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Graduate school training in CBT supervision to develop knowledge and competencies

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) is the dominant training model adopted by clinical psychology training programs and is commonly reported as the primary theoretical orientation among community therapists. However, few American psychologists receive formal training in supervision to support CBT, despite APA recommendations related to supervision competencies. Graduate training is an optimal time and place for supervision training, and we describe a CBT supervision workshop within a clinical doctoral program. Twenty-three trainees (69.6% Caucasian/White, 73.9% women) reported declarative knowledge of supervision and perceived supervision competencies before and after the workshop. Trainees increased declarative knowledge and perceived supervision competencies. Graduate training in CBT supervision may help develop a well-trained supervisor workforce that can better support the use of evidence-based therapies, such as CBT.

KEYWORDS

Professional psychology
graduate training;
supervision; competency

Cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) has been well-supported by research studies for the treatment of numerous mental health problems and diagnoses for individuals across the life-span (Hofmann, Asnaani, Vonk, Sawyer, & Fang, 2012) and is reported as a primary theoretical orientation by most providers in typical mental health service settings (see Chorpita et al., 2017; Wolitzky-Taylor et al., 2018). Whereas most doctoral training programs for clinical psychology in the US include content focused on developing student competencies in *delivering* CBT (Heatherington et al., 2012), fewer than 20% of psychology supervisors reported having received any formal coursework in supervision (Peake, Nussbaum, & Tindell, 2002), and the majority of training directors in US psychology graduate programs do not rank such training as highly important (Kaslow, Pate, & Thorn, 2005). A survey of 233 US pre-doctoral interns found that only 39% reported completing a graduate course in supervision (Crook-Lyon, Heppler, Leavitt, & Fisher, 2008). Supervision has been critical to the implementation of CBT in large-scale, state-wide dissemination efforts (see Hoagwood et al., 2014), but inconsistencies in

training in CBT supervision restrict the capacity of the local workforce to sustain such effective interventions (Milne, 2016). We contend that graduate training in clinical psychology presents the optimal time and place for training in supervision generally and in CBT supervision specifically.

Supervision is a key competency for psychologists

Clinical supervision is one of the key educational and training methods among professional psychologists and a cornerstone for the preparation of health service psychologists (Falender et al., 2004). Supervision has gained recognition as a distinct professional competency that requires formal training (Falender et al., 2004), yet few guidelines have governed the training of psychology supervisors in the United States (Falender & Shafranske, 2014; Milne, 2016). Changes in training recommendations for American Psychological Association (APA, 2014) accredited graduate programs more explicitly include supervision curriculum, but recent studies of students and administrators of psychology training programs call into question the extent to which APA guidelines regarding supervision are followed (Rodriguez-Menendez, Dempsey, Albizu, Power, & Campbell Wilkerson, 2017). Practicing supervision requires training in supervision and assessment of supervision competencies (Bernard & Goodyear, 2014), and thus necessitates the development of appropriate training curriculum to precede this practice.

Competency in CBT supervision supports effective practice

Clinical supervision has been proposed as a potential mechanism for ensuring the adequate implementation of evidence-based practices such as CBT following the completion of training (Martino et al., 2016; Schoenwald, Mehta, Frazier, & Shernoff, 2013). Numerous large-scale CBT implementation efforts are afoot within the US as well as abroad (see McHugh & Barlow, 2010, for a review of some of these efforts) and supervision appears to support such efforts at scaling CBT (Rakovshik, McManus, Vazquez-Montes, Muse, & Ougrin, 2016). Unfortunately, typical supervision in US mental health settings does not reflect the “model specific” CBT supervision that supports effective CBT practice, potentially limiting the quality of its implementation (Bailin, Bearman, & Sale, 2018; Dorsey et al., 2018; Lucid et al., 2018).

Based on reviews of the type of supervision used to support therapists in efficacy trials of CBT (Roth, Pilling, & Turner, 2010) and studies of CBT training methods (Rakovshik & McManus, 2010), CBT supervision typically includes theoretical instruction in CBT, experiential and active learning activities including modeling and role-play, and feedback on actual clinical performance or adherence monitoring. These aspects of CBT supervision

align with theoretical models of CBT supervision (Milne, 2009) and with both naturalistic and experimental studies testing what aspects of supervision predict therapist CBT implementation and competency (Bearman, Schneiderman, & Zoloth, 2017; Bearman et al., 2013). Others have noted that the “microskills” (James, Milne, & Morse, 2008) or moment-to-moment activities of CBT supervision should be closely matched to CBT intervention, such that it includes similar components (e.g., agenda-setting, homework review, checking theoretical knowledge, using experiential learning). In addition to these CBT-specific components of supervision, CBT supervisors (like CBT therapists) must also incorporate generic aspects of professional competency that are not specific to CBT, such as cultural sensitivity, professional ethics, and maintaining appropriate boundaries (Newman, 2010).

Within the United Kingdom, the national Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) initiative provides a clear example of CBT supervision training, as it required the development of a large supervisor workforce to support therapists treating adults with CBT for depression and anxiety (Turpin & Wheeler, 2011). All IAPT therapists who supervise others were required to complete focused training in CBT supervision, based on Roth and Pilling’s (2007) definition of generic, specific, applied, and meta-supervision competencies for psychological therapists. Researchers found significant improvements in ratings of each type of competency, as well as overall competency, providing preliminary evidence that didactic workshops may impact the development of CBT supervisory competencies among these practicing therapists (Taylor, Gordon, Grist, & Olding, 2012).

Graduate training in CBT supervision

Training experienced therapists in CBT supervision is an important aspect of developing a skilled supervisory workforce; another, complementary approach is to provide training in CBT supervision during graduate school, prior to entry into the workforce. The advantages to including structured training in CBT supervision within US professional psychology graduate programs are many. First, graduate training is among the most influential predictors of later practice (Cook, Schnurr, Biyanova, & Coyne, 2009), suggesting that it is an ideal time to introduce CBT supervision practices – especially in the context of training programs that already focus on CBT. Secondly, it is more cost efficient to train providers in effective practices during graduate school rather than “re-training” an existing workforce once habits have already been established (Hoagwood, Atkins, & Ialongo, 2013). Providing CBT supervision training alongside other foundational CBT content may also increase conceptual understanding, given that theories of supervision are closely linked to theories of learning, development, and behavior change as well as models of psychotherapy (Holt et al., 2015;

James et al., 2008; Stoltenberg, 2005). Lastly, graduate programs are tasked with the evaluation of trainee competencies, making them ideal “gatekeepers” for ensuring that developing therapists are exposed to the requisite curriculum regarding supervision and can adequately put this knowledge into practice.

We sought to extend the findings of prior research demonstrating that experienced psychologists develop competency in CBT supervision following training that prepares them to supervise therapists using CBT (Milne, Reiser, & Cliffe, 2013; Taylor et al., 2012), and build upon the work of others who have described graduate student training in clinical supervision (Foxwell et al., 2017; Newman, 2013). The present study focused on pre-doctoral trainees who participated in a one-day required workshop on clinical supervision for CBT. We assessed their experiences receiving and providing supervision in order to place the results of the study in the context of their training. In order to compare our sample with the study by Taylor et al. (2012), we measured participant self-assessment of supervision competency. We also measured whether supervision knowledge increased, since didactic training is theorized to be an effective means of generating declarative knowledge (Bennett-Levy, McManus, Westling, & Fennell, 2009).

Method

Participants

Twenty-three doctoral students in an American clinical science psychology training program with no prior formal supervision training completed the one-day training. All participants reported CBT as their theoretical orientation. There were 17 females (73.9%) and 6 males (26.1%) aged 23–31 ($M = 26.77$, $SD = 2.39$), spanning 1–5 years of graduate training. Sixteen (69.6%) were White/Caucasian, 3 (13.0%) were Asian/Pacific Islander, 1 (4.3%) was Black/African American, 1 (4.3%) was Hispanic, and 2 (8.7%) did not report ethnicity. The majority (78.2%) reported that they worked primarily with adults, and they reported a range of clinical experience (< 1 year = 17.4%; 1–2 years = 34.8%; 2–3 years = 26.1%; 3+ years = 17.4%).

Procedures

Participants attended the 8-hour training workshop as a required part of their doctoral curriculum. Prior to the workshop, they were invited to participate in a voluntary research study assessing supervision experiences and supervision competency. All participants provided written consent and completed pre- and post-workshop questionnaires before and after the

training. This study was approved by the University of Texas at Austin Institutional Review Board.

Training

The training content was developed and presented by the first author (not a faculty member in the training program to which the study participants belonged). The goals of the training were twofold: (1) To provide model-specific training in CBT supervision guided by research on the supervision in influential CBT research trials (Roth et al., 2010) and using resources described by the IAPT supervision initiative to support high-quality implementation of CBT (cf. Taylor et al., 2012; Turpin & Wheeler, 2011) and (2) to present an overview of the supervisory competencies recommended by APA (2014), including those expected in CBT supervision but that also extend across theoretical orientations (e.g., multiculturalism and diversity, legal and ethical parameters). The training format included didactics, group discussions, small-group exercises, and the use of audio and video recordings of supervision and therapy sessions with both confederates and real clients who had consented to share their sessions for educational purposes. Experiential strategies for learning, such as modeling by the trainer and role-play among participants, as well as observation-based feedback were prioritized to support learning and introduce the micro skills of CBT supervisory practice that have been recommended and evaluated (Bearman et al., 2017, 2013; James et al., 2008; Roth & Pilling, 2007).

The workshop began with a discussion of the purpose of clinical supervision in professional psychology. This was followed with trainees in small groups proposing their definitions of supervision and then comparing these to formal definitions. To provide specific context for the promise of CBT supervision to support CBT implementation in practice, research was presented comparing the relative benefit of CBT in efficacy trials versus studies conducted under more “real-world” conditions. The presenter underscored that high-quality CBT implementation necessitated high-quality CBT supervision. This section was followed by a presentation of supervision research, including summaries of systematic reviews and meta-analyses, the use of supervision in randomized clinical trials of CBT, and observational studies of supervision in “usual care.” CBT supervision was defined as “model-specific” (Roth et al., 2010) to support the development of competent CBT practice and was described as serving normative, formative, and restorative functions (Milne, 2007).

Next, the presenter illustrated the parallel structure of CBT supervision and CBT therapy, including establishing goals and contracting, agenda-setting, assessing competencies, skill-building, problem-solving barriers, summarizing, and check-out. Shared features of CBT and CBT supervision were

also described, including an active and skill-building approach, emphasis on collaborative expertise, and a commitment to the use of empirically-supported strategies and data to guide clinical decision making. In an activity, trainees role-played establishing goals and developing a supervisory contract for CBT supervision with a supervisee. Trainees were asked to inquire about their partner's prior experiences and expectations for supervision, clarify the process and structure for supervision, set expectations for progress monitoring and evaluation, identify supervisee goals, and summarize and seek feedback.

Topics on the normative function of supervision included the use of progress monitoring and technology (e.g., measurement feedback systems) and live supervision or recordings to ensure client safety, as well as a discussion of ethical obligations and dilemmas that often arise in supervision. Specific to CBT supervision, the oversight of treatment quality as an aspect of ethical supervision included a discussion of CBT treatment fidelity, defined as adherence (inclusion of prescribed components) and competence (skillfulness). Trainees used measurement feedback data from four hypothetical cases to rank order how they would prioritize discussion, using information about client symptoms and functioning, client attendance, and therapist reported CBT strategies. Next, the presenter introduced the topic of supervisee failure to implement supervisor directives related to client welfare (Vespia, Heckman-Stone, & Delworth, 2002). The presenter reviewed CBT practices (Socratic questioning, motivational interviewing, sequential problem-solving) as approaches to supporting supervisee behavior change. Following discussion, the trainees role-played addressing implementation failure in supervision.

With regard to the formative function, specific micro skills of supervision thought to promote the development of CBT integrity and consistent with CBT models rooted in learning theory were examined (e.g. modeling, role-play, and corrective feedback) and rehearsed. Trainees observed a segment of a therapy session and planned feedback related a particular CBT skill, cognitive restructuring, as well as nonspecific skills (e.g. warmth, congruence). The restorative aspect of supervision included a summary of research on supervisory working alliance.

The final section of the workshop focused on culturally sensitive supervision practices, including theoretical models and practices that promote culturally competent therapy and supervision. Although this competency is applicable to all orientations, the use of CBT was specifically related to Sue, Zane, Nagayama Hall, and Berger (2009) notion of credibility and giving as key aspects of psychotherapy with culturally diverse populations. Trainees brainstormed ways in which CBT, and CBT supervision, can enhance client perception of therapists as effective and trustworthy, and their perception that they received something useful from therapy. Trainees also role-played

introducing the topic of supervisee and supervisor cultural membership in a supervision meeting with a culturally diverse trainee. Table 1 outlines the content and learning outcomes for the workshop.

Measures

Participant characteristics

Participants reported demographic characteristics, number of years in the training program, clinical experience, and prior experience with supervision.

Prior experiences with supervision

Participants were administered the Supervision Process Questionnaire (SPQ; Accurso, Taylor, & Garland, 2011) at baseline. The SPQ is an 18-item questionnaire that gathers information concerning meeting time, basic client demographics, and time given to various supervisory functions (i.e., administrative tasks, case management, case conceptualization) used within the participant's most recent supervision meeting, as well as the supervisees' satisfaction with time spent on each area (*too little, about right, too much*).

Declarative knowledge

The Supervision Knowledge Questionnaire (SKQ) was developed for the current study to measure declarative knowledge pertaining to the evidence base on competent CBT supervision practice with 15 multiple choice items. Items reflected the content covered in the training, including the theoretical purpose of supervision, the existing literature on CBT supervision, the structure of CBT supervision, recommended CBT supervisory micro skills, and content related to ethical and multiculturally sensitive supervision. Sample items included the following: "According to Milne's (2009) three purposes of supervision, which of the following best describes the *normative* function?" "Supervision from a CBT framework often parallels CBT treatment in what ways?" and "Which supervision strategy(ies) is the best predictor(s) of whether the therapists' planned skill *actually* happens in the very next session with a client?" The SKQ demonstrated adequate test-retest reliability, $r = .72$.

Supervisory competence

The Supervisory Competence Questionnaire (SCQ; Taylor et al., 2012) is comprised of four subscales that measure 18 supervisory competencies as defined by Roth and Pilling (2007) using 19 items: *generic* competencies underpin supervision of all therapy modalities and includes the ability to employ educational principles to enhance learning and enable ethical practice and are assessed with 11 items, *specific* competencies are assessed with 4 items and include the ability to help the supervisee practice specific clinical

Table 1. Summary of CBT clinical supervision training.

Content	Learning outcomes	Experiential learning exercises
Theory & key principles		
Definitions and purpose of supervision ^{a,b}	(1) To be familiar with the three theoretical functions of supervision	Individually, identify beliefs related to supervision as supervisors (if applicable) and supervisees
Governance of supervision in professional psychology	(2) To be familiar with their position within the developmental model of supervision	In small groups, define the purpose of supervision in professional psychology and discuss past experiences
Role of supervision in fidelity of evidence-based practices ^c	(3) To understand the potential for supervision to bridge the research-practice gap in treatment	
Supervision research		
Results of systematic reviews of supervision and role in RCTs ^{d,e,f}	(1) To be familiar with the evidence base of supervision	As a group, list the qualities/ behaviors of most and least effective supervisors
Supervision in community mental health practice ^{g,h}	(2) To become aware of the differences between supervision as usual and supervision in RCTs	As a group, discuss and reflect upon supervision research findings
Suboptimal supervision ⁱ	(3) To learn how to detect ineffective supervision practices	
Empirically supported supervision practices ^{j,k}	(4) To become familiar with research supported supervisory processes that impact therapist adherence and competency	
Structure of supervision		
Contracting with supervisee and goal-setting	(1) To learn how to establish roles, expectations, and responsibilities with supervisee	Model initial supervision meeting, and then students role-play the following,
Within-and-across session structure	(2) To develop generic supervision skills:	(a) discussion of past supervisory experiences
Problem-solving barriers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structuring meetings • Shifting to treatment planning • Maintaining the agenda • Assigning homework • Skill building to enhance therapist competence 	(b) process and structure of meetings (c) supervisee goals (d) summarization of collected information
	(3) To understand how to predict and skillfully address potential barriers in therapy	As a group, use active listening of a recorded supervision session to identify structural aspects and how problem-solving was used to address a barrier that arose With a partner, discuss additional examples and problem-solve potential barriers
Normative function		
Ethical dilemmas ^b	(1) Understand supervision's role in oversight of quality control and client safety	As a group, identify ethical dilemmas new clinicians face in practice
Quality assurance through outcome monitoring ^l	(2) Be familiar with routine progress monitoring and incorporating client data into supervision to prioritize cases	Individually, rank cases for discussion in supervision using graphed client data from a measurement feedback platform, then discuss as a group
Role of live supervision/ use of recordings ^m		
Formative function		

(Continued)

Table 1. (Continued).

Content	Learning outcomes	Experiential learning exercises
Models of learning in supervision ^b Evidence for effective skill building in supervision ^{n,o} Components of corrective feedback in supervision	(1) Be familiar with adult learning models and the development of various types of knowledge <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Declarative • Procedural • Reflective (2) To be able to deliver effective corrective feedback to build clinical skills and foster treatment fidelity	Individually, reflect and record content learned in the seminar and how it will be useful to clinical practice As a group, listen to a supervision session where the supervisor models and role-plays with a therapist to develop competency As a group, watch a simulated supervision session to detect “non-specific” and “specific” skills, then provide corrective feedback
Restorative function		
Managing conflict in supervisory relationship ^p Building a supervisory working alliance ^q Professional burnout and consequences for clients ^{r,s}	(1) To become aware of potential reasons for therapist resistance to learning new skills and how to prevent conflict through collaboration (2) To become aware of potential benefits of a strong supervisory working alliance	Model how to explore supervisee’s ambivalence for using exposure with client Role-play with a partner: supervisor presents a recommendation and explores the supervisee’s reluctance, invites collaboration
Culturally sensitive supervision		
Cultural competency ^t Cultural adaptation of evidence-based treatment ^u Multicultural competent implementation through program and self-assessment ^v	(1) Learn how to introduce the topic of diversity and cultural competency (2) To differentiate cultural knowledge from cultural stereotyping (3) To differentiate cultural sensitivity from cultural blindness, in order to acknowledge cultural differences (4) To build competence through measurement of multicultural competence within a system and via self-assessment	Model the introduction of diversity in supervision Role-play with a partner how to assess supervisee’s experiences and knowledge related to multicultural sensitivity As a group, decide and discuss whether statements reflect knowledge based on evidence or stereotyping

^a Falender and Shafranske (2004). ^b Milne (2007). ^c Schoenwald et al. (2013). ^d Freitas (2002). ^e Roth et al. (2010). ^f Wheeler and Richards (2007).

^g Accurso et al. (2011). ^h Garland, Plemmons, and Koontz (2006). ⁱ Cummings and Ballantyne (2014). ^j Milne (2009). ^k Rakovshik and McManus (2010). ^l American Psychological Association (2006). ^m Worthen and Lambert (2007). ⁿ Bearman et al. (2013). ^o Bearman et al. (2017). ^p Friedlander (2015). ^q Johnston and Milne (2012). ^r Green, Albanese, Shapiro, and Aarons (2014). ^s Maslach and Jackson (1981). ^t Sue et al. (2009). ^u Bernal, Jiménez-Chafey, and Domenech Rodríguez (2009). ^v Ponterotto, Alexander, and Grieger (1995).

skills, *applied* competencies (3 items) include the ability to supervise a full clinical caseload with varying interventions and client populations, and *meta-supervision* competencies (1 item) are the ability to make adaptations in order to maximize the supervisee’s ability to learn. These subscales are also totaled for an overall composite of supervisory competency. Participants rated themselves on a 3-point Likert scale (1 = *not/barely achieved*, 2 = *partially achieved*, and 3 = *well/fully achieved*). In the current study, internal consistency ranged from acceptable to excellent for all subscales and total

scores at pre-training ($\alpha = .79 - .96$). For post-training, internal consistency for all subscales were in the excellent range ($\alpha = .91 - .94$) with the exception applied competencies ($\alpha = .63$), which was in the questionable range.

Results

Descriptives

We examined participants' characteristics regarding receiving and providing supervision. Most participants (69.6%, $n = 16$) had never provided supervision. In reference to their current or most recent clinical placement, about half (47.8%) reported they received supervision once a week or every other week, with the remainder reporting more frequent supervision. The majority of participants received supervision in person (69.6%, $n = 16$). Most (65.2%, $n = 15$) meetings included the use of therapy progress notes, 30.4% ($n = 7$) included discussion of video recordings from a session, 13.0% ($n = 3$) included the use of audiotape from therapy, and 4.3% ($n = 1$) used therapy checklists. Participants reported that the majority of session time in their most recent supervision meeting (45.4%, $SD = 34.60$) was devoted to discussion of specific therapy interventions and approaches and/or case conceptualization (33.3%, $SD = 22.43$). Participants also reported that they were largely satisfied with the amount of time spent on these supervisory content areas. About a quarter of participants (26.1%) reported that "too little" time was spent discussing the supervisory relationship and/or process, and 13.0% reported "too little" time was devoted to discussing supervisee professional and academic roles.

The effect of the workshop on knowledge and self-reported competency

Paired sample t -tests compared declarative knowledge of supervision on the SKQ from pre- and post-training. Mean declarative knowledge differed significantly between pre- ($M = 5.18$, $SD = 2.11$) and post-training ($M = 9.55$, $SD = 2.26$; $t(21) = -6.40$, $p = .000$, $d = 1.36$).

Paired sample t -tests compared self-reported supervisory competence from pre- to post-training (Table 2). In order to reduce the likelihood of Type I error, alpha was set at $p < .01$ for all paired sample t -tests. Mean generic competency differed significantly between pre- ($M = 20.86$, $SD = 6.38$) and post-training ($M = 25.45$, $SD = 6.82$; $t(21) = -3.10$, $p = .005$, $d = .66$). Mean specific competency did not reach significance at the adjusted .01 level from pre- ($M = 7.22$, $SD = 2.56$) to post-training ($M = 8.64$, $SD = .274$; $t(21) = -2.48$, $p = .022$, $d = .53$). Mean applied competency differed significantly between pre- ($M = 5.00$, $SD = 2.18$) and post-training ($M = 6.36$, $SD = 2.04$; $t(21) = -3.69$, $p = .001$, $d = .79$). Mean

Table 2. Paired T-tests of pre-and post-training supervisory competence.

SCQ Subscale	Pre-Training		Post-Training		t-test	p-value
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
General	20.86	2.04	25.45	6.82	-3.10	.005*
Specific	7.23	2.56	8.64	2.73	-2.48	.022
Applied	5.00	2.18	6.36	2.04	-3.69	.001*
Meta	1.5	.74	1.86	.77	-2.94	.008*
Total	34.59	11.10	42.32	11.47	-3.26	.004*

* $p < .01$. SCQ = Supervisory Competence Questionnaire (Taylor et al., 2012).

meta-competency differed significantly between pre- ($M = 1.5$, $SD = .74$) and post-training ($M = 1.86$, $SD = .77$; $t(21) = -2.94$, $p = .008$, $d = .62$). Mean total competency differed significantly between pre- ($M = 34.59$, $SD = 11.10$) and post-training ($M = 42.32$, $SD = 11.47$; $t(21) = -3.26$, $p = .004$, $d = .70$).

Discussion

Graduate training in psychology may be the optimal place and time to combine the emerging science and application of CBT supervision (Hershenberg, Drabick, & Vivian, 2012) to set the stage early and efficiently for a workforce that can support CBT in practice. Clinical psychology doctoral trainees in the current study improved from pre- to post-workshop on a measure of declarative knowledge of CBT supervision. Although the majority of the trainees in the study had received clinical supervision, their pre-workshop responses on the knowledge questionnaire indicated that they were not familiar with the theoretical functions of supervision, research-supported supervisory strategies for CBT, or the role of supervisory working alliance, to name a few commonly missed items. These results suggest that merely being supervised – even adequately, as reported by most study participants – may not sufficiently prepare psychologists to conduct supervision. The Declarative-Procedural-Reflective model of therapist skill development (Bennett-Levy, 2006; Bennett-Levy et al., 2009) describes declarative knowledge as an “intellectual understanding” of a content area that precedes the other aspects of knowledge (procedural and reflective) that is primarily developed through lectures and readings, much like the current training. Declarative knowledge about CBT has been suggested as a precondition for therapist behavior change (Jensen-Doss, Cusack, & de Arellano, 2008); it follows that CBT supervisory behavior would likewise require a conceptual understanding of CBT supervision.

In theory, competent CBT supervision supports the successful delivery of therapy; in the current study we measured supervision competency using the framework developed by Roth and Pilling (2007). This framework consists of competencies that are both broad and pan-theoretical (generic), competencies that support the practice of specific clinical skills (specific), competencies in applying supervision to specific treatment modalities (CBT) and specific client populations

(applied), and competencies in making adaptations to best meet the needs of the individual being supervised (meta-competencies). The training curriculum was designed to support the development of these competencies. For example, for generic competencies, trainees learned and practiced ways to engage in multiculturally competent supervision and to address ethical dilemmas. Related to specific competencies, trainees practiced using session recordings to incorporate direct observation and provide corrective feedback in supervision. Teaching trainees how to structure CBT supervision sessions and to use empirically supported strategies and data to guide clinical decision making were selected to support applied competency specific to CBT. Lastly, content related to the developmental model of supervision supported the development of trainee meta-competencies that help them to maximize supervisee learning. As in the study by Taylor et al. (2012), trainees in our study reported improvements in all areas, although change in specific competency was only a trend. In Taylor et al. (2012), experienced therapists' self-report of competency improved over the course of a five-day training; in the current study, clinical psychology trainees achieved similar scores after a one-day workshop. Although self-report of supervision competency does not equate with the ability to competently apply supervision, the well-established link between self-efficacy and task performance (Stajkovic & Luthans, 1998) suggests that changes in perceived self-competence after participation in the training hold promise for engagement in strategies to enhance procedural knowledge (storehouse of skills) and reflective knowledge ("engine" of ongoing therapist development) (Bennett-Levy et al., 2009).

Implications for supervision training

Despite recommendations for training in supervision for professional psychology programs (APA, 2014), supervision training experiences remain uneven across training programs (Rodriguez-Menendez et al., 2017) and may lack focus on effective, research-supported aspects of supervision (Townend, Iannetta, & Freeston, 2002; Weck, Kaufmann, & Witthöft, 2017). The current study provides evidence that embedding training in CBT supervision in graduate school curricula has the potential to enhance trainee knowledge and competence. Development of these skills during an early career stage may enhance preparation from trainee to licensed practitioner and clinical supervisor and may also help trainees benefit more from their own experiences as a supervisee (Newman, 2013). Moreover, effective clinical supervision has been suggested as a means for advancing research-supported mental health treatments, such as CBT, in typical mental health settings (Schoenwald, Hoagwood, Atkins, Evans, & Ringeisen, 2010) – potentially increasing the employment opportunities of psychologists trained in CBT supervision.

Although the current study used a one-day workshop format, the same content could be easily integrated into a more traditional course format, and

paired with activities like role-plays and self-reflection practices to develop procedural knowledge and engage the reflective system. CBT supervision coursework could be complemented by clinical practicum experience wherein students can supervise others in CBT while being supervised (“meta-supervision”) (Newman, 2013). Regardless of the format, we maintain that a formal didactic training experience in CBT supervision can benefit psychology trainees.

Shifting the responsibility of training in clinical supervision to psychology training programs might increase the development of a skilled supervision workforce in the United States. Training in evidence-based CBT practice requires corresponding supervision in those practices (Beck et al., 2014) that includes live observation or video review, data monitoring, and therapist competency ratings, components recommended for effective supervision (Lewis, Scott, & Hendricks, 2014). Given that a one-day workshop without any preparatory course readings or evaluation of mastery was associated with increases in knowledge and competence, expanding this curriculum into a formal course has additional potential.

Limitations

Although the current study contributes to the understudied area of training in supervision, there are several limitations. Without a control group, we cannot rule-out the possibility that changes in outcomes are due to factors other than participation in the one-day workshop. Secondly, although declarative knowledge of supervision and self-reported competency in supervision may be preconditions for actual supervision behaviors, in this study, we had no measure of behavior change, nor any objective measure of competency. Likewise, we assessed only immediate change, and have no way to know whether increases in knowledge and competency persisted beyond the immediate post-training boost. Future research should assess knowledge and competency over time, to examine whether changes can be sustained. Because of our small sample, we also did not assess whether participant characteristics such as years of training or experience, moderated the impact of the training. The small sample size also resulted in limited power, so results should be replicated in a larger sample. Lastly, perhaps due to the limited number of items, the applied competencies subscale of the competency measure had a questionable level of internal consistency in the post-test administration with the current sample.

Conclusion and future directions

Taylor et al. (2012) noted that “the practice of supervision remains highly valued but poorly evaluated” within clinical work (p. 83). This is also true within clinical psychology training. Without the support of well-trained

supervisors whose knowledge and competency in the specific activities of CBT supervision complements their training in CBT interventions, efforts to increase therapist training and improve client outcomes may flounder (Pilling & Roth, 2014). Graduate training is an optimal time to introduce psychologists to the science and practice of CBT supervision, and to assess their skill in implementing what they have learned (Cook et al., 2009). Psychologists trained to support evidence-based treatments like CBT via supervision may have particular value given increasing implementation efforts in mental health settings (McHugh & Barlow, 2010). The current study demonstrated that trainees who participated in a one-day workshop showed increased knowledge and self-assessment of competency similar to more experienced therapists who participated in a longer workshop (Taylor et al., 2012). We see this as an encouraging first step that would be augmented by additional research with larger samples that include a control condition and the use of objective assessment of competency.

Expanding the research on effective training in clinical supervision broadly has the potential to improve the workforce competency of mental health professionals. Such research may shift the long-standing tradition of supervisory training for clinical psychologists in the United States from one based on learning via personal experience receiving supervision alone (Crook-Lyon, Presnell, Silva, Suyama, & Stickney, 2011) to a more formal and comprehensive training model that assesses supervisory competency, similar to training in therapeutic skills. Graduate school is a natural time to enforce such training and competency checks. With increasing awareness and consensus that supervision is a distinct professional practice within the field of psychology practice (Falender & Shafranske, 2007), continued efforts to examine effective training methods to enhance competent supervisory practice should inform training and policy initiatives that govern mental health professionals.

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Ethical standards

The authors have abided by the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct as set out by the American Psychological Association. This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board of the University of Texas at Austin (2015-04-0014).

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