and tracking around practicum related activities. This leaves a large gap in student understanding of their own competence and growth. Similarly, supervisors receive feedback informally if requested from students or through SIRS course rating forms. SIRS rating forms are generic feedback forms about a course, not specifically tailored around competency-based feedback for a supervisor, or competency related supervision course items.

Falender and Shafranske point out in order to shift to competency-based supervision, there is a need for training in self-assessment for both supervisors and trainees. Further, students should collaboratively track their progress and development over time, as a supervisor can then address a trainee's deficits. With this system, supervisors can ground their feedback and assessment using competency benchmarks. Similarly, supervisors may engage in self-assessment of their own supervisory competence, as they are responsible for reviewing their knowledge,

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skills and attitudes, and seeking feedback from supervisees and peers regarding their performance (2017).

The PI recommends the program implement a program-wide training for competency-based assessment. It is recommended the program subsequently implement the use of a competency based assessment tool for students and supervisors based on specific competency benchmarks. In addition, it is recommended that the program implement a group supervision specific evaluation form at the end of each semester to assess effectiveness, group processes, supervisor effectiveness, etc. This rating form would be specific to group supervision, rather than a generic course evaluation. The program may create this tool or refer to preexisting measures such as those found in Bernard and Goodyear's *Supervisor Toolbox* (2004). Rating forms may be reviewed by the program director, and feedback subsequently provided to group supervisors. Supervisors may implement a bimonthly peer supervision group meeting to discuss their own competency, providing competency-based feedback to trainees, and implementation of competency related material across supervision groups.

### *Promotion of a Responsive Framework*

Supervisors largely expressed concern over the level of prescription a uniform syllabus may impose, and the subsequent override of their supervisory responsibilities of responsiveness and attunement to their trainees. Supervisors felt their groups were most engaged and responsive when the content was related to their current needs and relevant to their work. Supervisors appreciate program support and the impetus driving the structured syllabus, however they feel most empowered and effective when they have a bank of resources to draw from, rather than a prescribed weekly lesson plan, hindering their agency to meet the unique needs of their supervisees. Roth and Pilling highlight the supervisory competences involved in running



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supervision in a group format. An ability to structure sessions and to manage group processes are among two of the competences (2008). Given the fact that all supervisors have prior training and experiences in supervising groups, it may be assumed they experience a level of familiarity with these competences and don't require a uniform structure, which may be perceived as undermining their expertise.

The PI recommends the syllabus be restructured and presented as a responsive framework containing a bank of resources in which supervisors should use to meet the unique needs of their group. Supervisors may use their supervisory skills to draw on the resource and embed competency-based elements into the weekly meetings at their discretion. Supervisors may be held accountable to appropriately incorporate all supervision competency domains into their group over the course of the year. They may be held accountable throughout the year to their peers during peer supervision meetings and evaluated at the end of the year by their supervisees. The program director may provide feedback regarding the supervisor and course evaluations. Any apparent gaps or weaknesses in competency based supervision practices may be addressed at the discretion of the program director, perhaps through further supervisor training or continuing education.

### *Institute Firm Electronics Policy Across Supervision Groups*

Supervisors generally indicated they did not feel electronics were a problem in the group supervision context. One supervisor did call for a program level initiative to address this problem. Other supervisors did not report this to be a problem in their experience. On the contrary, students felt the use of electronics was addressed in subtle, informal ways and the presence and use of electronics during group supervision created a disengaged, unsafe, untrustworthy environment. Students indicated supervisors generally did not implement formal

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rules around this and it was not taken seriously when students were using electronics during group.

The PI recommends the group supervisors and program director convene and discuss a formal plan to address this issue. Perhaps, with this data, supervisors may gain understanding of the severity of the impact on the environment from the student perspective. The literature highlights the anxiety experienced by some supervisees in a group format as a disadvantage to group supervision (Fleming & Steen, 2012). Given this, it is likely that some students naturally experience a level of anxiety in the group format, and this may be exacerbated when the environment does not feel safe because group members are disengaged through electronics usage. The literature touts group supervision as a highly effective, valid format of supervision, however, if run poorly, it can be a potentially “unhelpful and aversive experience,” in which learning is inhibited, rather than fostered (Fleming & Steen, 2012).

### *Modify Time Requirement of Supervision Groups*

Students largely discussed the time implications around group supervision. Students generally felt group supervision could be shortened in duration, from two hours and forty-five minutes, down to an hour and a half to two hours. Many students already experience an abbreviated version of the requirement, as some supervisors do not require the group to stay the whole length of allotted time. Supervisors discussed feeling aware of the “supervision burnout” students experience and how this impacts the way they run groups.

The PI recommends the supervisors, program director, and Dean discuss the implications and feasibility of shortening the length of time of supervision groups. Given the present data regarding attitudes and perceptions of the length requirement, as well as the diverse range in time

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actually spent in group supervision across the groups, it is necessary for the program to provide attention and input to this matter, and decide how they can implement a uniform initiative.

### *Program Support for Group Supervision Program*

Supervision is a critical, formative professional activity in a trainee's development. Trainees spend five semesters in the program's group supervision courses and it is of critical importance that the experience is marked by professionalism, quality, and competency attainment. The support of the program director and Dean are of fundamental importance in the success of the group supervision program, including driving future change. The PI recommends the program director and Dean work collaboratively with the group supervisors to address needs, gaps, and weaknesses in the group supervision program. Further, it will be critical to receive the support of the program director and Dean in implementing competency based initiatives.

Future research in the area of group supervision in psychology graduate programs will continue to shape the formative training experience of future mental health professionals. This study focused on the perceptions and experiences of both students and supervisors in one graduate program's group supervision courses. One of the main objectives of group supervision is to ensure trainees are positively developing and attaining competencies necessary to go forth in the field and provide mental health services to various populations. Based on participant responses it is evident further attention and research is needed at the graduate level in the implementation and evaluation of competency-based supervision practices. Continued exploration of trainee perceptions and experiences within supervision is critical so as to make modifications to ineffective practices, and ensure a quality, growthful experience in which competency is effectively sought, tracked, and attained.

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### Principal Investigator's Experience with the Dissertation

The principal investigator chose this dissertation topic for a few reasons. First, her initial interest was sparked and further developed through her involvement in supervision research with Dr. Karen Haboush during her first year of graduate training. Beginning the second semester of her graduate training through the present time, the PI encountered a myriad of supervisory styles and experiences through individual and group supervision within GSAPP and her various practica. These experiences continued to generate personal interest for the PI regarding the professional activity. Over the semesters and years of training, the PI specifically wondered and questioned aspects of the group supervision courses required within GSAPP. As a current student in the program, the PI had also heard peer experiences and perspectives of group supervision, and therefore chose to explore the area in a more formal way. The PI viewed this study as an important and timely evaluation of the program's supervision courses, as some recent adjustments took place including changes in supervisors and an initiative to standardize groups.

The PI viewed a qualitative approach to research appealing as to elicit a naturalistic wealth of information from participants. It was critical to enter into the study without a preconceived hypothesis, especially due to the PI's current positioning in the program. Through conducting student and supervisor interviews, the PI obtained a host of information from key stakeholders in the program. Challenge was inevitable as the PI used the three-phase process of Grounded Theory to guide her analysis and extract meaning from the response data. Because of the amount of data and the level of unquantifiable subjectivity, the PI carefully and mindfully allowed themes, natural consequences, and the central phenomena to emerge organically, rather than forcing the data to fit into any preconceived structure.

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The process of meeting and interviewing participants was one marked by positivity, enjoyment, and connection. The PI met and related with fellow peers she may not have had she not conducted this study using qualitative means. Participants were eager to speak about the topic and showed a genuine interest in the process and outcome of the study. They were helpful, gracious, and valuable with their time, effort, and input into the study.

The PI is proud of the process and outcome of the dissertation and it is her sincere hope that GSAPP finds the results and recommendations insightful and valuable for future development of the group supervision program.

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### Summary

The purpose of this study was to examine the experiences and perceptions of key stakeholders involved in GSAPP's school psychology group supervision program. This study was designed to provide a qualitative evaluation of key elements related to supervision, a significant professional activity. Based on study results, the PI provided meaningful recommendations for future program development. The participants involved in this study were 22 students and four supervisors, currently involved in the program's group supervision courses. Findings from the study reveal important factors related to the group supervision program including: supervisor prior experience and involvement, purpose and importance, structure, experience and processes, evaluation, impact, and points for programmatic consideration. Recommendations include the following: implement competency based practices at multiple levels, promotion of a responsive framework, institute firm electronics policy, modify time requirement, and program support for group supervision program. Despite limitations of the study design and a need for further research, the dissertation is thought to provide meaningful results and recommendations.

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**APPENDIX A: INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The GSAPP School Psychology Supervision Program Study

**Study Purpose**

This study explores relevant stakeholders' experience within GSAPP's School Psychology group supervision courses using Grounded Theory. Before taking part in this study, please read the informed consent form below and the accompanying audio recording addendum. On the addendum, please check and initial "I Agree" and provide your signature and date at the bottom of the document if you understand the statements and freely consent to participate in an audio-recorded interview.

**Study Method**

This study involves interview-based research to explore stakeholder's experience with GSAPP's School Psychology Program's group supervision courses. The study is being conducted by school psychology doctoral student Elizabeth Murray of Rutgers University, and it has been approved by the Rutgers University Institutional Review Board. No deception is involved, and the study involves no more than minimal risk to participants (i.e., the level of risk encountered in daily life). Participation in the study will involve one 30-minute interview conducted with the principal investigator, Elizabeth Murray.

Interviews may be recorded and transcribed, upon participant consent. The goal of interviews are to better understand stakeholders' involvement and personal experience participating in GSAPP's School Psychology group supervision in their specific capacity. Participation is strictly confidential. Participants will answer a series of questions, in an in-person or phone interview format, about their experience in GSAPP's School Psychology Program group supervision. Some question items may require an interviewer prompt for verbal elaboration of specific responses. Other items require the interviewee to provide a written numerical rating-type response on the Interview Response Sheet. All responses are treated as confidential, and in no case will responses from individual participants be identified. Rather, all data will be pooled and presented in aggregate form only.

**Study Benefits**

Participant time and consideration in responses are greatly appreciated and will contribute to the broad understanding of supervisor and supervisee perceptions of the group supervision in the GSAPP School Psychology program. Participants will not be identified or linked in any way to their responses once the interview is complete. Findings will be presented in aggregate form to emphasize larger themes across responses. Please keep in mind when responding to questions, only consider your experiences within the group supervision within GSAPP's School Psychology Program. This study does not seek to examine experiences with outside supervision and supervisors/supervisees.

Participants may personally benefit from better understanding their experience in the program and the perceptions of others. Furthermore, key stakeholders of the School Psychology Program,

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

such as the Chair, may benefit from the results of the study so as to better understand the current perceptions of the supervisors and supervisees. Participation is voluntary, refusal to take part in the study involves no penalty or loss of benefits to which participants are otherwise entitled, and participants may withdraw from the study at any time. Participants will not receive credit or monetary compensation. No risks have been identified with study participation. Study results will be provided to participants upon request.

### **Compensation**

Each participant will be entered in a lottery in which they have an equal chance to win a \$25 Amazon gift card for their participation in the study. The lottery will be conducted after all participants have been interviewed. The first five participants to be randomly drawn from the lottery will be awarded a \$25 Amazon gift card. All participants (regardless of completion of the study or consent to use responses in the study and/or be audio recorded) will have an equal opportunity in the lottery. Winners will be contacted by secure Rutgers email if they are a lottery winner.

### **Confidentiality**

Interviews will be audio recorded upon consent of the participant. Audio files will be transcribed and saved in electronic documents. All research data, including hard copies of protocols, audio files and data files, will be retained for three years following the end of data analysis. During the time prior to study completion, all data will be stored in a lock box securely in the Principal Investigator's home. Upon study completion, data transcription files, audio files and written notes will be destroyed. Paperwork will be shredded, audio files will be destroyed and transcription electronic files permanently deleted. At no time will study data be available for public review. Subjects may withdraw from the study at any time and may request that interview data is not used in the study.

### **Contact Information**

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to file a complaint or concern, they may contact:

Principal Investigator (PI):

Mrs. Elizabeth Murray, Rutgers University  
School Psychology Doctoral Student  
141 Spencer Road  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
908-399-1384 (P)  
[emolnar@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto:emolnar@gsapp.rutgers.edu)

Dissertation Chair Person:

Dr. Kenneth Schneider, Rutgers University  
Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology  
152 Frelinghuysen Road  
Piscataway, NJ 08854-8020  
(732) 445-2000 X106 (P)  
[schneid@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto:schneid@gsapp.rutgers.edu)

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

Institutional Review Board  
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey  
Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200  
335 George Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
732-235-2866 (P)  
[humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu](mailto:humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu)

**APPENDIX B: AUDIO RECORDING ADDENDUM TO INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

**AUDIO RECORDING ADDENDUM TO INFORMED CONSENT FORM**

The GSAPP School Psychology Supervision Program Study

You have already agreed to participate in a research study conducted by Elizabeth Murray. We are asking for your permission to allow us to audiotape your interview as part of that research study. You do not have to agree to be recorded in order to participate in the main part of the study.

The recording(s) will be used so that the PI may examine participant perceptions and experiences within GSAPP's supervision courses. Findings will be presented in aggregate form to emphasize larger themes across responses. Individual responses will not be presented and/or linked to participants.

The recording(s) will not include participant names or other identifiers to link participants to audio recordings. The cohort year of student participants will be indicated on the audio recording.

The recording(s) will be stored Audio files will be transcribed and saved in electronic documents. All research data, including hard copies of protocols, audio files and data files, will be retained for three years following the end of data analysis. During the time prior to study completion, all data will be stored in a lock box securely in the Principal Investigator's home. Upon study completion, data transcription files, audio files and written notes will be destroyed. Paperwork will be shredded, audio files will be destroyed and transcription electronic files permanently deleted. At no time will study data be available for public review. Subjects may withdrawal from the study at any time and may request that interview data is not used in the study.

**Contact Information**

If participants have further questions about this study or their rights, or if they wish to file a complaint or concern, they may contact:

Principal Investigator (PI):  
Mrs. Elizabeth Murray, Rutgers University  
School Psychology Doctoral Student  
141 Spencer Road  
Basking Ridge, NJ 07920  
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Dissertation Chair Person:  
Dr. Kenneth Schneider, Rutgers University  
Graduate School of Applied & Professional Psychology  
152 Frelinghuysen Road  
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EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

(732) 445-2000 X106 (P)  
[schneid@gsapp.rutgers.edu](mailto:schneid@gsapp.rutgers.edu)

Institutional Review Board  
Rutgers University, the State University of New Jersey  
Liberty Plaza / Suite 3200  
335 George Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
New Brunswick, NJ 08901  
732-235-2866 (P)  
[humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu](mailto:humansubjects@orsp.rutgers.edu)

Your signature on this form grants the investigator named above permission to record you as described above during participation in the above-referenced study. The investigator will not use the recording(s) for any other reason than that/those stated in the consent form without your written permission.

\_\_\_\_ I read the above information and provide my consent to participate in the GSAPP School Psychology Supervision Program Study by way of an audio recorded interview, and agree to have the audio recording transcribed. \_\_\_\_\_ (Initial)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of Participant                      Signature                      Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Printed Name of PI                      Signature                      Date

**APPENDIX C: SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Supervisor Interview Questions**

1. How long have you supervised (in general)? In GSAPP's School Psychology Program?
2. How did you come to supervise in GSAPP's School Psychology Program?
3. Do you have any training in supervision? If so, explain.
4. Here are a list of topics that are most likely discussed in your group, please write the percentage of time you felt was spent on each (Try to sum to 100% as closely as possible).

Assessment \_\_\_\_\_

Intervention \_\_\_\_\_

Ethics \_\_\_\_\_

Laws \_\_\_\_\_

Interpersonal matters \_\_\_\_\_

Issues of personal competence \_\_\_\_\_

Other \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* (If interpersonal matters is above 25%, ask student what activities comprise that) \*\***

5. Are there topics that you as a supervisor would have liked to have covered, but you were not able to cover? What were they?
6. How do you take into account the mixed cohort makeup (2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> years together) of the group in doing supervision? Do you notice these differences in your group makeup in terms of what gets discussed?
7. Do you have a sense of the range of attitudes that students have regarding supervision? How do you account for this in running your group?
8. Have you found that students approach supervision differently than they do a didactic class? If so, how do you account for this in running your group? What do you make of it?
9. How do you address student's electronics usage during supervision group? How did you come to this approach?
10. What do you tell your supervisees about the importance of supervision as a professional activity? Do you cover didactics about supervision in your group?
11. Below is a list of seven supervision competency domains that APA promotes in training programs. Indicate the frequency to which you address these areas in your group. See an explanation of each competency (by the APA Task Force) under the below table.

EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

<b>1. Supervisor Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>2. Diversity</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>3. Relationships</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>4. Professionalism</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>5. Assessment/Evaluation/Feedback</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>6. Problems of Professional Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>7. Ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus

12. How do you distinguish between passing/failing, what criteria do you use in this decision?
13. Do you agree with pass/fail system? If not, how would you feel about a system based on specific competencies? How might you measure this?
14. Rate the level of structure you employ in your group: Not enough, Just about right, Too much. How does that structure affect you? The group?
15. What group dynamics (if any) were you aware of at play in your supervision group? How did you handle them? (For example: If a student dominates the discussion, or if a student is completely disengaged, etc)
16. In your role as a supervisor, how do you think about the unique responsibility of having to give feedback to a student who may exhibit concerning behaviors regarding his/her professional competence?



## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

17. What does the school psychology program require of you to be a supervisor? What framework and requirements (if any) do they provide you in running a supervision group within the program?
18. Do you think the supervision program should continue as it is? If not, what changes would you suggest implementing?
19. How have you changed as a supervisor over time? Are there areas you feel you would like to improve?

**APPENDIX D: STUDENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL**

**Student Interview Questions**

1. What year are you in the School Psychology program?
2. Why do you think group supervision is a requirement in the program?
3. How would you rate your experiences in supervision? If positive, why? If negative, why?

(1) All Positive	(2) Mostly Positive	(3) Neutral	(4) Some negative	(5) All Negative
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4. Here are a list of topics that are most likely discussed in your group, please write the percentage of time you felt was spent on each (Try to sum to 100% as closely as possible. Approx 14% for each item equals 100%)

- 1) Assessment \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Intervention \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Ethics \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Laws \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Interpersonal matters \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Issues of personal competence \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Other \_\_\_\_\_

**\*\* (If interpersonal matters is above 25%, ask student what activities comprise that) \*\***

5. How do you feel about the time spent on the particular topics from question 4? If negatively, what would you have preferred?
6. Which of the topics from question 4 would you have preferred the group to spend more time on, if any?
7. What do you think is the general attitude of students toward supervision?
8. How do you feel about the amount of supervision provided within the program? Inadequate, adequate, excessive. If not adequate, explain.
9. If 3<sup>rd</sup> year student:
  - A) Given the fact that you have spent four full semesters in group supervision in GSAPP, can you provide three positives and three negatives from your experiences across your group supervision experience?
  - B) In your group supervision experiences, did the group supervision process change as you participated in it over time? Explain.

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

10. Was the process and importance of supervision explained by your group supervisor? If yes, how?
11. What kind of feedback would you find beneficial from your supervisor? And with what frequency and format?
12. Do you know that the professional psychology organizations have specific competencies you should gain from supervision? If yes, what do you know?
13. Below is a list of seven supervision competency domains that APA promotes in training programs. Indicate the frequency to which each is addressed in your group. See an explanation (by the APA Task Force) of each competency under the below table.

<b>1. Supervisor Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>2. Diversity</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>3. Relationships</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>4. Professionalism</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>5. Assessment/Evaluation/Feedback</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>6. Problems of Professional Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>7. Ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus

14. Did you track or notice your own progress and/or attainment of competencies over time? If so, how?
15. Rate the level of structure your supervisor employs in your group: Not enough, Just about right, Too much. How does that structure affect you? The group?

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

16. How does your supervisor address student's electronics usage during supervision group?
17. What was the most important thing you gained from supervision during your time in the program? Why?
18. How can the school supervision program be improved? What would have made the experience more useful/beneficial to you as a student in training?
19. How do you think you will go forward in using supervision in your career?

**Appendix E: SUPERVISOR INTERVIEW RESPONSE FORM**

**Supervisor Interview Response Form**

4. Here are a list of topics that are most likely discussed in your group, please write the percentage of time you felt was spent on each (Try to sum to 100% as closely as possible).

Assessment \_\_\_\_\_  
 Intervention \_\_\_\_\_  
 Ethics \_\_\_\_\_  
 Laws \_\_\_\_\_  
 Interpersonal matters \_\_\_\_\_  
 Issues of personal competence \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other \_\_\_\_\_

11. Below is a list of seven supervision competency domains that APA promotes in training programs. Indicate the frequency to which you address these areas in your group. Following the below table, see an explanation of each competency. \*Retrieved directly from the *Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology* (American Psychological Association, 2014).

<b>1. Supervisor Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>2. Diversity</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>3. Relationships</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>4. Professionalism</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>5. Assessment/Evaluation/Feedback</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>6. Problems of Professional Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>7. Ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus

**\*The below competency outline was retrieved directly from the following source:**

American Psychological Association. (2014). Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology. Retrieved from <http://apa.org/about/policy/guidelines-supervision.pdf>

### **Supervisor Competence**

1. Supervisors strive to be competent in the psychological services provided to clients/patients by supervisees under their supervision and when supervising in areas in which they are less familiar they take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect others from harm.
2. Supervisors seek to attain and maintain competence in the practice of supervision through formal education and training.
3. Supervisors endeavor to coordinate with other professionals responsible for the supervisee's education and training to ensure communication and coordination of goals and expectations.
4. Supervisors strive for diversity competence across populations and settings
5. Supervisors using technology in supervision (including distance supervision), or when supervising care that incorporates technology, strive to be competent regarding its use.

### **Diversity**

1. Supervisors strive to develop and maintain self-awareness regarding their diversity competence, which includes attitudes, knowledge, and skills
2. Supervisors planfully strive to enhance their diversity competence to establish a respectful supervisory relationship and to facilitate the diversity competence of their supervisees.
3. Supervisors recognize the value of and pursue ongoing training in diversity competence as part of their professional development and life-long learning.
4. Supervisors aim to be knowledgeable about the effects of bias, prejudice, and stereotyping. When possible, supervisors model client/patient advocacy and model promoting change in organizations and communities in the best interest of their clients/patients.
5. Supervisors aspire to be familiar with the scholarly literature concerning diversity competence in supervision and training. Supervisors strive to be familiar with promising practices for navigating conflicts among personal and professional values in the interest of protecting the public.

### **Supervisory Relationship**

1. Supervisors value and seek to create and maintain a collaborative relationship that promotes the supervisees' competence.
2. Supervisors seek to specify the responsibilities and expectations of both parties in the supervisory relationship. Supervisors identify expected program competencies and performance standards, and assist the supervisee to formulate individual learning goals.
3. Supervisors aspire to review regularly the progress of the supervisee and the effectiveness of the supervisory relationship and address issues that arise.

### **Professionalism**

1. Supervisors strive to model professionalism in their own comporment and interactions with others, and teach knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with professionalism.

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

2. Supervisors are encouraged to provide ongoing formative and summative evaluation of supervisees' progress toward meeting expectations for professionalism appropriate for each level of education and training.

### **Assessment, Evaluation, Feedback**

1. Ideally, assessment, evaluation, and feedback occur within a collaborative supervisory relationship. Supervisors promote openness and transparency in feedback and assessment, by anchoring such in the competency development of the supervisee.
2. A major supervisory responsibility is monitoring and providing feedback on supervisee performance. Live observation or review of recorded sessions is the preferred procedure.
3. Supervisors aspire to provide feedback that is direct, clear, and timely, behaviorally anchored, responsive to supervisees' reactions, and mindful of the impact on the supervisory relationship.
4. Supervisors recognize the value of and support supervisee skill in self-assessment of competence and incorporate supervisee self-assessment into the evaluation process.
5. Supervisors seek feedback from their supervisees and others about the quality of the supervision they offer, and incorporate that feedback to improve their supervisory competence.

### **Professional Competence Problems**

1. Supervisors understand and adhere both to the supervisory contract and to program, institutional, and legal policies and procedures related to performance evaluations. Supervisors strive to address performance problems directly.
2. Supervisors strive to identify potential performance problems promptly, communicate these to the supervisee, and take steps to address these in a timely manner allowing for opportunities to effect change.
3. Supervisors are competent in developing and implementing plans to remediate performance problems.
4. Supervisors are mindful of their role as gatekeeper and take appropriate and ethical action in response to supervisee performance problems.

### **Ethics, Legal, and Regulatory Considerations**

1. Supervisors model ethical practice and decision making and conduct themselves in accord with the APA ethical guidelines, guidelines of any other applicable professional organizations, and relevant federal, state, provincial, and other jurisdictional laws and regulations.
2. Supervisors uphold their primary ethical and legal obligation to protect the welfare of the client/patient.
3. Supervisors serve as gatekeepers to the profession. Gatekeeping entails assessing supervisees' suitability to enter and remain in the field.
4. Supervisors provide clear information about the expectations for and parameters of supervision to supervisees preferably in the form of a written supervisory contract.
5. Supervisors maintain accurate and timely documentation of supervisee performance related to expectations for competency and professional development.

**Appendix F: STUDENT INTERVIEW RESPONSE FORM**

**Student Interview Response Form**

3. How would you rate your experiences in supervision? If positive, why? If negative, why?

(1) All Positive	(2) Mostly Positive	(3) Neutral	(4) Some negative	(5) All Negative
------------------	---------------------	-------------	-------------------	------------------

4. Here are a list of topics that are most likely discussed in your group, please write the percentage of time you felt was spent on each (Try to sum to 100% as closely as possible. Approx 14% for each item equals 100%)

- 1) Assessment \_\_\_\_\_
- 2) Intervention \_\_\_\_\_
- 3) Ethics \_\_\_\_\_
- 4) Laws \_\_\_\_\_
- 5) Interpersonal matters \_\_\_\_\_
- 6) Issues of personal competence \_\_\_\_\_
- 7) Other \_\_\_\_\_

13. Below is a list of seven supervision competency domains that APA promotes in training programs. Indicate the frequency to which each is addressed in your group. Following the below table, see an explanation of each competency. \*Retrieved directly from the *Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology* (American Psychological Association, 2014).

<b>1. Supervisor Competence</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>2. Diversity</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>3. Relationships</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>4. Professionalism</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>5. Assessment/Evaluation/Feedback</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>6. Problems of Professional Competence</b>			



## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus
<b>7. Ethical, legal, and regulatory considerations</b>			
(1) Never Focus	(2) Infrequent Focus	(3) Moderate Focus	(4) Frequent Focus

**\*The below competency outline was retrieved directly from the following source:**  
American Psychological Association. (2014). Guidelines for Clinical Supervision in Health Service Psychology. Retrieved from <http://apa.org/about/policy/guidelines-supervision.pdf>

### **Supervisor Competence**

1. Supervisors strive to be competent in the psychological services provided to clients/patients by supervisees under their supervision and when supervising in areas in which they are less familiar they take reasonable steps to ensure the competence of their work and to protect others from harm.
2. Supervisors seek to attain and maintain competence in the practice of supervision through formal education and training.
3. Supervisors endeavor to coordinate with other professionals responsible for the supervisee's education and training to ensure communication and coordination of goals and expectations.
4. Supervisors strive for diversity competence across populations and settings
5. Supervisors using technology in supervision (including distance supervision), or when supervising care that incorporates technology, strive to be competent regarding its use.

### **Diversity**

1. Supervisors strive to develop and maintain self-awareness regarding their diversity competence, which includes attitudes, knowledge, and skills
2. Supervisors planfully strive to enhance their diversity competence to establish a respectful supervisory relationship and to facilitate the diversity competence of their supervisees.
3. Supervisors recognize the value of and pursue ongoing training in diversity competence as part of their professional development and life-long learning.
4. Supervisors aim to be knowledgeable about the effects of bias, prejudice, and stereotyping. When possible, supervisors model client/patient advocacy and model promoting change in organizations and communities in the best interest of their clients/patients.
5. Supervisors aspire to be familiar with the scholarly literature concerning diversity competence in supervision and training. Supervisors strive to be familiar with promising practices for navigating conflicts among personal and professional values in the interest of protecting the public.

### **Supervisory Relationship**

1. Supervisors value and seek to create and maintain a collaborative relationship that promotes the supervisees' competence.
2. Supervisors seek to specify the responsibilities and expectations of both parties in the supervisory relationship. Supervisors identify expected program competencies and performance standards, and assist the supervisee to formulate individual learning goals.

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

3. Supervisors aspire to review regularly the progress of the supervisee and the effectiveness of the supervisory relationship and address issues that arise.

### **Professionalism**

1. Supervisors strive to model professionalism in their own comportment and interactions with others, and teach knowledge, skills, and attitudes associated with professionalism.
2. Supervisors are encouraged to provide ongoing formative and summative evaluation of supervisees' progress toward meeting expectations for professionalism appropriate for each level of education and training.

### **Assessment, Evaluation, Feedback**

1. Ideally, assessment, evaluation, and feedback occur within a collaborative supervisory relationship. Supervisors promote openness and transparency in feedback and assessment, by anchoring such in the competency development of the supervisee.
2. A major supervisory responsibility is monitoring and providing feedback on supervisee performance. Live observation or review of recorded sessions is the preferred procedure.
3. Supervisors aspire to provide feedback that is direct, clear, and timely, behaviorally anchored, responsive to supervisees' reactions, and mindful of the impact on the supervisory relationship.
4. Supervisors recognize the value of and support supervisee skill in self-assessment of competence and incorporate supervisee self-assessment into the evaluation process.
5. Supervisors seek feedback from their supervisees and others about the quality of the supervision they offer, and incorporate that feedback to improve their supervisory competence.

### **Professional Competence Problems**

1. Supervisors understand and adhere both to the supervisory contract and to program, institutional, and legal policies and procedures related to performance evaluations. Supervisors strive to address performance problems directly.
2. Supervisors strive to identify potential performance problems promptly, communicate these to the supervisee, and take steps to address these in a timely manner allowing for opportunities to effect change.
3. Supervisors are competent in developing and implementing plans to remediate performance problems.
4. Supervisors are mindful of their role as gatekeeper and take appropriate and ethical action in response to supervisee performance problems.

### **Ethics, Legal, and Regulatory Considerations**

1. Supervisors model ethical practice and decision making and conduct themselves in accord with the APA ethical guidelines, guidelines of any other applicable professional organizations, and relevant federal, state, provincial, and other jurisdictional laws and regulations.
2. Supervisors uphold their primary ethical and legal obligation to protect the welfare of the client/patient.
3. Supervisors serve as gatekeepers to the profession. Gatekeeping entails assessing supervisees' suitability to enter and remain in the field.

## EXPLORING GSAPP'S SUPERVISION PROGRAM THROUGH GROUNDED THEORY

4. Supervisors provide clear information about the expectations for and parameters of supervision to supervisees preferably in the form of a written supervisory contract.
5. Supervisors maintain accurate and timely documentation of supervisee performance related to expectations for competency and professional development.