Collaborative counseling: Using course-embedded experiences to train skills and foster confidence

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**Collaborative counseling as a clinical course embedded experience**

- 3-4 sessions per semester
- Follows training and competency assessment
- Instructor present, alongside of students
- Instructor scaffolds interaction and techniques
- Clients start at more straightforward and move to more challenging

**The process:**

1. **Client #1 – Instructor helps scaffold student interactions – focus on counseling phases (engaging, focusing, evoking, planning) and techniques (open-ended questions, affirmations, reflections, summaries)**
   - **Scaffolding includes writing down key information on the whiteboard, cues to shift between phases, stepping in and modeling techniques**
   - **Students negotiate group dynamics and collaboration (who asks and says what)**
   - **Client input**
   - **Client difficulty**
   - **Tools used**

2. **Client #2 – Instructor decreases scaffolding – focus on getting to planning details, focus on differentiating between techniques (OARS)**
   - **Scaffolding is mostly shifting to planning, eliciting details and implementing initial steps for planning, eliciting specific steps, recognizing change talk**
   - **Client input**
   - **Client difficulty**
   - **Tools used**

3. **Clients #3/4 – Group is fairly independent at counseling – focus on high-level skills pulling together the rambling, hodge podge of ideas into a bouquet of change talk**
   - **Client input**
   - **Client difficulty**
   - **Tools used**

**Results and Interpretations**

- **Improved confidence/self-efficacy**
- **Increased use of OARS (core techniques)**
- **Reached evoking and planning (core phases)**
- **Gained client diversity experience**
- **Increased comfort**
- **Enjoyed opportunity**
- **Preparedness for profession**
- **Critical appraisal of peer or self’s techniques**

**Key Educational and Clinical Takeaways**

- **Hands-on guided practice**
- **Increased learning and repeated opportunities for practice**
- **Students identified increased:**
  - self-efficacy and confidence across three collaborative sessions
  - Ability to implement counseling skills and techniques
  - Ability to negotiate team-based counseling
- **Qualitative Coding**
  - **Transcribe and segment codable statements**
  - **Multiple rounds of open and axial, qualitative coding with consensus coding across three researchers**
  - **Identified overarching schemes, categories, and subcategories**
  - **Multiple sources (individual reflection, group debriefings, and field notes) to triangulate and establish rigor**

**Level the disparity between expert and learner. This is a Vygotskian principle – participation in authentic interactions, ... and vicarious learning (needs to be an achievable model) – if we create a knowledge divide, the chasm is harder to cross.**

**Training counseling**

- The American Speech-Language Hearing Association (ASHA, 2016) identifies counseling as one of the 8 main practice domains for speech-language pathologists (SLPs) and audiologists (AuDs)
- Counseling is in the scope of practice for SLPs and AuDs (ASHA, 2016)
- ASHA (2017) requires Communication Sciences and Disorders (CSD) training programs to train counseling
- Only 59% CSD programs have stand alone course in counseling (Doud & Hoepner, in prep; Doud, Hoepner & Holland, in prep; Seckhon et al., 2015; Simmons-Macke & Damico, 2011)
- SLPs may intentionally or unintentionally avoid counseling moments because they feel unprepared or feel compelled to get back to other communication-based interventions (Simmons-Macke & Damico, 2011)
- SLP graduate students identify a need for more training in counseling methodology and counseling experience in their training programs (Luterman, 2002)

**Collaborative counseling**

- Brings an authentic interventions program into a course
- Employs an apprenticeship model where instructors deliver interventions alongside of students
- Explores service delivery models
- Exposes students to the lived experience
- Multiple roles can change depending on context
- Faculty, students, and clients can be experts
- Faculty, students, and clients can be apprentices

**Research Methods**

- Participants: 36 first year students (18 per cohort) across 2 years
- Individual written reflections after each collaborative-counseling session
- Large-group, oral debriefings after each session (still analyzing)

**Apprenticeship Model of Instruction**

- **Roles can change depending on context**
- **Faculty, students, and clients can be experts**
- **Student to student**
- **Faculty to student**
- **Student to faculty**
- **Faculty to peers**
- **Student to students**
- **Student to clients**

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