DEVELOPING A THEORY OF POWER IN THE

CLINICAL SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

by

MEGAN JAYNE MURPHY

(Under the direction of Sharon Price and David Wright)

ABSTRACT

This dissertation constitutes the development of a grounded theory of power within clinical supervisory relationships. Elements of three theories and a review of clinical literature form the conceptual foundation for this effort. Semi-structured interviews of eleven supervisees in an AAMFT-accredited training program provided data upon which the theory was grounded. In analysis of interview transcripts three themes emerged: structure, individual characteristics, and power use. Structure consists of pre-existing factors that serve to determine the amount of power relationship participants had, such as supervision arrangements, the presence of learning, supervisors relationships, and dual relationships. Individual characteristics consist of attributes of supervisors and supervisees that influence power, such as personality, age, and amount of experience. Power use consists of how supervisors and supervisees use power in the supervisory relationship. Power uses by supervisors included collaboration, empowerment of supervisees, perspectives and assessment, imposition of style/orientations, safety, expectations of supervisees, call-ins, favoritism, and supervisors' misuse of power. Power uses by supervisees included withholding

information, supervisee-peer power, supervisees as consumers, and supervisees' abuse of power. Implications for relationships between themes were explored and suggestions for future research also are presented. Further research on power in the supervisory relationship is needed, from supervisors' perspectives, and in different supervisory settings. Implications for researchers and clinicians/supervisors are discussed and suggestions for future research also are presented.
INDEX WORDS: Power, supervision, grounded theory, supervisory relationships

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Since its inception in the 1950s, the field of marriage and family therapy has grown substantially. Using systems theory based on observations of schizophrenics and their families, early pioneers of marriage and family therapy formed a unique way of viewing families and their problems. As time passed and the field grew, new generations of marriage and family therapists looked to these pioneers to teach theories and techniques. During the growth of the field, partly because of the use of the one-way mirror, supervision emerged as an important aspect of the therapeutic process. Supervision began to fulfill a variety of functions, including socialization of new therapists into the profession, ethical guidance, development of clinical skills, management of paperwork, as well as providing a forum for clinicians to exchange ideas with more experienced practitioners. In parallel with the increased recognition of the importance of the therapeutic relationship between therapist and client, the importance of the supervisory relationship has increasingly been seen as central to supervision. In therapy, mastery of techniques by therapists is not sufficient to achieve therapeutic outcomes or goals. As a result, the supervisory relationship is the foundation upon which supervision takes place.

Despite its importance, there is a paucity of research about clinical supervision, in general, and specifically regarding the supervisory relationship. Until recently, little was known about what aspects of the supervisory relationship are important and influential to

its participants, and most studies on the topic of the supervisory relationship are exploratory in nature (Goalstone, 1997; Prouty, 1997). A few scholars, however, have begun to explore different facets of the supervisory relationship in an attempt to delineate what aspects are more salient for a positive and successful outcome (Chung, Baskin, & Case, 1998; Greben, 1991; Shanfield, Matthews, & Hetherly, 1993; Worthen & McNeill, 1996). It is clear that whatever phenomena are occurring in the supervisory relationship, they have a dramatic impact on the therapeutic relationship. For example, therapists may refrain from disclosing important information about a case to a supervisor out of fear of retaliation (Ladany, Hill, Corbett, & Nutt, 1996); some may be challenged to grow and develop their clinical skills which may benefit clients (Anderson, Schlossberg, & Rigazio-DiGilio, 2000; Porter & Vasquez, 1997; Steward, 1998). It seems that having a beneficial supervisory relationship would be of utmost importance in both the development of supervisees' skills and in improving client outcomes.

Even in the scant literature on the supervisory relationship, one can see that power is a recurring theme, although researchers have infrequently and specifically addressed it. Theoreticians in the family science literature have typically demonstrated the most interest in conceptualizing power. Researchers interested in supervision have utilized these theoretical constructs to develop concepts and to link these concepts to form theory (Cromwell & Olson, 1975; Foucault, 1977; French & Raven, 1959). Unfortunately, input from participants who are in a relationship in which power dynamics are present is rare, perhaps leading to a gap between theory and practice. For example, there have been several studies examining supervisee's perspectives on individual or relationship characteristics which lead to a more positive or negative supervisory relationship (Cohen,

& Laufer, 1999; Jeanquart-Barone, 1993; Kauderer & Herron, 1990; Krause & Allen, 1988; Lochner & Melchert, 1997). A comparison of these studies, however, reveals inconsistencies which could be attributed to the exploratory nature of these studies.

Nearly all studies on the supervisory relationship have been quantitative, and have examined supervision from either supervisees' or supervisors' experiences. Two doctoral dissertations have examined the supervisory relationship using qualitative methodology and involved the supervisor and the supervisee (Goalstone, 1997; Prouty, 1997). The main goal in these studies was to explore and develop a theory about the clinical supervisory relationship. The researchers, following grounded theory, encouraged the research participants to describe what they found to be salient in the relationship. Both of these studies revealed power themes as pervasive and important to the supervisory relationship, although neither study was specifically addressing this issue. Therefore, the area of power in the clinical supervisory relationship needs to be further explored so that detrimental and beneficial effects can be understood and can be used to enhance the supervisory relationship.

An examination of power in the clinical supervisory relationship is crucial, especially in training programs. This relationship can have a dramatic impact on participants in the relationship and, in turn, impact on clients and their therapeutic outcomes (Lee, 1997). Conflict is common in the supervisory relationship, as supervisors serve many roles in relation to their supervisees, including gatekeepers for the profession, and facilitators of the learning process. They also need to develop rapport in order to create a safe atmosphere where supervisees can be honest about their therapeutic experiences. The supervisee is aware that he/she is being evaluated, and often presents

his/her best experiences to the supervisor. To further complicate the supervisory relationship, supervisors and supervisees often have dual relationships, in which they may participate in other activities involving teaching, serving on committees, and/or being involved in departmental and professional activities. Because of the complicated nature of the supervisory relationship and its potential influence on other roles in clinical training programs, it is important to more thoroughly examine power in the relationship and how it affects each member of the relationship.

There are two main goals for this study. They are: a) To gain an understanding of the experience of power in the clinical supervisory relationship from the perspective of the supervisee; and b) To develop grounded theory about the role and influence of power on supervisors and supervisees in the clinical supervisory relationship.

CHAPTER 2

DEVELOPING A THEORY OF POWER IN THE CLINICAL SUPERVISORY RELATIONSHIP

The topic, power, is often viewed as abstract, difficult to understand, define, and study. Research and theorizing about power and its relationship to micro- and macrostructures has been haphazard. However, clinicians and researchers increasingly acknowledge the importance of including the concept power in order to enhance the explanations of human behavior. Marriage and family therapists, in particular, have been reluctant to explore the effects of power in their clients' lives or in the supervisory relationship. This reluctance is, in part, because power was not considered pivotal in systems theory as originally conceptualized.

Selected scholars have included power as an important concept in relationships. As early as the mid-1900s, several theorists from sociology, family theory, and feminism have articulated ways in which power affects individuals, relationships, and social networks. It is the purpose of this literature review to highlight selected theories about power that have been developed in different fields. Each theory emphasizes various aspects of the concept power; however, there are apparent differences between the theories. Conversely, there are similarities in theories related to power, which makes it difficult to intertwine theory with research in an attempt to articulate and understand the effect of power on humans and human relationships.

After exploring key theories related to power, research and theory about the supervisory relationship will be examined, with an emphasis on power in the supervisory relationship. The power dynamic in both clinical and supervisory relationships is recognized as critical in fully understanding the relationship clinicians have with clients, and the relationship between supervisors and supervisees. Beginning in the early 1980s, supervision began to be viewed as a worthwhile focus for research, and subsequently power started being investigated in this context in the mid-1980s.

Finally the author will integrate literature on power from sociology, feminism, and family studies, and its effect on the supervisory relationship. The rationale for the current study will be based on an exploration of the strengths and weaknesses of recent studies on power in the supervisory relationship, and an argument will be made for pursuing a qualitative study based on grounded theory methodology.

Theories of Power

Power as a concept has been seen as central to the understanding of social life and has, therefore, been explored in depth, particularly by sociologists and feminists. The number of theories using power to describe and predict human behavior is large; however, only three theories involving power will be elaborated upon. These theories have been selected for their potential application in understanding power in the clinical supervisory relationship.

Exchange theory. One of the major sociological theories, exchange theory, explicitly deals with power as a way of describing and explaining human behavior. There are many different branches of exchange theory, including resource theory, network exchange theory, and social exchange theory. Each approach differs in its focus on the

dynamics of exchange; however, all include power in understanding rewards, costs, dependence, and alternatives. The goal, therefore, is to examine power as a concept that extends across the borders of mini-exchange theories.

There is no doubt that power is central and influential in exchange relations. Indeed, the understanding of power is central to the understanding of people and society (Willer, Lovaglia, & Markovsky, 1997). Exchange relationships imply a relationship between at least two people (Molm, 1991; Spread, 1984; Stolte, 1989; Weeks & Johnson, 1980), who are attempting to maximize rewards and minimize costs. Each person involved in an exchange relationship seeks a reward (or is attempting to avoid a cost) in relation to the other. Exchanges can also involve a win-win, in which both participants gain and neither lose in the exchange. Much of exchange theory, however, is devoted to theorizing about the more common situation in which there is an unequal exchange taking place between individuals, and each participant attempts to maximize rewards and minimize costs. Therefore, the context in these common situations is power-imbalanced, in which participants are attempting to maximize their rewards and the expense of another (Stolte, 1988).

One of the strengths of exchange theory in understanding the concept power is its theorists have provided definitions of power. For example, Willer et al. (1997, p. 230) define power as “structurally determined potential for obtaining favored payoffs in relations where interests are opposed.” This definition does not elaborate on the amount of power each person has, if each has power. However, there are several points about this particular definition of power that are of interest to this study. First, power is seen as structurally determined, that is, power is, in fact, larger than what the exchange

participants individually have to offer. Second, power is seen as having potential, implying that one can choose to act upon power (within limits of the structure). Third, the definition implies that conflict exists and is necessary between the exchange participants.

In contrast to the previous definition of power, Blau (1964) defined power as, "…the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment, inasmuch as the former as well as the latter constitute, in effect, a negative sanction" (p. 117). Resistance in this definition implies the refusal on the part of the power receiver to accept the will of the more powerful. This definition clearly articulates that power can be found in individuals or groups; it also implies nothing about the function of the structure or network within which the individuals or groups are located. Moreover, power appears to be a concept that can be acted upon at the more powerful individual's choosing. Power appears to be a negative concept in Blau's definition, implying that resistance by the less powerful may need to be overcome through various means of deterrence. Still, a similarity between the two presented definitions is one party appears to have more power than the other, and power can be acted on (but is not necessarily chosen to be acted on) in relation to another. Conflict arises when power is acted upon, highlighting different needs of individuals involved in an exchange relationship. Again, based on an exchange perspective, conflict appears to be inherent in both definitions of power.

These definitions suggest there are different levels at which an individual (or group) can have power. Power can be located, for example, at the macro-level, such as in state-socialist or capitalist organizations (Szmatka & Willer, 1995). Stolte (1988), in

examining Emerson's exchange theory, notes that individuals have power, and this power must be understood as part of where the individual is situated in a network. This level of theorizing about power does not seem as broad in scope as macro-level exchange theories, although it does recognize that power exchanges are more complicated than original "A-B" conceptualizations (Stolte, 1988). In recognizing the importance of power as located in networks, one can begin to understand, as previously stated, there can be a difference between potential power and power as activity (Willer, 1992). The fact that power exists in potential does not mean it will be used in an exchange relation.

It appears that some aspects of power are inherent in the network or structure within which the individual is located. Some branches of exchange theory elaborate on how power is ascribed to an individual, that is, individuals are ascribed status characteristics, in part based on how they are situated in the exchange network (Thye, 1999; Weeks & Johnson, 1980). Power can also come in the form of love, services, information, money, and goods, depending on the needs of those participating in the exchange and the network in which they are located (Weeks & Johnson, 1980). Still, status characteristics can be hard to define, and are, in part, socially constructed. The socially constructed nature of status characteristics and/or power implies that an individual may have power and not realize it. The power an individual has partially rests on how others evaluate the services one has to offer, and the alternatives others have to offer (Spread, 1984). The socially-determined aspect of the power an individual holds has been referred to as attributed power (Stolte, 1989). The power an individual has in a network can also be "objective," for example, the individual has power because of the place he/she holds in the network (Molm, 1991). Absolute or objective power is easier to

define and known by all involved in the exchange. An example of objective power is being a supervisor in a supervisor-supervisee exchange.

Power in exchange theory is related to dependence on the exchange for a needed reward (Cromwell & Olson, 1975). Dependence can be described on two dimensions--a combination of ascribed and objective power (Molm, 1991). Most exchange theorists agree that dependency increases when fewer alternatives exist for the participant in need of a reward. Reliance on a participant to provide a reward dramatically increases the amount of power the other participant has in the exchange (Molm, 1991; Spread, 1984). For example, supervisees, especially in academic training networks, are highly dependent upon their clinical supervisor. Alternative supervisors are few; therefore, exchange theorists would view the lack of opportunities as increasing the power of the supervisor in the relationship.

Exchange theorists are relatively vague in articulating or acknowledging the existence of power held by the less powerful individual in a relationship. On one hand, the inherent nature of an exchange relationship implies that both individuals are voluntary participants in the exchange; that even though one may hold significant power over the other and the less powerful individual always has the option of leaving the exchange relationship. Indeed, Spread (1984) speculates that exchange theory does not consider the possibility of coercion, as coercion is the “negation” of exchange. Moreover, according to Stolte (1988), power in an exchange can be balanced through coalition formation. Bringing in additional supporters may increase the power of the less-powerful individual, or the completely powerless can become powerful if exchange participants believe they have nothing to lose (Weeks & Johnson, 1980). On the other hand, if alternatives are

truly limited and the less powerful individual is still interested in the reward (or avoidance of a cost), their power may be virtually non-existent.

One of the strengths of exchange theory is its detailed exploration of the concept power, particularly from different levels of analysis. However, some exchange theorists provide mathematical equations and proofs as tools to help measure and facilitate understanding of power in exchange networks (Bonacich, 1998; Bonacich & Friedkin, 1998). The mathematical understanding of such complicated interactions between humans, and considering some of the social constructions attributed to individuals with power, makes it difficult to apply to real-world settings, such as the supervisory relationship. Other exchange theorists acknowledge that structural power may not be adequately measured through traditional (mathematical) means (Stolte, 1988). The utility of defining exchange relations in mathematical terms has justly been questioned. Another criticism of exchange theory is its relative inattention to context and setting in which individuals and exchanges are located. Network exchange theory attempts to contribute this missing context to the theory, yet critics may contend that, for example, status and other ascribed characteristics need to be further explored for a fuller understanding of how power affects exchanges and relationships. The need for reality-based and socially understandable accounts of power in exchange relationships is highlighted by these criticisms.

Feminist theories. All feminist theories deal directly or indirectly with the concept power. It appears, however, that postmodern feminists have most clearly articulated their thoughts on power and its effect on people and relationships. Postmodern feminist theorists generally argue that power is socially constructed within a larger context of the

community, and while they differ in some important ways, they share similar conceptualizations with exchange theories.

Postmodern feminist theorists agree with exchange theorists that power is essential to study, as it is found in individuals' relationships with others. The postmodern feminist theorists differ, however, in their argument that power is present and important in *all* social situations and interactions (Kitzinger, 1988). Moreover, exchange and postmodern theories agree that power is traditionally located within the individual (Kitzinger, 1991; Morawski, 1994), which is problematic because an individualistic conceptualization of power ignores the larger social factors or structures which influence power dynamics. In overlooking larger socio-cultural factors that impact power relations, power has traditionally been seen in positivistic terms. Positivistic notions of power, as exemplified in exchange theory, assume that power is observable and therefore able to be measured (Kitzinger, 1991). Postmodern feminists assert conceptions of power should be shifted to relational terms that consider the impact of social constructions on both the definition and the social displays of power.

How exactly do postmodern feminists define power? As previously implied, feminists prefer not to offer a static definition of power, because power is found in relationships, and is ever-shifting according to the social structure. Power is socially constructed, not only between two individuals, but also by members of the larger society that fashion what is considered power and what is not (Kitzinger, 1991). Postmodern feminist conceptualizations of power are not simplistic; for example, power cannot be understood in either-or language. Feminists refrain from defining power as "good" or "bad", or from defining one person or group as powerful and another group as powerless

(Morawski, 1994; Weedon, 1987). The definition of power, therefore, is constantly shifting and changing, as individuals and society continually alter their own attributions of power to certain individuals and groups (Foucault, 1977; Morawski, 1994).

If postmodern feminists refrain from providing a concrete definition of power, they do espouse a philosophy that power is located in those individuals and institutions who have the ability to create knowledge, or shape what others know (Foucault, 1977). Individuals, groups, and institutions which have the ability to create meaning for others have power; they have the ability to change language and make meaning (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988). Knowledge, language, and meaning are relational in that humans exchange information with each other as a way of learning about the world around them. Therefore, the ability to impart knowledge to others is a form of power (Morawski, 1990). Postmodern feminists such as Morawski challenge the core of positivistic epistemology: "who is the knower, what can be known, and how knowledge is established… [as] a way for feminism to influence the normative constituents of knowledge making" (Morawski, 1990, p. 174). Indeed, who is the knower, and how the knower can define what is known—that is power. Those with more power tend to focus on rules, discipline, rationality, and control, whereas those with less power tend to support relatedness and compassion (Hare-Mustin & Marecek, 1988). Having (or not having) the ability to create knowledge and make meaning shapes one's view of the world. Furthermore, determining who has "knowledge" or who is the "knower" is, in part, socially constructed, opening up the possibility of continual shifting in power.

The power to define knowledge is intimately intertwined with the ability to influence and create others' identities. Postmodern feminists challenge the idea that there

is a “knowable” world; therefore, those with the power to define knowledge for others are necessarily using and imposing their own subjectivities onto others. Those with the power to define others’ identities naturally promote certain types of identities (Morawski, 1994). Defining others’ identities, however, does not solely come from individuals with the power to create knowledge. Social institutions provide structures that allow for power differentials to exist, and therefore for individuals to create knowledge and shape identities according to the dominant culture. Power rests in the ability to create knowledge and/or suppress alternative, less dominant identities (Foucault, 1977; Weedon, 1987). Creating identities is interwoven with the ability to create knowledge and influence language at many levels—the individual, the relational, at the level of social institutions, and all levels in-between.

It has been established that, from a postmodern feminist perspective, power exists in relationships. A lesser known belief from the feminist perspective is that power can be used positively and productively (Morawski, 1994). We all experience times in which we feel powerless, as well as times in which we feel powerful. Morawski (1990) suggests that there are benefits in feeling powerless at times, which later can be made useful to remind ourselves of the different perspectives of others when we *do* have power. The concept of power often carries negative connotations (Kitzinger, 1991), but this is not always the case. For example, power can be used constructively in the meaning-making process, such as in research practice and in psychotherapy.

Power in the psychotherapy literature has not been explored in systematic detail (Kitzinger, 1991; Morawski, 1994). Researchers and therapists alike have the ability or power to shape knowledge and help people make meaning from social interactions.

Exploring human behavior and contributing to its definition is an example of power use (Morawski, 1994). Yet examining power as a research topic is relatively rare, perhaps because it is so difficult to define, and, according to postmodern feminists, ever-changing (Foucault, 1977; Kitzinger, 1991). Exploring power from research participants' perspectives would be a means of both researching the power in and of itself while giving voice to those best able to define the knowledge about power—those who have experienced power in relation to another.

French and Raven's theory of social power. In the field of sociology, French and Raven (1959) articulated five social bases of power. By social bases of power, the authors meant there are different sources of power at play in the social realm. The five sources of power they described were: (a) Reward power, or power based on the ability to reward another for his/her behavior; (b) Coercive power, or power through the threat of punishment to follow or conform to the influence attempts of the more powerful individual; (c) Legitimate power, or the cultural or social expectation which results in internalized valuation of the more powerful individual according to the role in which she/he occupies; (d) Referent power, power based in the less powerful individual's ability to identify with the more powerful individual (for example, the less powerful individual strives to achieve similar qualities seen in the more powerful individual); and (e) Expert power, or power based on the perception that the more powerful individual has more knowledge or skill than the less powerful individual.

Even though French and Raven's theory of social power was based on observations of small group interaction, their theory has contributed greatly to the understanding of power from a dyadic perspective. Many studies of power in therapy and

supervision have relied on French and Raven's theory, perhaps because some researchers have created quantitative measurements of the bases of power (for example, Rahim & Buntzman, 1989). By providing a means of measuring power, researchers and practitioners who understand the importance of power in relationships can begin to measure how power is attributed to the more powerful. Yet in their zeal to quantify power, researchers often overlook the fact that French and Raven's theory was not based on participants' ideas of power, but rather the theorists' thoughts about the bases of power. Moreover, their theory focuses on how power is attributed to those with greater power, and the measurement instruments created by using this theory fail to adequately consider the important cultural and social mores that contribute to how power is attributed to the powerful.

French and Raven's theory of the bases of social power has similarities to and differences from exchange theory and postmodern feminist theories of power. Not surprisingly, these theories contain a basic assumption that power is located in relationships, as opposed to examining power from an individualistic perspective. Yet the theories differ on the degree to which emphasis is placed on social relations and larger social-cultural (or structural) contexts. Postmodern feminist theorists place the most emphasis on acknowledging the role of the larger society in understanding the power that exists in relationships. Exchange theory is more moderate in placing importance on the social values and roles. Organizational structure is largely considered central to the understanding of power within an exchange. French and Raven's (1959) theory gives support to the influence of social norms on an individual's internalized notions of who should or should not have power (in the legitimate power base). They have also

contributed an articulate and useful theory of understanding the complex concept of power. In delineating five types of power, they have acknowledged that power is multi-dimensional, and as will be presented, the five social bases of power are the foundation of a number of quantitative studies about power in the supervisory relationship.

As expected, research based on postmodern feminists' theories of power has been sparse, in part because they are reluctant to present a formal definition of power, which is viewed as ever-changing. Furthermore, postmodern feminists place heavy emphasis on power as socially constructed, which is difficult to measure in quantitative terms. Rather, they suggest that power be brought to the forefront of all research, because power is often seen as of secondary importance, either emerging from qualitative studies in which power was not the primary topic under study, or simply the failure to centrally locate power in quantitative studies. Postmodern feminists may even argue that power is nearly impossible to measure because it is socially constructed and always changing, even though it may be perceived by individuals. Exchange theory provides a framework within which to study power, as these theorists often use mathematical equations to illustrate the theory. The thought of reducing complex human interactions down to mathematical concepts, though well intentioned as a simple means of understanding behavior, runs antithetical to some theorists' and researchers' beliefs about relationships. Like the bases of social power suggested by French and Raven (1959), exchange theory is based on professionals' thoughts and theories about power, rather than on participants' thoughts, experiences, and languaging about relationships. Therefore, the extent to which participants' experiences are interwoven with theory will be explored below in reviewing the literature on power and the clinical supervisory relationship.

Summary of theories of power. As can be seen from the discussion above, power appears to be a multi-dimensional, amorphous concept. This fact has provided researchers with much difficulty in attempting to define and measure power as it relates to social groups or families (Szinovacz, 1987). There are many possible aspects of power, such as power potential or power realization; individual power or social power; and power-over or power-with other individuals. There is wide disagreement in regard to an operational definition of power; concepts in power definitions include control, dependence, knowledge, potential, ability, and influence, among other concepts. It is easy to imagine the difficulty researchers face in attempting to measure a multi-dimensional concept in which no set definition is present. Particularly when power is examined from different theoretical perspectives, it can be an overwhelming task for researchers to attempt to measure power in relationships. As will be discussed in the following sections, attempts have been made to measure power in clinical supervisory relationships.

The Clinical Supervisory Relationship

The literature pertaining to the clinical supervisory relationship is exploratory and fragmented. Research on the supervisory relationship recently began to be considered important enough to merit study and further theorizing; theories and research on this topic emerged in the early 1980s, particularly in the field of marriage and family therapy (Todd & Storm, 1997). Compiling a comprehensive and coherent review of literature relating to the supervisory relationship has proved daunting, and power has only recently been added to the already complex and fragmented literature on the supervisory relationship.

Despite the lack of a consistent theoretical underpinning of the supervisory relationship, there are several themes that run throughout the literature; these themes will be explored. Several theorists have proffered a developmental perspective of the supervisory relationship—that the relationship changes in significant ways over time. The effect of power from a developmental perspective has only recently been considered in the development of the supervisory relationship. A second theme that has been explored and evaluated in some depth is that certain factors seem to impact the supervisory relationship, such as supervisor characteristics, supervisee characteristics, the setting in which supervision takes place, and the modality used in supervision. In the mid-1980s and the late 1990s, researchers focused on discovering what contributed to "good" and "bad" supervision experiences from the supervisee's point of view. Power has only recently been explored as an integral component in the supervisory relationship; more theoretical articles have been written than research conducted. Some researchers are attempting to ground their research on power in the supervisory relationship in previously developed theories on power—most notably French and Raven's (1959) five bases of social power. Feminists are calling for more research on power in relationships, yet they offer little guidance in how to carry out actual research on power in the supervisory relationship. Therefore, the scant literature on power in the supervisory relationship will be explored, a summary of the literature will be discussed, and a rationale for the current proposed study will be presented.

Developmental models. All developmental models share the assumption that the skill level of the supervisee should change over time, that is, supervisees should improve their clinical skills over time. Developmental models suggest that supervisors alter their

interactions or content focus with supervisees depending on the level or stage of the supervisee. Stoltenberg's (1981) model is perhaps the best-known supervisee developmental model, which proposes the supervisees' dependence on supervisors decreases over time. Consequently, supervisors are to be more direct with supervisees at the beginning stages of training, and to assist supervisees be more self-accountable in the latter stages of supervisee development. In 1988, Krause and Allen evaluated Stoltenberg's counselor complexity model from both supervisor and supervisee perspectives. They found that supervisors reported a difference in their own behavior based on the developmental level of the supervisee. Specifically, supervisors reported being more collegial and less structured with advanced supervisees (Krause & Allen, 1988). In contrast, the supervisees did not report any differences in perceived supervisor behavior in relation to their stage of development. Supervisee satisfaction with supervision was strongly related to whether supervisors and supervisees agree upon the supervisees' developmental level, suggesting that supervision participants understand and accordingly participate in supervision depending on their role. This study demonstrated support for Stoltenberg's (1981) model of supervisee development, yet suggested that supervisors and supervisees hold differing views of the supervisory relationship.

Another developmental model which has been tested is Bernard's (1979) model, which focused on developing three types of supervisee skills: process skills, conceptualization skills, and personalization skills, combined with three roles of a supervisor: consultant, teacher, and counselor. Again, supervisors believed they were able to respond to a supervisee depending on the supervisees' developmental level, although the dimensions on which the supervisor role was based could be explained by other

factors (Ellis & Dell, 1986; Ellis, Dell, & Good, 1988). Evaluations of Stoltenberg's (1981) and Bernard's (1979) models suggest there may be some validity to defining roles of supervision participants and goals of supervision, however some aspects of supervision or the supervisory relationship seem to be missing, that is, power is left out of developmental models. In summary, supervisors and supervisees, as will be seen in other studies, appear to have different perspectives on the supervisory process.

Though there has been mixed support for developmental models, there is no question that the supervisory relationship changes over time. Clinicians instinctively know that supervision should focus on different components according to supervisees' skill levels (Rothberg, 1997). Not only should supervisees change over time, supervisors should also change and develop (O'Brien & Kopala, 1999). A shift in dependence level is key for supervisees, as they progress from skill development, to consolidation of their identity as a clinician, to mutually working with other skilled clinicians, that is, developing a sense of autonomy (Hess, 1986; Horner, 1988). Supervisors should also change, from beginning supervisor, to exploring the role of supervisor and what works best with which supervisees, to confirming the supervisor identity (Hess, 1986; O'Brien & Kopala, 1999). Curiously, most of the developmental models focus on development of the supervisee, rather than development of the supervisor, and how the development of both participants in supervision affects the supervisory relationship has yet to be explored. Linda Stone Fish has offered a glimpse of this emphasis on development in her article, which emphasized appropriate development and growth within a hierarchical relationship (Fish, 2000). In this article, she describes the differences between symmetrical and complementary relationships as it relates to parent-child interactions.

Children develop best in a complementary interactional unit, in which the emphasis is on child, rather than parent growth. The goal of complementary relationships is to help children grow, so ultimately the relationship can be symmetrical, in which parents and children can more equally share and benefit from the relationship. Her approach to understanding development could be easily applied to supervisor and supervisee growth in the supervisory relationship.

Power has only recently been added to the understanding of development in supervision. Nelson (1997) addressed this lack of attending to the development of supervisees *and* supervisors by using power to connect both participants in the developmental process of supervision. According to her theoretical model, supervisees, particularly female supervisees, should practice the appropriate use of power as they gain counseling skills. Moreover, the supervisor should use less power as the supervisee becomes more clinically skilled. One of the goals of supervision is for the supervisor to use his/her power depending on the supervisee's skill level to help empower the supervisee within a connected and trusting relationship. Consideration of the power differential in the supervisory relationship may be pivotal to providing a complete and thorough understanding of the supervisory relationship.

Factors affecting the supervisory relationship. There appear to be four general factors that affect the supervisory relationship: supervisor characteristics, supervisee characteristics, the setting in which supervision takes place, and the modality used in supervision. Most studies appear to focus on a single factor, and from only one perspective (that is, the supervisor's or the supervisee's). Studies that examine interactions between two or more of the above-mentioned factors also examine power,

usually using French and Raven's (1959) theory of social power as a basis. (Those studies will be discussed in a separate section.)

The gender of the supervisor and supervisee has been a topic of exploration as researchers attempt to understand the contextual influences on the supervisory relationship. Perhaps because trust seems to be an important element in the supervisory relationship, the effect of gender of supervisors and supervisees has been linked to the trust level in the relationship, although studies offer conflicting results on this issue. For example, Scott (1983) found that in a business setting, women subordinates did not express higher levels of trust in their superiors than men, nor were men as superiors trusted more than women superiors. Scott (1983) did find an interaction effect between superior's and subordinate's gender, meaning same-gender subordinate-superior pairs reported higher trust levels than different-gender pairs. These results seem to be in contrast to those found in a study by Jeanquart-Barone (1993), who also examined the influence of gender and race of supervisors and subordinates on trust levels in a business setting. She found that blacks experienced less trust in white supervisors and that women subordinates experienced more trust in men as supervisors than in women as supervisors did. In this study, men as subordinates reported having less trust in men as supervisors. Interestingly, neither study explicitly examined power and how it affected trust levels; power as part of role expectations, as structurally-based, or in specific superior-subordinate dyads.

Granello (1996) reviewed the scant literature on gender in clinical supervision. She suggested that leaders might be perceived in a way consistent with the stereotypes of their gender. Women may have a more difficult time adjusting to the role of supervisor,

and supervisees may have difficulty seeing women as supervisors, whereas men are expected to better fit the role of supervisor. Moreover, Granello (1996) asserts that men and women may use different methods of influence or styles of leadership. Women are more likely to be collaborative and indirect, whereas men may be more directive in the supervisory relationship. Granello's ideas about influence have support from a study that examined the delivery of negative feedback to subordinates (Brewer, Socha, & Potter, 1996). These authors found that men supervisors were more specific and direct in providing feedback to poorly-performing subordinates than women. These results suggest that men tend to have a more directive leadership style than women, who were less direct in providing negative feedback. On the other hand, a study conducted by McHale and Carr (1998) found women supervisors to use a more directive style than men supervisors. Women supervisors, more so than men supervisors, were found to be more likely to interrupt both men and women supervisees. Yet another outlook on gender and supervision, provided by Osterberg (1996), suggests that the differences between men and women supervisors are socially constructed as a way to maintain the status quo; men retain their power over women in supervision (and in other contexts) by emphasizing differences between men and women.

Supervisors and supervisees have personality and other characteristics that also contribute to the dynamics in the supervisory relationship. Characteristics included in studies focusing on supervisors are: general decision-making style, level of expertise, self-confidence, knowledge of human nature, ability to interact with people, ability to develop rapport, client focus, and identification. In addition, supervisees have been examined for their ability to develop rapport, client focus, job outcomes, and preferences

for training (Abdalla, 1987; Brock & Sibbald, 1988; Efstation, Patton, & Kardash, 1990; Henry, Sprenkle, & Sheehan, 1986). In 1990, Efstation and colleagues developed the Supervisory Working Alliance Inventory to measure supervisor and supervisee factors, and how they affect the *working alliance*, or the supervisory relationship. Three supervisor factors (client focus, rapport, and identification) and two supervisee factors (client focus and rapport) emerged in the development of the inventory. Client focus referred to supervisors' promotion of supervisee understanding of the client; rapport referred to the building of rapport between supervisors and supervisees by supervisors engaging in supporting and encouraging supervisees; and identification referred to the supervisor's identification of the supervisee's identification with the supervisor. This study was among the first attempts to develop a quantitative measure of the supervisory relationship using characteristics of both the supervisor and the supervisee. Still, power as a topic was not included in the development of the inventory.

Supervisee experiences of supervision provided by supervisors of different cultures appear to be extremely limited. Although the importance of supervisee exposure to different cultures is being articulated in the supervision literature, most supervisees report a lack of experience of supervision from culturally diverse supervisors (Wieling & Marshall, 1999). For example, according to Wieling and Marshall (1999), supervisees expressed a strong desire to receive supervision from supervisors who have different cultural experiences than supervisees. Moreover, power differences in relation to varying cultural experiences as applied to supervision have yet to be examined.

The complexity of supervision is difficult to measure and quantify, particularly when there is a lack of knowledge about what constitutes effective supervision. It appears

obvious that supervisors and supervisees bring certain qualities to supervision, and both parties contribute to the supervisory process. Wetchler (1989) attempted to explore and measure supervisor and supervisee characteristics, such as interpersonal skills, theoretical orientation, gender, experience levels, and supervision setting in order to determine the relationship of these characteristics to effectiveness of supervision. Not surprisingly, supervisors and supervisees thought that interpersonal skills were important for supervisors to have, and for supervisees to develop in relation to their own clients.

Most studies involving clinical supervision are conducted in an academic setting, perhaps because of the accessibility of research participants and the importance of supervision to the training of clinicians. Surprisingly, students' perceptions of their training programs have been minimally investigated. Henry and colleagues (1986) surveyed students and faculty in family therapy training programs. Their study focused on broad questions about the quality of the program and preparation for employment rather than on supervision. They found that although standards for clinical competency exist in academic settings, faculty reported being reluctant to expel students from the program.

Even though supervision research is mostly conducted in academic settings, it is relatively rare for supervisees to be asked for their perceptions about supervision. Brock and Sibbald (1988) surveyed supervisees from AAMFT-accredited graduate programs and found that although a majority of supervisees were satisfied with supervision, most did not receive the type of supervision they desired. Specifically, supervisees expressed a preference for regular supervision meetings in the context of an egalitarian supervisor-supervisee relationship.

One can readily see the piecemeal approach in the supervision literature. Most of the studies are descriptive, atheoretical, and from the perspective of either the supervisor or the supervisee. In spite of their inadequacies, however, these studies contribute valuable information in providing direction for future research on the interaction between the characteristics of the participants and/or the setting in which supervision takes place.

Power in the supervisory relationship. The literature on power in the clinical supervisory relationship mirrors the theoretical development of power as a concept. As with exchange theory, there have been attempts to quantify and measure power in relationships. Likewise some researchers have examined power in supervision using French and Raven's (1959) five bases of social power. Feminists have long discussed the importance of considering power when discussing relationships. What is true across these theoretical divides is the idea that power is beginning to be explored as it pertains to the supervisory relationship. Researchers and clinicians still have difficulty defining power; however, most seem to know what power is when it affects them. When combining the abstract nature of the concept "power" with the infancy in understanding the supervisory relationship, the result is a lack of theory and coherent research on power.

Power has been examined using French and Raven's (1959) five bases of social power. Whenever there is hierarchy in a system, power is likely to be present. A few studies on power have been conducted on non-clinical populations, such as in a business setting or on undergraduates in power-simulated situations (Abdalla, 1987; Rahim & Buntzman, 1989). Although these are non-clinical studies, they offer an understanding of power in relationships using a well-established theoretical background as a basis. Rahim and Buntzman (1989) correlated each of the five bases of social power with five styles of

handling conflict and subordinate compliance in a business setting. Only legitimate, referent, and expert power bases were associated with styles of handling conflict and subordinate compliance. Moreover, a coercive power base of a supervisor was negatively correlated with subordinate satisfaction and compliance in supervision. This study highlights the idea that subordinates often comply with a supervisor because of a belief in themselves (personal power base) rather than the objective (legitimate) power a supervisor holds. Curiously, Abdalla (1987), in studying superiors' and subordinates' bases of power, found that expert and referent power bases loaded onto the same factor. These results were partially explained by the subordinate's educational level; subordinates who were more educated were less likely to be influenced than those who were less educated. In this case, subordinates' characteristics may be more of a determining factor in power relations than superiors' characteristics. Both studies imply that social bases of power are important to examine, yet there are other factors to be considered when examining power in a hierarchical relationship.

One of the earliest studies of clinical supervision using French and Raven's (1959) bases of social power was done by Kadushin (1974), who asked supervisors and supervisees in the Social Work field to select the source of supervisors' power which most influenced the supervisee. Expert power was perceived by both supervisors and supervisees to be the most influential to the supervisee. Interestingly, legitimate power was the second largest source of supervisors' power, as perceived by both supervisor and supervisee; supervisees attributed over 21% of supervisor's power to their legitimate power bases, whereas supervisors only attributed about 2% of their power to their position. These results were not examined further in this study; it may be that supervisees

are more aware of the power they do not hold, than supervisors are aware of the power they do hold.

Hierarchy is inherent in the clinical supervisory relationship, which contributes to power differences between supervisors and supervisees (Hawes, 1998; Hicks & Cornille, 1999). First there is hierarchy in the roles within supervision: the supervisor is a teacher and/or expert in relation to the supervisee (Shulman, 1993). Supervisees are involved in the learning process, even if they are at an advanced level of training, and it is assumed that supervisors necessarily have more knowledge to impart to supervisees. In accordance with the expert role, supervisors are expected to evaluate supervisees, either informally as a means of providing feedback and improving supervisees' skills, or formally by performing written evaluations or grades (Burke, Goodyear, & Guzzard, 1998; Emerson, 1996; Kaiser, 1992; Sanderson, 1989). Furthermore, supervisors are seen as reflective of the larger therapeutic community, and therefore are gatekeepers with a higher obligation to society (Hawes, 1998; Salvendy, 1993). In these ways, the supervisor role is distinguished from the supervisee role and, with these differences, comes power ascribed to the role of supervisor

In addition to the multiple roles of supervisors, there are additional factors that contribute to the intricacies of power in the supervisory relationship, such as gender, race, discipline, and age (Farmer, 1987; Salvendy, 1993). Gender is most often cited as central to power relations in supervision (Munson, 1987; Reid, McDaniel, Donaldson, & Tollers, 1987; Rigazio-DiGilio, Anderson, & Kunkler, 1995). Most discussions of gender, as it pertains to power and supervision, involve either gender dynamics of supervision dyads (male or female supervisors with male or female supervisees) or helping to empower

female supervisees in supervision (Taylor, 1994; Warburton, Newberry, & Alexander, 1989). Some clinicians have called for empowerment, or recognition of supervisees' personal resources, of all supervisees in relation to supervision or specifically of women supervisees to help them develop a voice in supervision (Holloway & Wolleat, 1994; Porter & Vasquez, 1997).

There is conflicting evidence about whether gender of the supervisor is problematic, especially for women supervisors. Some studies, for example, suggest that women as supervisors may experience more difficulty supervising both men and women because of cultural expectations of men as "experts" (Nelson, 1991), resulting in difficulty for women to gain respect by both men and women supervisees. Yet Hicks and Cornille (1999) found that men, regardless of their role (as supervisor or supervisee) are likely to attribute power differences to personality or to theoretical stance, and women as supervisees tend to be more aware of power differences in supervision. Women as supervisees may be treated different than men as supervisees. Nelson and Holloway (1990) found that both men and women supervisors did not encourage women supervisees' assumptions of power in the supervisory session. It is clear that power, gender, status, and roles are intertwined in the supervisory relationship, yet how supervisors and supervisees experience these factors remains largely unexplored (Sprenkle, 1999).

With hierarchy inherent in supervisory relationships, and unequal distributions of power between supervisors and supervisees, it seems there is the possibility of abuse of power by the supervisor. As previously mentioned, supervisors may be less aware of the power they hold in relation to supervisees. Ethical dilemmas and difficulties may arise

when supervisors fail to consider the power they hold over supervisees (Martinez, Davis, & Dahl, 1999); a lack of awareness of one's power may lead to abuses of power by supervisors (Farmer, 1987; Kurpius, Gibson, Lewis, & Corbet, 1991; Porter, 1985). Supervisees are often more aware of the power differentials in supervision than supervisors (Porter, 1985). The fear of supervisors' abuse of power has been shown to relate to supervisees' withholding information in supervision, possibly harming clients (Emerson, 1996; Ladany et al., 1996). For these reasons, supervisors need to carry heightened awareness of their power, particularly in training institutions in which supervisors are involved in dual relationships (Fine & Turner, 1997; Martinez et al., 1999; Nelson, 1991). Supervisors can abuse power in a variety of ways. Boundary violations are a common form of power abuse by supervisors, and can include forcing supervisee self-disclosure, providing therapy to a supervisee, and sexual contact or sexual harassment (Bonosky, 1995; Martinez et al., 1999; Porter, 1985; Porter & Vasquez, 1997; Sanderson, 1989). Other forms of power abuse by supervisors include over-focusing on supervisee mistakes, psychopathologizing the supervisee, verbally attacking supervisees, assigning an excessive caseload to a supervisee without adequate supervision, using supervision to meet a supervisor's needs, and forcing supervisees to adhere to a supervisor's theoretical framework (Emerson, 1996; Porter, 1985; Porter & Vasquez, 1997). (It is important to note that many of the articles on abuses of power are authors' speculations rather than being directly identified by supervisees.)

Given the number of articles available on supervisors' abuse of power, one may be misled into believing that supervisors are the only participants in the supervisory relationship with the ability to use and abuse power. Less often discussed, and much less

studied, is the idea that supervisees also have power which can be abused (Mathews, 1986). Salvendy (1993) posited that supervisees can abuse power in the supervisory relationship, albeit in different ways than supervisors abuse power, by withholding feelings from supervisors, demanding to be able to evaluate supervisors, and impacting the reputation and careers of their supervisors (Salvendy, 1993). To date, no studies have examined the abuse of power by supervisees, or how this abuse of power is different from or similar to abuse of power by supervisors.

Power often carries a negative connotation when it is examined within the context of the supervisory relationship (as well as in other contexts). Some experts argue that power is not inherently negative, and can be used as a means to enhance the supervisory relationship (Salvendy, 1993; Tuckman, 1996). There are specific ways in which supervisors can use power to teach supervisees about relationship dynamics. Although it is impossible to eliminate hierarchy and power differences in the supervisory relationship, it is possible and perhaps beneficial to reduce and demystify power in the relationship (Cohen, 1998; Kaiser, 1992; Porter, 1985; Porter & Vasquez, 1997; Salvendy, 1993; Wheeler, Avis, Miller, & Chaney, 1986). Most feminist supervisors support a minimization of hierarchy while working toward collaboration within the supervisory relationship through the supervisor being aware of the power she/he has in the relationship (Farmer, 1987; Porter & Vasquez, 1997), and having open and ongoing discussions with supervisees about power, as it relates to the supervisory relationship as well as how power is manifested in the supervisee-client relationship (Hawes, 1998). Supervisors can also model appropriate uses of power, which can contribute to the development of a trusting relationship with supervisees (Kaiser, 1992). Other appropriate

uses of power include mutual evaluations of the supervisory relationship, building upon supervisees' strengths and competencies, and understanding that supervisees must expose weaknesses and are therefore vulnerable (Porter, 1985; Wheeler at al., 1986).

The benefits of minimizing hierarchy and overtly discussing and analyzing power are generally speculative at this point in time. Few studies have expressly examined power in the supervisory relationship. Power continues to be viewed as dichotomous and/or categorical, in terms of "good" and "bad" uses of power, or as reflected in French and Raven's (1959) five bases of social power. Yet in the past few years, a limited number of qualitative studies have elaborated on the topic of power in the supervisory relationship. Both Goalstone (1997) and Prouty (1997) interviewed supervisors and supervisees using grounded theory in an attempt to develop a theory about the supervisory relationship or a theory of feminist supervision. Although neither author was specifically looking at power, it emerged as a theme in both studies. Prouty articulated a theme of power in her study, meaning that "power [existed] between people that created some type of hierarchy" (Prouty, 1997, p. 54). The fact that everyone in Prouty's study discussed power in supervision provides evidence that power is a salient topic that needs further exploration and study.

In conclusion, research on the topic of power in the supervisory relationship is sparse and relatively simplistic. It appears that more has been written about first-hand accounts of power, how it is used appropriately or abused, than has actually been studied. The haphazard nature of the research on this topic is understandable given that the examination of the supervisory relationship is in its beginning stages, let alone exploring power within the supervisory relationship. Gathering different perspectives—from both

supervisors and supervisees—is important in furthering awareness of power in the supervisory relationship.

The theories that have been explored in-depth, exchange theory, feminist theory, and a theory of social power, have provided a foundation for further examination of power in relationships. Exchange theory has hinted at the importance of structure on power in exchange relations, while also denoting the importance of status characteristics. Within exchange theory's contribution of examining different levels of power lies an interesting omission in examining the power of the less-powerful in an exchange relation. Feminist theories extol the importance of power as conceptualized in relationship to another as well as to a higher, more abstract social world. Feminists recognize the interconnection between individual and structural determinants and influences on power relations. Theirs is a unique perspective in suggesting that not only is it important to acknowledge that power is differently experienced by those in a relationship, it is also necessary to give voice to both participants in a relationship which involves power.

This study attempts to elaborate on missing elements of the three main theories involving power relations. The author interviewed participants involved in a relationship that can be characterized as one in which power is apparent, thereby allowing supervisees an opportunity to comment on those supervisor, supervisee, relational, or structural characteristics which these theories and the literature have suggested are critical to understanding power in the supervisory relationship. These characteristics include, but are not limited to, gender, sexual orientation, age, and religious preference of both supervisor and supervisee, relationships with others and the impact these relationships have on power in the relationship, and other factors the participants believe may affect

power (Martinez et al., 1999). Most importantly, participants were be given an opportunity to define power for themselves based on their thoughts and experiences.

This study offers a unique addition to the literature in developing a grounded theory specific to power in the clinical supervisory relationship based on participants' experiences. Herein lie the goals of the study: a) To gain an understanding of the experience of power in the clinical supervisory relationship; and b) To develop grounded theory about the role and influence of power on supervisees in the clinical supervisory relationship. These goals offer a unique perspective of a relationship in which power plays many roles. Furthermore, the extent to which previous theories have accurately captured the essence of power in a relationship will be seen as they are combined with participants' experiences of the clinical supervisory relationship.

CHAPTER 3

METHOD

It has already been said that the concept power is ambiguous and poorly defined. It appears to be multidimensional and it seems clear that it is an important and salient concept with many applications. It also seems clear that it is an important concept to consider in the training of marriage and family therapists. Within clinical supervision, its role is important regardless of whether it is part of the supervisor's or supervisee's personal characteristics, or part of the supervisory relationship. Up to this time, literature about power in clinical settings has been descriptive in nature. While power continues to be an important theme in the literature, no one has attempted to develop a theory of the supervisory relationship that specifically addresses power. One could pursue a study in which power is quantitatively assessed and described, yet without a theoretical foundation, the results of such a study would merely contribute to the atheoretical nature of studies about power and supervision. It is with these concerns in mind that this researcher has selected grounded theory—a qualitative approach in which theory is inductively developed from the experiences and interviews of research participants (Glaser, 1992; Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

In this section, the process of engaging in grounded theory research will be described, while specifically elaborating on how it was used in this study. This section will begin with a general discussion of grounded theory as it is applied to the field of marriage and family therapy. In addition, the process of grounded theory will be

explained and related to the current project, including research questions, sampling and selection procedures, data collection, data analysis, and a section on credibility and trustworthiness.

The Selection of a Qualitative Methodology

Quantitative research continues to be the predominant research methodology in marriage and family therapy and supervision studies (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). This may be in response to the need to provide data that substantiate the effectiveness of marriage and family therapy to third-party payers (Sprenkle, 1994). However, there is a place for qualitative methodologies in the field of marriage and family therapy, as clinicians and researchers attempt to understand the complex, human processes that occur in therapy and supervision. The point here is not to enhance the current polarization between qualitative and quantitative methodologies; rather, the best possible approach to fully understanding therapy in all its complexity is a combination of both methodologies (Sprenkle, 1994).

Qualitative methodology, in particular, is isomorphic to marriage and family therapy. For example, qualitative researchers and therapists alike are naturalistic participants in attempting to understand participant and client realities (Moon, Dillon, & Sprenkle, 1990). Qualitative methodologies can address and elaborate on complex topics, emphasizing social context, multiple perspectives, and circular causality (Moon et al., 1990). Grounded theory is recursive and systemic by nature; in other words, information is gathered from participants, and theory is inductively produced based on data provided. The researcher develops a theory, and then returns to the participant to further refine, alter, and check the theory against the participant's reality (Stern, 1994). This is similar to

what is done in therapy. Therapists gather information from clients, develop theories about clients' problems and/or solutions, and then modify the theories to fit clients' realities. What grounded theory attempts to accomplish is the development of theory that fits the data provided by the participants through inductive methodologies (Golden-Biddle & Locke, 1997).

There are different ways to conduct and utilize grounded theory. For example, theory may be generated from data as a means of understanding a social phenomenon, or current theories can be elaborated and modified using data (Strauss & Corbin, 1994). Many researchers use some grounded theory methods rather than using pure grounded theory methodology, such as combining grounded theory techniques with a phenomenological approach. Other examples of different uses of grounded theory include interviewing some (but not all) participants more than once, selection of constant comparative elements, and a variety of styles of theory generated using this method (Glaser, 1993; Strauss & Corbin, 1997). The current study presents one way to conduct grounded theory.

The Research Questions

The research questions in grounded theory are open-ended, broad, and flexible (Hutchinson & Wilson, 1994; Rafuls & Moon, 1996). Questions are meant to explore concepts that are not clearly defined, or to explore relationships between concepts that have not been understood or conceptualized. The researcher refrains from biasing questions toward one theory or another (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Applied to the current study, it is generally agreed that power is an important topic in many kinds of relationships, although little is specifically known about power as it relates to

supervision. Therefore, grounded theory is an appropriate approach to use to answer the general research question posed in this study, "How is power experienced by supervisees in the clinical supervisory relationship?"

Biases and Assumptions

Grounded theory attempts to minimize researcher biases and assumptions so that the developed theory reflects the participants' experiences rather than the researcher's agenda (Glaser, 1978). All researchers, however, have biases and assumptions that lead one to have an interest in a specific topic or ask certain questions about a topic. At this time, this researcher's assumptions about this topic will be explored so future researchers are aware of what contributed to this researcher's interest in this topic.

The researcher, a 29-year-old Caucasian female, was an advanced doctoral student in marriage and family therapy, with almost seven years experience as a supervisee. Three years ago, she started her experience as a supervisor-in-training. She believed her experiences, positive and negative, were influenced by power in the supervisory relationship. As this researcher gained experience as a supervisor, she was attempting to understand the different realities that are experienced in the role of supervisee as opposed to the role of supervisor. Power as a concept is central to feminism, with which the researcher strongly identifies. Combining this researcher's interest in feminism with her experiences as both a supervisor and supervisee contributed to her interest in power in the supervisory relationship.

The researcher's first interest in power emerged after her participation in two research studies on the clinical supervisory relationship. Furthermore, the researcher has had a wide variety of supervisors, including AAMFT supervisors-in-training, licensed

mental health practitioners, and AAMFT-approved supervisors. Her supervision experiences have taken place in internships and in Marriage and Family Therapy graduate training programs. She has had approximately ten supervisors, men, women, young students, and seasoned supervisors.

She noticed that positive supervisory experiences appeared to coincide with positive relationships with supervisors, beneficial outcomes for clients, and an overall stronger personal and professional growth period. In contrast, negative supervisory experiences seemed to result in fear, inhibition, poor relationships with supervisors, fewer beneficial outcomes for clients, and an overall struggle in personal growth. In addition, the importance of power in the supervisory relationship was rarely addressed. Her interest in this area was in bringing voice to supervisees who might have been reluctant to openly discuss the effects of power in the supervisory relationship.

When the general research question was examined, several assumptions were evident. The first assumption was that power is inherent in all relationships; it is and will be present in the supervisory relationship. This assumption was undoubtedly imposed on the participants, reflected in the types of questions that were asked. It is also assumed the participants agreed with the assumption there is power in the supervisory relationship; power is inherent in all relationships. What the questions explored is *how* participants experience this power. This leads to a second assumption, which was that the participants have some of experience of power in the supervisory relationship. They may or may not have been aware of their experience of power, but being asked questions about power resulted in participants reflecting on thoughts, beliefs, feelings, and actions about power they experienced in the supervisory relationship. A third assumption is that the

supervisory relationship takes place in a clinical setting. The exact location and structure of where supervision takes place may or may not have an impact on power. This study, however, specifically examines clinical relationships. For example, because of the different context, power may be experienced in a different manner between a manager and an employee.

Sample and Procedures

According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), grounded theorists utilize theoretical sampling, or sampling designed to make comparisons that will "maximize opportunities to discover variations among concepts and to densify [saturate] categories in terms of their properties and dimensions" (p. 201). Sampling is conducted based on a set of criteria that originate from the research question and the researcher's guiding assumptions (Rafuls & Moon, 1996). For this reason, participants were recruited from a clinical training program, in which participants were supervisees and also students pursuing a degree in an academic program. Supervisees in clinical training settings are likely to have relationships with other people at the facility, which may impact power in the supervisory relationship. The selected program had Masters- and Doctoral-level students as supervisees that provided an opportunity to compare and contrast participants' experiences of power based on level of experience. This training program was one of a few AAMFT programs that train both Masters- and Doctoral-level students in Marriage and Family Therapy. For this reason, there were a high number of supervisors who interact with students/supervisees throughout their training. Furthermore, there were many students in the program at the time the research was conducted. Therefore, the

experiences of the students/supervisees in this particular program were likely to be different than the students in other programs.

The selection of one training program was a decision guided by theoretical sampling, or the researcher's interest in locating participants most able to provide experiences applicable to the development of a theory of power in supervision. Training programs are unique; interviewing supervisees in different programs could have posed challenges in understanding different power dynamics present in supervision. Comparisons would have to be made across programs in addition to within programs, contributing to the complexity of theory development. Comparing experiences of power in different training programs, as well as in other supervisory settings, would be beneficial for future research projects.

Participant recruitment. The researcher sent an e-mail to a supervisor in the selected training program describing the study, with an attachment of the interview questions, and requested permission to interview students enrolled in the training program. After consulting with other supervisors in the program, the contact supervisor agreed to help recruit participants. The supervisor forwarded the e-mail to all supervisees in the program, with a note encouraging them to participate in the study. A second and similar e-mail was sent out to program supervisees about a week after the original e-mail was sent. Supervisees were encouraged to contact the researcher, through e-mail or phone. Three participants were recruited during this process. Subsequently, the researcher traveled to the training program and attended a clinic meeting in an effort to recruit participants. At the clinic meeting, the researcher described the study and handed out copies of the Supervisee Questions (see Appendix A). The researcher distributed a sign-

up sheet with available interview times for participants. One particular student in the program was helpful in encouraging fellow classmates to participate in the study. Eight participants were recruited in this manner, for a total of 11 participants for this study.

Interviews were conducted over three days. Nine interviews were conducted in therapy rooms in the training program, and two interviews took place in the home of the participants. The rooms were large and comfortable, and for the interviews that took place in a therapy room, one-way mirrors were obscured with blinds. Participants arrived at a pre-scheduled time for the interview. The tape recorder was placed on a table between the participant and the researcher.

Participants were given the Supervisee Interview Informed Consent (see Appendix B) to read and sign. Participants were given the opportunity to have any questions answered. Participants were made aware that consent could be withdrawn at any time. Participants signed the consent form, then were given a copy to keep. The researcher then turned on the tape recorder and began the interview. Interviews lasted from 45 to 90 minutes. Supervisees were asked questions about power in the supervisory relationship. The questions in the interviews cover the following topics: (a) structure of current supervision; (b) supervisee likes/dislikes about supervision; (c) does the supervisee believe that the supervisor has power inside and/or outside the supervisory relationship, and how has this been shown; (d) does the supervisee believe that he/she has power inside and/or outside the supervisory relationship, and how this has been shown; (e) has the topic of power in the supervisory relationship been discussed; (f) has the supervisee ever felt that the supervisor misused power inside/outside of supervision; (g) has the supervisee ever felt that he/she has misused power inside/outside of supervision;

(h) how the supervisee thinks power affects clients; (i) the role of power in helping/hindering training of the supervisee; (j) individual characteristics of the supervisee and the supervisor that affect power in the supervisory relationship (for example, race/ethnicity, gender, age, etc.); (k) aspects of the clinical facility or training program that influence power in the supervisory relationship; (l) how supervisee relationships with other supervisees influence power in the supervisory relationship; (m) how supervisee relationship with other supervisors influence power in the supervisory relationship; (n) what the supervisee would like to change about the supervisory relationship; (o) anything else the supervisee would like to add to the interview; and (p) what the supervisee thinks power is. During the interview, the researcher probed for counter-examples of supervisees' reported experiences. After the interview was completed, the researcher turned off the tape recorder. Participants then filled out the Demographic and Background form (see Appendix C), which included information such as ethnicity, age, gender, religious preference, educational and clinical training and experience, and career aspirations. Participants chose a pseudonym for the researcher to use for transcripts and in reporting the results of the study.

At the beginning of the interview, supervisees were encouraged to respond to questions after reflecting on *all* their supervisory experiences, not only supervision experienced while enrolled in this particular program. The purpose for this was to illustrate supervisees' experiences, and to assist in maintaining confidentiality for supervisees and supervisors. Participants' confidentiality was maintained by having them select a pseudonym for use during the study. During the interviews, some participants inquired about whether they could use names in talking about supervisory relationships

and situations. The researcher responded they could use names, but they would be blocked out during transcription. Consequently all identifying information including supervisor names or clinic names were replaced during transcription with "[supervisor name]" and "[clinic name]," respectively. Additionally, some participants had questions about confidentiality during or after the interview. The researcher made every attempt to invite and respond to such questions. One participant requested to have a copy of his/her transcript mailed to him/her for review. This request was honored, and an exchange occurred via mail between the researcher and this participant, in order to attend to confidentiality concerns. One participant requested a copy of the results. Participants were assured that identifying information would not be used in the written portion of the research project, meaning the dissertation or any published reports.

Risks to participants. The risks to the participants in this study were real. Because they were likely to remain involved in supervisory relationships, confidentiality was the foremost concern for the participants. The researcher was prepared to address any ethical issues that arose; she had information ready and available in case participants needed to report an ethical violation to the State Ethics Board. Participants had given much thought to difficult dilemmas they faced, and took appropriate action where they felt necessary, including talking with a supervisor about a problem. Participants could monitor their responses and refrain from identifying supervisors by name. In summary, participants were aware of the risks entailed in the interview and, therefore, took proactive steps to protect themselves from risks.

Researcher and participant power. The previous discussion of risks and confidentiality leads to consideration of the power of the researcher and the participants

in the research process. The researcher had power in her ability to select and shape what was reported in the results of this study. The researcher had the power to use identifying information for the participant, even if she used their selected pseudonym. Moreover, the researcher may have good intentions in refraining from using such information, but there may be a difference between what the researcher and what the participants defined as identifying. Therefore, this researcher took steps to protect participants' identities and confidentiality.

In addition, the researcher was not the only person with power in the research process. For example, participants had power during the interviews in the selection of their responses to the interview questions. It is impossible to know how revealing participants were in reporting their experiences. Indeed, some participants hinted at selecting some experiences to share over others, and/or modifying their responses (and articulating this) because of their ongoing supervisory relationships and involvement in a training program. Similarly, participants had the right and ability to give brief answers to questions, rather than expanding on experiences they may have had. Supervisees in the program may have chosen not to participate in the study because of feelings of vulnerability.

The characteristics of the participants and the researcher may have also had an impact on what participants chose to reveal during the interview. The researcher, as previously stated, is a Caucasian woman, in her late twenties, and an advanced-level doctoral student. The researcher is also a feminist, although this was not verbalized during the interview. The researcher, however, allowed participants to voice their thoughts during the interview process without researcher interpretation or opinion. It is

difficult to determine how participants viewed the researcher, but it is likely their views differed, depending on their characteristics. For example, it is possible that Masters students viewed the researcher as having more power, whether through knowledge or experience, resulting in more timidity in their responses. It is also difficult to separate this possibility of power from the participants wanting to be helpful to the interviewer. For example, many participants inquired if their responses were on track or sufficiently specific. Therefore, it is difficult to determine if these inquires came from power differences or from the natural tendency to want to help another student.

Participants did not refer to their own or their supervisors' sexual orientation or during the interviews. The reason for this is only speculation; however, there are a number of reasons for this lack of response, including participants may not have considered a characteristic such as sexual orientation to be an important element in the supervisory relationship. Second, participants may have been struggling with this issue and have not yet come to a resolution about it, therefore, decided that the appropriate first person to tell about this was not the researcher. Third, participants may object to homosexuality. Finally, the researcher may have appeared to be heterosexual, contributing to a lack of participant comfort in discussing this personal characteristic. The potential power of social stigma was present in nearly all interactions, including the interaction between researcher and participant during the interview process. To counter the effects of such social stigma, the researcher made every effort to accept any and all participant responses to the interview questions.

Data Analysis

Data analysis began with the start of the first interview. Although the researcher began data collection with a semi-structured interview, participants were allowed to continue on tangents while being interviewed. The researcher also took opportunities to have participants clarify their thoughts and elaborate on their experiences. During the first interview, the researcher took mental notes of the main points that the participant was describing. For example, the first two participants interviewed described, in some manner, the importance of the supervisee's development in how supervisees experienced power in the supervisory relationship. After some participants explained this experience (and it was not included in the original, semi-structured interview), the interviewer began probing this theme further with subsequent participants.

All eleven interviews were conducted within a short period of time. The researcher took notes as she transcribed the interviews, writing down possible category names. After transcription was completed, the researcher read through the transcripts to perform open coding. According to Strauss and Corbin (1998), there are several ways to perform open coding. For the purposes of this study, whole sentences or paragraphs were examined to explore the major ideas that were present in the interview data. Notes were made in the margins of the transcripts to indicate possible themes emerging from the data. Once open coding was completed on all the interviews, the researcher made a list of possible categories. The list created from the transcripts was compared and added to the previous list made during interview transcription.

At this point, *axial coding* began, as categories and sub-categories discovered in the interviewing process were re-assembled into a more organized scheme. The goal of

axial coding is to *relate* categories to each other, looking for relationships as theory is being developed (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Categories that appeared similar in nature were collapsed into one category. Categories were distinguished from one another, and sub-categories were developed. After axial coding was completed, dense and well-developed categories were related to each other in a conceptual scheme. Grounded theorists (Glaser, 1978; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) suggest that data collection is complete when *theoretical saturation* has been reached—that is—new data provide no new information for the researcher. Theoretical saturation was reached in this study, as recurring themes were noted while analyzing interviews.

It is important to note that the constant comparative method was used throughout the process of coding and data analysis. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), there are four stages involved in the constant comparative method used in grounded theory: 1) comparing incidents applicable to each category; 2) integrating categories and their properties; 3) delimiting the theory; and 4) writing the theory. The description of the methodology used reflects the constant comparative method. At all times, categories are being compared with each other; similarly, subcategories and properties of categories are being compared with each other in an effort to determine the best "fit."

Most themes readily emerged from the data, that is, from participants' own words. Oftentimes, participants' words would capture the theme they were discussing. Moreover, because the participants have all had at least a year of training in marriage and family therapy, they tended to use "systems" words, such as "structure," "boundary," "dual relationships," and "binds." It was relatively easy to find these themes in reading the transcripts. Other participant words were frequently used, yet not asked in the semi-

structured interview, such as “safety,” “knowledge,” “collaboration,” and “empowerment.” Not all of their words were indicative of categories; rather, the context in which the words were located was important. For example, nearly every participant in the study used the word “knowledge”. “Knowledge” was not developed as a category, but was used as a strong indicator for how participants defined their supervisors as having power. Supervisors (and supervisees) are knowledgeable in many areas, yet it was supervisor knowledge that was a symbol of the power they held in the supervisory relationship. Conversely, “empowerment” did emerge as a category specifically related to supervisees because participants discussed the “empowerment” of supervisees (as opposed to the empowerment of supervisors). Empowerment was a process facilitated by supervisors for the benefit of supervisees. The word “empowerment” seemed to capture the essence of supervisees’ gains in power within the supervisory relationship.

It is important to note that the interview was semi-structured, in that it guided participants’ responses, yet allowed them to elaborate on their own thoughts. The semi-structured interview had implications for the data analysis and emergence of themes. First, power was the central theme in the interview. Power was left undefined for participants, allowing them to give their own meanings and definitions to the word, yet also allowing them to share their experiences according to how they see power in the supervisory relationship. The term “power” often has a negative connotation, as participants tended to recall negative experiences when asked about power in their supervisory relationships. Indeed, when the interview came to the question of misuse of power in the clinical supervisory relationship, the answers referred to power uses that were negative and extreme. Participants’ may also have talked more about their negative

experiences because they may have felt uncomfortable talking about power in their relationship with their supervisors. Aside from possibly confiding in other supervisees, an interview may be the only opportunity participants had to legitimize their experiences of the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, there was a tendency for those participants, who reported few to no abuses of power in the supervisory relationship, to have difficulty articulating appropriate uses of power, so their answers tended to be brief.

As many themes were collapsed into fewer, more comprehensive categories, the researcher reviewed the transcripts to identify and insure fit of a category to the data. At this point in the data analysis, she consulted with an "objective" supervisor who was not previously involved in the study. This supervisor reviewed the developing categories and transcripts, and asked the researcher to describe and explain how categories were developed and linked together. Subcategories were refined in the same manner. Moreover, some categories overlapped within the data or participant quotes. The more salient theme in a particular quote was used for illustrative purposes in the *Results* section. There were many overlaps between categories and sub-categories, yet through the process of constant comparison, different categories were retained when some participants made distinctions between two categories. One example of this was the distinction between *supervisor relationships* and *dual relationships*. These two themes were found to overlap, yet participants described them as having distinct properties—enough to warrant different categories.

The result of this process is a grounded theory, or scheme of understanding, based on participants' experiences and recollections. Some categories were very dense with many subcategories, whereas others were less dense and did not have subcategories. The

categories without subcategories were salient themes in the interviews—enough to be included in the *Results*, yet not developed enough to have subcategories. Furthermore, such undeveloped categories did not fit well under other, more developed categories.

Trustworthiness

With a quantitative study, it would be necessary to establish validity and reliability measures. However, because qualitative studies examine social phenomena from a different perspective, issues of validity and reliability are not directly applicable to the current study. Prominent theorists and researchers, such as Lincoln and Guba (1985), and Creswell (1998), have proposed different means of establishing what they call *trustworthiness* in qualitative research. Lincoln and Guba (1985) in particular have offered methods of establishing trustworthiness comparable to reliability and validity concerns in quantitative research. There are four ways to establish trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Each of these will be examined in depth.

Credibility. In qualitative research, credibility is the most important dimension in establishing the trustworthiness of a study. Credibility is similar to internal validity in quantitative research, that is, are participants' realities being accurately reflected in the research process? Several methods were employed in this study to attend to credibility concerns. First, the researcher used multiple theories, exchange theory, postmodern feminist theory, and French and Raven's theory of social power, to inform the research questions and to examine the developed theory of power in the clinical supervisory relationship.

Another method of establishing credibility was through triangulation of sources and investigators. Level of experience was used as a triangulation point in the research process. Participants had different amounts of experience as supervisees; they contributed different perspectives of power in the supervisory relationship. This added to the richness and scope of the study. The researcher used multiple investigators in the study; she had another supervisor review the developing theory. This supervisor relied on his extensive supervisory experience, as well as his experience as a supervisee, to reflect on, contribute to, and challenge the theory as it was being developed. Thus, the researcher engaged in multiple levels of triangulation throughout the study.

Peer debriefing provided an external check in the process of theory development in grounded theory research. As indicated above, the researcher continually met with a "disinterested" supervisor, who was not directly involved in the research project. This supervisor provided feedback to the researcher through challenging and informative statements. Through the course of ongoing conversations, theoretical concepts were confirmed.

Negative case analysis was also used to enhance the study's credibility. In the development of categories, negative cases were used to develop and challenge the researcher's understanding and conceptual development of categories. Negative examples of concepts helped to refine the concept in question; participating in negative case analysis helped the researcher consider which properties were to be included and/or excluded in the theory.

Finally, a member check was conducted towards the end of theory development. An outline and a description of the theory, accompanied by a cover letter, were sent to

participants, asking for feedback, comments, and/or confirmation of the developed theory. This was done to ensure the theory accurately reflected the participants' experiences and descriptions. Participants confirmed that the theory reflected their experiences of power in the supervisory relationship. A copy of the theory outline and description can be found in Appendix D.

Transferability. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), transferability is akin to external validity; that is, is the study generalizable to other settings, contexts, and people? Although it may be difficult or impossible to generalize the findings from this study to other settings, this researcher described the methods of this study in detail in the current chapter. In part, this was done so other researchers could determine for themselves the extent to which the study generalizes to other populations or settings. Additionally, the first theme in the developed theory, structure, helps establish the context for uses of power in the supervisory relationship. For example, this study may be more generalizable to other (similar) academic settings, whereas it may be limited in its applicability to supervisory relationships in agency settings.

Dependability. Dependability, the qualitative counterpart to quantitative reliability, also helps to establish the trustworthiness of a study. That is, can the same results be found in another study if the current study was replicated? Again, providing a rich description of the methods and data analysis of the study proves helpful. This researcher established an audit trail of the process and progress of the research. Memos were kept regarding the possibility of categories, subcategories, concepts, and interrelated categories. These memos and records are kept so other researchers can scrutinize the

research process, and, ultimately, conduct the same research study and come to the same conclusion as the current researcher.

Confirmability. Methods of confirming the research, or ensuring objectivity of the researcher, have been conducted throughout the study. In other words, through the other three methods of ensuring trustworthiness: credibility, transferability, and dependability, the researcher has been held to a high standard of objectivity. Yet the researcher has also kept an informal reflexive journal along with her audit trail. For example, after categories were listed and/or brainstormed at the beginning stages of theory development, the researcher wrote down her thoughts and possible biases that may have influenced her understanding of participants' experiences. According to Lincoln and Guba (1985), the process of writing a reflexive journal helps reduce bias, as researchers effectively purge themselves of their biases through writing. Additionally, the researcher has made her biases clear to the reader earlier in this chapter under the subtitle *Biases and Assumptions*. This helps the reader critically evaluate the extent of the researcher's objectivity in conducting the research project.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

To understand the results of this study, it is necessary first to describe the participants and their experiences with power in the clinical supervisory relationship as well as give a brief summary of the physical setting at the time of the interviews with participants. Following that, the focus of the chapter will be on the three themes that emerged: *structure*, *individual characteristics*, and *power use*. These will be described in detail along with the subthemes that emerged within each of the major themes. An outline of themes and subthemes can be found in Figure 1.

Participant Information and Experiences

Eleven supervisees participated in this study; three men and eight women. All participants identified themselves as Caucasian and ranged in age from 23 to 38. All had at least a Bachelor's degree, and five had a Master's degree. Participants varied in their religious preference, including a variety of Christian identities (for example, Catholic, Lutheran, and Latter-Day Saints). Participants' experience as marriage and family therapists (or therapists-in-training) ranged from seven months to over seven years.

At the time of the interview, participants were asked to describe how supervision was currently arranged for them. All participants responded they had approximately one hour of individual supervision (one-on-one time with a supervisor, or dyadic supervision in which another supervisee was present) plus approximately two hours of group supervision (one supervisor would facilitate a discussion of cases with five or six

Figure 1

Outline of a Theory of Power in the Clinical Supervisory Relationship

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Structure
- Academic setting
- Learning
- Physical structure
- Program issues
- Supervisor relationships
- Dual relationships
- Supervision arrangements
- Supervisor role

Individual Characteristics
- Supervisor experience and age
- Supervisor gender
- Supervisor personality
- Supervisee social characteristics
- Supervisee clinical development and age
- Supervisee gender
- Supervisee personality

Power Use
- Power discussion
- Perspectives and assessment
- Empowering supervisees
- Safety
- Collaboration
- Favoritism
- Imposition of style/orientation
- Call-ins
- Expectations of supervisees
- Supervisors' misuse of power
- Supervisees' withholding information
- Supervisee-peer power
- Supervisees as consumers
- Supervisees' misuse of power

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supervisees present). Individual supervision consisted of live, video, or case consultation. Some participants had arrangements that extended beyond this basic format. For example, some supervisees received supervision at their internship placement, which included having two group supervision meetings per month and receiving individual

supervision from the agency supervisor. In addition, some participants described their supervisors as supervisors-in-training (SITs), who were also being observed by a supervisor who was behind the mirror during a supervision session.

Participants were encouraged to draw on any and all supervisory experiences they had. Some participants were supervisors-in-training at the time of the interview; they were instructed to only focus on their experiences as supervisees. Some participants relied on experiences from their current program, whereas others described supervisory experiences that took place prior to entering the present training program.

Participants have had a wide range of supervisory experiences. Comments from two supervisees reflect the extent of those experiences (numbers in parentheses following the participant pseudonyms reflect the location of the quote in the original transcript):

> I've only had a couple different supervisors, there's just, there are different styles and so, you know, I come together with the two supervisors I've had in different ways. I like both of them, we got along well enough, but it's kind of a different feeling, a different fit. (Betty, 027)

> But I'm in my seventh year of supervision. Not that I don't have a lot of growth, you know, I still do, but that's a long time to get supervision. (Katie, 123)

Participants were consistent in describing their supervisory experiences as generally positive, although they had some negative experiences. These negative experiences with supervision will be discussed within the themes, however, it is important for the reader to understand them in the context of more positive supervisory experiences.

> Oh boy. I'm a real big advocate of supervision. I love it. And I don't get enough of it, I feel like. I don't know that I could get enough of it…I've had a pretty good experience with supervision. I really don't have a whole lot bad to say about it. I mean it's been very fruitful for me. (Bob, 036-037, 047)

> I just want to say that despite those two experiences that were not good, I think overall that supervision has been wonderful…Hopefully I've added the good stuff, but I know that the bad are more potent, but I've had a lot of good experiences too. (Gwen, 315, 326)

The potency of negative supervisory experiences referred to in the last quote resonated with many of the participants:

> It's easier to think about the negative things than it is the positive things, of course. I don't want anyone to think that it's all been negative! It's been positive! (SC, 232)

Participants who had negative supervisory experiences described only one or two incidents in vivid detail. It is hoped this discussion will highlight how power can contribute to negative experiences as well as reflect the participants' sentiments of enjoying the supervisory relationship, particularly when supervisors use power to benefit supervisees.

Participants with supervisory experience outside training programs commented on the difference between supervision inside versus outside academia:

> And I know that that's not always going to be the case, and I know that before coming into this program I worked and I had supervisors in other kinds of, it's a different thing but where it's not always that way. So maybe that's one reason why I do have such a positive spin on it because I have been in the real world and know that it can suck if you, if somebody that you ruffle feathers with, or don't get along with…this is not that bad. (John, 190-191)

Most supervisees, however, appeared to concentrate their thoughts on supervision within an academic setting. Even participants with multiple experiences as supervisees tended to focus on their current supervisory relationships, which also were in an academic training program. It is not the purpose of the current study to definitively describe the differences in supervision in academic training programs and in other settings.

Theme One: Structure

The first theme that emerged from the interviews, *structure,* acts as a backdrop against which power plays out in the clinical supervisory relationship. The subthemes under *structure* are indicative of structural elements that shape how power is used within supervision. For example, there are unchangeable aspects of the institution where supervision takes place (in this case, the school) which neither participant in the supervisory relationship—the supervisor or the supervisee—has significant control over or ability to change. These include: *academic setting*, the process of *learning*, *physical structure*, *program issues*, *supervisor relationships*, *dual relationships*, *supervision arrangements,* and *supervisor role*. These subthemes indicate those elements that help structure the supervisory relationship.

Academic setting. It was not the purpose of this study to examine differences between supervision that occurs inside or outside academic settings (for example, in an agency setting), but some comments from those with outside experience highlight important points.

> It's just a given that in the college or academic setting that your supervisor's going to have a little more power than students. (Natalie, 162)

This quote was from a supervisee who is new to the supervisory relationship, having had only two supervisors during her academic program. Another participant clarified how a supervisor in an academic setting might have more power:

> I mean I recognize that it's important that it's [power] there but I think in the university setting where to me it can feel more negative because there's more riding on it, and there's less options and choices, it's harder to get out of uncomfortable supervisory relationships without fearing more ramifications, where in the real world if you're paying a supervisor, you can fire that person and get someone else and not be as afraid about grades or letters of recommendation. (Katie, 221)

This quote was from a supervisee who has had supervision outside of academia and, therefore, can speak to the reality of power differences of supervisors, depending on the supervision setting. Supervisees' fears of negative ramifications appear to be more salient in an academic setting, and evidence in support of this hypothesis will be discussed under the theme *power use*.

Learning. In an academic setting, supervisees expect that learning will occur in supervision. Within this subtheme is the idea that supervisors have knowledge to pass on to supervisees; therefore supervisors have more power.

> You already assume they have power because to quote the wonderful phrase, "knowledge is power," they've got experience, they've got the credentials, they have the education already and you're just coming into it. (Celine, 077)

Supervisees expect to gain knowledge from their supervisors, and this is a way for them to learn and thereby increase their own power:

> Most of the time it feels really good because the fact that they do have a power in that way, as knowing more than I do, it gives me a way to learn something and increase my own knowledge base and therefore increase my own power for later in my career. (Betty, 068)

Participants clearly expected their supervisors to have more knowledge, so they could learn in supervision.

> I really do think that in a practicum group without a supervisor, [if] it was just peers, wouldn't have credibility to it. I mean yeah it's great talking to your peers and getting it all out, but if you don't have someone that has experience, has credentials, and had knowledge of the experience, how is their advice any better than any advice you pick out of a fortune cookie, it's not, so I'd rather have a power relationship with someone that has some more knowledge, has the experience, has something to offer me other than commiserating or saying, "well I don't agree with that, I think that's silly," because we all have different opinions, different backgrounds, and so we can argue about things or come up with things. (Celine, 281-282)

Therefore, supervisors are seen as different from supervisees' peers, and the way they accomplish this is to be more knowledgeable than supervisees.

Supervisors are also seen as role models:

> And those two individuals are the type of individuals I would like to emulate as I become a supervisor. (Betsy, 039)

In this quote, the participant describes how she would like to follow the practices of supervisors who have provided her with what she considers to be good supervision. Other participants mentioned negative experiences they have had in supervision, which showed them what not to do as supervisors, when they reach that level. In either case, supervisees learn what is expected from supervisors.

Because of this inherent difference in knowledge (and therefore power) between supervisors and supervisees, participants see supervision as a place to learn, grow, and be challenged.

> …perhaps if that's a perception that you have, it's just because when we talk about the process of therapy and supervision, there's so much of an individual nature, to truly become a good therapist, it's a process, and it can be a painful process to, of realizations of working through things, of watching the experience take a toll on your own life…you know, one hand it's expansive, and pushes you to grow and learn and all these things, but on the other it may take away parts of your life because of time commitments and [things] like that, it could hurt your own relationships. (José, 147-148)

> In my training, well again it kind of goes back to what I've been saying all along, that if you do feel like they have power, but that they are going to use it for your benefit rather than to your detriment, I think that your training is a much more successful experience, and for lots of reasons, not just because you're not going to get in trouble, but because you can experiment, you can try different things, you can make the most of your training rather than only wanting to do what you know works because you're afraid they're going to nail you if you don't. (Betsy, 166)

In both these quotes, the struggle of learning in supervision is distinctly articulated; the possibilities of learning and growing as well as negative ramifications are

clear. The following quote describe this learning process for supervisees, yet alludes to the theme of safety, which will be discussed later.

Another aspect of learning for supervisees is applying their own growth to their clients. Supervisees expect to transfer what they learn in supervision to their clients:

> I don't think the clients could benefit as much as they could if I were being the best therapist I could be, which, if I'm not getting the help I need, then I'm not being able to sort of transfer that growth onto them. (Katie, 118)

Supervisees want to learn how to be good therapists so they can help their clients, and to do that they look to their supervisors for knowledge as well as their clinical experiences to facilitate supervisees' personal and professional growth. In turn, they see that their growth as supervisees helps clients meet their goals and benefit from therapy.

Physical structure. There are certain aspects of the supervision facility that could serve to increase the power differential in the clinical supervisory relationship. Elements of physical structure that impact power are the presence of phones in the therapy room, one-way mirrors for supervisors to observe supervisees, the capacity to videotape sessions, and the location of faculty offices.

> Supervisors have power to call in, more power than they had before, we didn't have them [phones] last year, so I think that, when they put those in, I got a little bit scared at first but I haven't had any experience with it and everyone who has said it hasn't been a big deal. (Natalie, 128)

> The fact that we have two-way mirrors, the fact that we have phones in here, the fact that we have cameras, videos, being able to take a video to a, to put it in front of your fellow students, that's a release of power, you, you're making yourself vulnerable, you're showing yourself on a film doing what you're planning to do for the rest of your life or for at least the next twenty years or whatever. (Bob, 246)

> But obviously that, with the mirror set up and things like that, that are back there, and even the taping opportunity, or audio-taping in a sense shows that power in that you're bringing something to them, rather than they bringing something to you, I mean it's the nature of the relationship. (José, 252)

In each of these quotes, it is apparent that having and making use of special recording equipment contributes to a sense of supervisees ceding power to supervisors. Participants, however, did not describe the effect of physical structure on power relations with other supervisees. For example, they did not describe ceding power to peers who might view them on tape during conjoint or group supervision or who might observe them as part of a team approach to as case.

Equipment available in the therapy room allows for direct observation of supervisees, making them feel vulnerable. The immediate presence of a supervisor, however, may also be comforting to beginning supervisees:

> I haven't, I haven't ever really thought, I haven't really been too aware of it when I'm up in the therapy room, it's been more of a blessing to me that someone's [supervisor] back there, because then I have someone to confer with and talk to after. (Natalie, 133)

In either case, supervisors have the power to directly intervene or contribute to supervisees' therapy sessions. Supervisees react in different ways to supervisors' observations of their work.

Supervisees are aware of the location of faculty offices. Such locations mean different things to different supervisees in relation to the power of their supervisors:

> I think physically it's interesting, I find it interesting that some faculty members have offices here and others have them in a different building, and that might, you could look at that two different ways, but that might, in some ways you're not as important or some are more important because they're here. I don't know if that has anything to do with it, or it could have been just the lack of space or the lack of, the ones who have offices elsewhere teach other things, like undergraduate courses, where the ones who don't [teach undergraduate courses] I think primarily focus on the graduate students. (John, 127-128)

This participant suggests that having faculty close by means they are more important to the clinic, but may be less important than other faculty. He appeared unclear on how decisions are made regarding faculty office space and location.

> I think the fact that we know we can get supervision, it's close by, for example if there's nobody, we have one, two supervisors that remain in this building during working hours, there's supervision close by for those, if they're not available, we know we have three others that are over at [building name] hall, just right across the street, so we know we can get to them quickly, or call them and they could be here within two or three minutes, so having that is also an empowering thing for the therapist, knowing that help is close by it I need it. (Bob, 255)

The physical distance to supervisors' offices may be indicative of the power they do or do not have in the program. Physical structures, such as supervisors' office locations, serve to help supervisees assess the amount of power their supervisors have in the supervisory relationship.

Program issues. All clinical training programs, and presumably all clinical agencies, have program issues that supervisors and supervisees must deal with. Supervisees identified program issues that affect power in supervision: lack of clients, lack of space, and lack of cooperation in making major decisions. It is important to note that all programs have conflicts and concerns; yet supervisees sometimes appeared frustrated over how these conflicts were handled, rather than the presence of the conflict itself:

> I think another thing is when decisions are made that should involve us [supervisees], but they [supervisors] don't involve us, I think in some respects they're trying to take power in areas that they don't need to, that they need to involve the supervisees into that decision making process. They're going to do it the way that they want to do it, and I think they do that for a reason because they don't want to really hear what people have to say, so it's safer, so it's a power…that's a big power thing, I think it's safer for them to keep that power. (SC, 178, 181)

> That's a release of power, that's making yourself vulnerable. I'd say the situation that I talked about earlier with how many clients we're seeing right now. That's in a way, and maybe not an overt use, but it's a manipulation of power, we don't have as many clients as we need right now. Students know that they're going to be here longer than they planned, and that's difficult to deal with, sometimes people lose some respect over that, and so power may be decreased or increased in areas because of the situation with clients. (Bob, 247-249)

Supervisees also have choices in how they wish to deal with program issues. One supervisee described an active approach to helping solve a program concern:

> Because we're struggling right now with hours and some of the ways that hours have been held, have been sought after, we have a lot of students feel like the clinic hasn't done enough to get clients in…I mean this is the second time we've made that presentation, and so these are initiatives that have started because we've had a chance to voice that, and maybe some of that does deal with our power outside of the therapy session, I think the students have a big voice if they want to use it, and they utilize that, and it's starting to show, we're starting to see some movement there, and that is our use of our power, we feel like the school is here because of us, we're not here because of the school, and in that manner, they need to work for us, and so we utilize the power of our voices to whoever, to, in order to get some action in those areas, and it's worked really well, I mean the response has been very good. (Bob, 153, 158)

Supervisor relationships. Supervisors have relationships with one another, just as they have relationships with supervisees. Supervisees may not know the nature of any disagreements, coalitions, or triangles among supervisors, but they do know that such relationships affect them in supervision:

> I think that the right hand doesn't know what the left hand is doing, and then that makes them look less powerful, but that also overflows into our relationship because in some respects they are supposed to be quote more powerful in some areas to help guide us. (SC, 173)

> Sometimes the faculty have the tendency to disagree among themselves, and so if, you know, when that happens that the power is kind of, it's not flowing along nicely, it's kind of like being pulled, and things like that, so sometimes that doesn't always benefit the students as much as it could. (Betty, 140)

These quotes are illustrative of the complexity of supervisory relationships. Supervisors have disagreements with one another, which may result in, at least from supervisees'

perspectives, treating supervisees differently than expected. Relationships between faculty members, whether they are cantankerous or agreeable, have an effect on power in the supervisory relationship.

Supervisors' position in the clinic, for example being program director, tenured, or an associate professor appears to affect other supervisors which, in turn, affect supervisees:

> And so they know who I'm closest with, a faculty member, so the ones that are on the other side, I think that affects how they treat me. I think the power, the power structure within the faculty members, OK, that's, my relationship, that influences how they treat me because of which side I'm closest to. (Gwen, 262, 264)

> In addition to that, you think about committees, and you've got people on your committee that may have been supervisors, or they're co-supervisors, you know, they're all working together, their relationship to each other will affect what happens for your defense, and this has happened with lots of people, when you've got antagonistic supervisors who, their power relationship in the context of the therapy clinic is what's coming into play into your report, they're saying you need to change this, no, no, do this, no do this, you need to add that, well I don't think I need to add that, and it just goes on and on and on. (Celine, 363)

In other words, it appears that power is also an important factor in supervisors' relationships with each other, especially is power is associated with position or status as a faculty member.

Dual relationships. Dual relationships refer to multiple roles supervisors and supervisees have in relation to each other in different contexts. Multiple dual relationships are inherent in academic training programs; for example, supervisors are teachers, major professors, and co-therapists. Likewise, supervisees take on different roles:

> You also have two different roles to play, student and supervisee, just as they have two different roles as supervisor and professor. (Betsy, 049)

Participants expressed a concern with confronting supervisors, knowing they may experience ramifications in other relationships with supervisors:

> And as far as me being more comfortable saying I think there's a problem here, considering the fact that this person's my major advisor I think makes things a little bit more difficult. (SC, 069)

> Just the idea of the dual natures of it, that they're both supervisor teacher, they're your advisor, they're on your committees for your thesis [or] dissertation, that type of thing. So do you dare bring up an issue if something, your publishing is based on that, your research is based on that, and how much you're willing to ruffle the feathers, if you will. (José, 258, 261)

Participants described how power in supervision might be different if dual relationships were not present:

> So maybe you find yourself not opening up to the extent you would if you didn't have such a power relationship, if it wasn't a dual thing, if it wasn't professor and supervisor, would it be different, and I think it would be. There's some people in our program that have opportunities to have supervisors outside, we've had two people contract in and do some work, and they've had really positive experiences that just because there isn't that, you know, conflict of interest or the idea that this could have ramifications in my academic work. (Celine, 082-083)

Dual relationships can affect supervisees' sense of power, or their willingness to confront supervisors. The experience of having positive supervision from a supervisor outside of academia illustrates impact of these relationships on power in the supervisory relationship. Furthermore, dual relationships cannot entirely be avoided because of multiple roles held by supervisors and supervisees.

Supervision arrangements. Supervisors have limited choices about how supervision is arranged for supervisees. For example, it may be likely that the high student-faculty ratio necessitated the use of supervisors-in-training (SITs). Supervisors' training or professional status affects how power is attributed to that supervisor. This is most often the case when SITs are assigned as supervisors:

> They don't have, because I'm being supervised by Ph.D. students, my actual supervisor doesn't have, they can't grade me, for example. (Jennifer, 029)

Supervisees know the limitations of SITs' power. The power dynamics in the supervisory relationship are likely to be different if the supervisor is an SIT who is not eligible to give out grades, and is unable to effect the same ramifications as a faculty supervisor.

Supervisor role. Power is inherent in the supervisory role. Power is an abstract concept, making it difficult for supervisees to define. Despite the nature of supervisors' invisible power, participants were aware of its presence:

> It's more, it's more subtle, it's really kind of an invisible thing, usually, in the room. (Katie, 037)

> I guess it's kind of one of those intangible things, I mean, power is sometimes not real concrete thing that you can just, you know, observe. (Betty, 064)

> I'm doing co-therapy with a particular supervisor, and it's not really overt, but I know it's there. (SC, 065)

The intangible sense of power also exists outside of supervisory relationships, suggesting that power is attributable, in part, to the supervisory role:

> I don't see a supervisor as an equal, so, but the thought doesn't go away outside of our supervision hour. (Natalie, 033)

> And as far as having a faculty member in the supervision, I think there is that power there, but I don't think it has to do with supervision so much as it does it's just they're faculty, you kind of acknowledge that that's their place. (John, 035)

Summary of structure. The theme of structure is intended to serve as a foundation or a contextual understanding of what power supervisors and supervisees have, as well as how power is played out in the clinical supervisory relationship. Moreover, there is considerable overlap between the subthemes under the main theme of structure. For example, *supervisor relationships* and *dual relationships* appear to be very similar subthemes, yet the difference in them lies in *who* the relationship is with. The *supervisor*

relationships subtheme is intended to capture the effect of supervisors' relationships with other supervisors on the supervisee. *Dual relationships*, however, attempts to capture the multiple layers of relationships possible between supervisors and their supervisees. Both subthemes are similar in that they represent a supervisor's relationship with another person.

Theme Two: Individual Characteristics

In comments related to the theme of *structure*, participants often referred to the supervision process in general terms, based on their knowledge and experiences up to the time of the interview. In addition to general terms, participants also described the supervisory relationship in terms of their unique experiences as well as the unique attributes of their supervisors. Subthemes based on individual characteristics of supervisors are *experience and age*, *gender*, and *personality*; subthemes for supervisee individual characteristics include *social characteristics*, *clinical development and age*, *gender*, and *personality*.

Supervisor experience and age. Originally, clinical development and age were coded as separate subthemes, yet they tend to be related. That is, supervisors who are older tend to have more experience. Supervisees reported feeling intimidated, yet having respect for supervisors who have a vast amount of clinical experience.

> I think one thing is just they have more experience and most, most often they have a higher degree than you, so that can be a little bit intimidating sometimes, even though the person may not be intimidating. (Natalie, 021)

Although most supervisees value supervisors with vast clinical experience, this is not always true:

> My supervisors that maybe had more experience, I'm more likely to think their advice is good than people who haven't really been practicing much longer than I

> have, maybe I'm more inclined to second guess their advice or try to seek the advice of someone else. But then again I have [had] a supervisor who's practiced for [a very long time], and sometimes I'd second-guess their advice more than I do someone with less experience. (Katie, 155-156)

Alternatively, it may be difficult for supervisors who are younger than their supervisees.

> I think age of the supervisor affects the relationship because I think that it is more difficult when you've got somebody who has more life experience than you do, and you're trying to supervise them. I think that would be a pretty intimidating position to be in, in some ways because they have experiences that you don't have, you have education that they don't have, how do you balance that out, and I honestly don't know that I've seen a good balance of that at this point. (Betsy, 193-194)

In this case, it may be more difficult for the supervisor to find a balance of power between her/his inexperience, and the supervisee's considerable life experience. It is easier for supervisees to see more experienced supervisors as having more power.

Supervisor gender. Male and female supervisees appreciated having women for supervisors. Male supervisees appreciated the different perspectives offered by female supervisors, whereas female supervisees appreciated having a supervisory relationship with someone of the same gender who has been through similar situations. One male supervisee said:

> My supervisor this semester is a female, and that has influenced a little bit…I think it's just to have that frame of reference to come from in supervision has been nice. I don't think it's a bad thing at all, I think she might bring up things that I would just not even think about. I think the same would be true with anything different than myself. (John, 114-116)

A female supervisee described benefits of having a female supervisor:

> Sometimes I think some of the males that do supervision try, they try to understand, they try to be…I think it's good but at the same time it's really easier to talk about that with another person who's been through it. (Celine, 313)

Participants described men and women supervisors having different but equal amounts of power:

> As far as, in this particular program, I can't honestly say, because the female supervisors that I've had, they, I think they're just as powerful as the male supervisors have been, probably even more powerful in their own way. (SC, 149)

> As far as gender, I think that we have, in this program, when it comes to women supervisors with male therapists, I think the women here are very strong and very aware of gender issues, and that equalizes the power a great deal. And I think part of it is that most of the men in this program that I've interacted with aren't way on the other side, you know, they aren't big into power relationships, and aren't chauvinistic for lack of a better term. (Bob, 211-212)

Only one negative supervisory experience was attributed at least in part to a supervisor's gender:

> I think for [that] particular supervisor…I think it was like I am male, hear me roar type thing, but he, like I said, he was like that with everyone and everything. (SC, 143)

Although participants did talk about the gender of supervisors, they did not express a strong relationship between gender and use of power in the supervisory relationship. For example, supervisees did not express a preference for men or women supervisors, as they felt both men and women supervisors had valuable experiences to offer.

Supervisor personality. This subtheme was very important to participants in describing what it was about a particular supervisor that contributed to power in the supervisory relationship. Personality characteristics attributed to supervisors include: power hungry, controlling, realistic, flexible, outspoken, energetic, closed off, easy going, open, and insecure. Participants often credited positive or negative uses of power to the supervisor's personality:

> OK, if, once again, if they are showing signs of insecurity, needing approval, I don't see them as, I don't see them as being as powerful. (Gwen, 241)

> That's a hard one because I think some supervisors are a little bit more rigid or closed off than, it makes it hard to be, for me to relax and able to talk to them. And I think that's one way they've demonstrated their power. (Natalie, 109-110)

No one type of personality is preferred over another. In particular, supervisors are valued for their quiet, as well as for their outgoing personalities:

> One of them is very quiet, she's not somebody who's going to go get loud or anything like that, but her quietness or willing to listen to taking what you're saying and really process it and everything, her openness gives her a lot of power in that way. But then I have another [supervisor] who's more loud and outgoing and things like that, full of energy, so, I mean it's kind of like the opposite end of the spectrum that they're both respected, they both have power but it's kind of in different ways. (Betty, 127-128)

Different personalities appear to display power in different ways. This subtheme is similar to supervisor's gender. No one personality characteristic or gender is preferred over another, but both have different types of merit or value for supervisees. Moreover, participants' interpretation of supervisors' personalities is interconnected to supervisees' own personalities. This point is further discussed under the subtheme *supervisee personality*.

Supervisee social characteristics. Supervisees described themselves as being viewed differently or feeling there were different expectations of them based on personal characteristics such as marital status and religiosity. Some supervisees felt their supervisors neglected these social characteristics by failing to understand or consider the importance of these parts of supervisees' selves. Moreover, supervisees report assumptions were made about them based on their social characteristics and, as a result, they were treated differently:

> So I think sometimes there's this idea that because I'm single and I don't have a family, that I have more time to do things, or I don't have as many worries, or I don't have as many responsibilities…It is interesting. It's a weird form of discrimination, but it's something that I think I've encountered everywhere I've gone, I'm leery, I'm an unattached person, means that there are expectations placed on you that aren't placed on other people. (Betsy, 191)

For another supervisee, different treatment involved his religious values:

> …there's [that] other piece where perhaps they were more valued, and I think that goes along with, well, they're valued because of their values, and you know if my values are different, then I think in some ways that there's been a privilege more for them, yeah…That's very clear, that there, you know, it's a different treatment. You know, religion happens to be that piece for me, that it's a different treatment depending on the supervisor. (José, 230, 232)

Different treatment refers to negative expectations; participants do not describe ways in which they were positively treated in relation to their social characteristics. The supervisors' interpretations, assumptions, and expectations influence how supervisees are treated.

Supervisee clinical development and age. Participants described how the stage of their clinical development influenced how much power they and their supervisors had. Supervisees felt they had less power in the beginning stages of their clinical development than at later stages; they cited reasons such as lack of knowledge and not knowing what to expect of the supervisory relationship. More advanced supervisees were able to notice and comment on the change in the power differential over time. Supervisees in the later stages of clinical development expected more sharing of power in the form of a collaborative supervisory relationship.

> I think in my Masters program, at the beginning, they probably did not see me as powerful because I did not have the knowledge at that point in time, so I think they felt like they had to serve as more of a guide until I was able to so-called "be a grown-up" and go out on my own, so to speak. Now it's a lot different. It's totally different now as far as I've come. (SC, 046)

> I think my development as a therapist has a lot to do with that also, in the sense that when you first start therapy, you want, it's almost like you desire somebody, you give that power away because you don't feel like you have the expertise to utilize it properly, so you're looking to an outside source for structure, for understanding, for direction. (José, 050)

The idea that beginning-level supervisees have less power makes sense if knowledge and experience are used as a way to determine how much power one has in the supervisory

relationship. Longer time spent in a training program means supervisees gain knowledge and experience, thereby increasing the amount of power they have.

> We may have touched on part of this earlier, but I think time in [the] program does impact how much power you have. I think Ph.D. students, in relation to their supervisors, have a little bit more power because they have more experience under their belt. I think as each year, as you progress, you're going, they're going to empower you more and more and more, to the point where you're ready to go out on your own… (Bob, 271-272)

Not only do supervisors increase empowerment of advanced supervisees, these supervisees also feel freer to share or assert their power:

> …the further you get in your career, you may be less interested in that power that they have to influence you, and maybe that's a change that slowly occurs, where you have more power, especially once you are out of school and you go to seek supervision and you have, I think even more power at that point, if you don't like it, you leave. Break the contract or whatever it is. (José, 194)

Supervisors' clinical development, experience, and knowledge seem to be positively related; age and life experiences are similarly related for supervisees. Further, these characteristics are likely to interact with matching supervisor characteristics. The following quote is illustrative of such complexities, as this supervisee is older and has had more life experiences than some of her supervisors, who have been younger and thus do not have as much life experience:

> But this is a second career, and I think sometimes because I have a lot of life experience, I worked for ten years in a totally different career, I can be very intimidating, especially to people who maybe are, to supervisors who are actually younger than I am, and I think people sometimes really need to recognize that I'm new at that, but I do know that it's been a problem. (Betsy, 181)

It is difficult to determine from this quote whether older supervisors have failed to recognize this supervisee's "newness" to the field. This example emphasizes the interrelatedness of supervisor and supervisee characteristics, both of which influence power in the supervisory relationship.

Supervisee gender. For one female supervisee, being socialized as a woman not to speak up or assert herself has affected her sense of power in the supervisory relationship:

> Well, I think part of it is being someone [who] wants to please other people. I think part of it is being a woman and sort of being trained to be forgiving and letting things go by and not sort of…being trained to not stick up for myself, and I think the other part of it is that I even questioned, should I, is that really wrong when she did that? (Katie, 087)

Most other female participants did not describe themselves in this manner, yet appreciated having a supervisor with similar life experiences:

> Being a woman and having a female [supervisor] is, is a good, in most situations, I think because it's, you come from a similar oppression type background. I mean I'm not another minority, but I'm a woman, and being a woman presents different issues than being a man, especially a white man. (Celine, 310-311)

Not one of the three men interviewed attributed any feelings of being less powerful in the relationship to their gender. Rather, male supervisees attributed any lack of power to the stage of their clinical development.

Supervisee personality. Supervisees attribute much of the power they feel in the supervisory relationship to their personality; these characteristics include openness, having a sense of humor, being closed, confident, upfront, indirect, domineering, and loyal. Participants believe that supervisors treat them in accordance with their personality characteristics:

> …I guess this is part of my personality characteristics, I define myself as being very loyal, very trustworthy. I think that I'm perceived that way because I'm not somebody in the program that goes around and talks and gossips. I'm a very private person and keep to myself, and I think the supervisors will tell me more about things than they would other students, not in an unethical way or anything. But if something's going on, I think that sometimes I'll receive more information because they know that it's not going to go anywhere. (Gwen, 181-184)

If information is viewed as power, then supervisors may feel more comfortable sharing power with supervisees who they view as being trustworthy and loyal. Similarly, how supervisors give feedback may depend on supervisees' personality characteristics:

> I had supervision…and the supervisor and I were discussing the case afterwards, and she said…I think you were a bit more mechanical in this session than you are normally, and she said I wouldn't be able to say that to everybody, but I know that you're a pretty easygoing person to know that I mean well, and I think that's true, and I've made that pretty clear…I've said look, if you have something critical to say, say it to me because I want to know. (Bob, 193)

> Sometimes I feel like I don't get as much feedback as other people do, and I don't know whether they think I wouldn't receive it well or what… (Jennifer, 152)

Sometimes, participants simply described their own sense of power in the relationship:

> I think the confidence, I think sometimes power and confidence go hand-in-hand because if you're viewed as more confident, you've viewed as more powerful in a way. People view me, I think that, I feel confident, some areas I don't feel confident in, but I think in this particular area I do feel somewhat confident and so they might say OK, well she's very confident here so she's probably going to exert a little bit more power, and I, you do feel more empowered and powerful when you feel confident about something. (SC, 129-130)

How power is perceived in the relationship appears to largely depend on supervisor and supervisee personalities. Moreover, how the personalities interact appears to affect the relationship. For example, pairing a formal supervisor with a laid-back supervisee may lead to misinterpretations of behaviors:

> …that I'm more laid back, easy going, sometimes that they, like with my first supervisor, it wasn't that it was strict, it was just very formal, organized. And I would say something kind of sarcastic and it kind of flowed, and sometimes it wouldn't, and it's not that I'd get in trouble, it'd just be like OK, well let's think about this for real. Maybe it appears that I'm not taking it seriously enough, or acknowledging the hierarchy when, when I am, I'm just, that's just who I would be, who I am. (John, 103-104, 107)

> *Summary of individual characteristics.* Power dynamics in supervisory relationships depend on individual characteristics of both supervisors and supervisees.

The importance of knowledge and experience, as it is related to power, can be found in the subthemes *supervisor experience and age* and *supervisee clinical development and age*. Supervisees feel more powerful when they are further along in their clinical development; supervisors are seen as more powerful when they have more experience. Moreover, supervisor and supervisee individual characteristics seem to interact with each other; this can be seen in many of the subthemes. For example, supervisees who are laid back may be seen by more rigid supervisors as disrespectful of the power inherent in the supervisors' role. Individual characteristics, in combination with structural elements shaping the supervisory relationship impact the last major theme of *power use*.

Theme Three: Power Use

Themes one and two, *structure* and *individual characteristics*, respectively, set the context for theme three: power use. Each of the subthemes found within *power use* indicate an aspect of power that is attributed to the supervisor or supervisee; each has the choice to act on or refrain from acting on each of the *power use* subthemes. All the subthemes under power use take place within the context set by *structure*, along with an interaction of supervisor and supervisee *individual characteristics*. Supervisors, according to the participants in this study, have more power than supervisees do. Thus, it makes sense that more of the subthemes under *power use* are in reference to ways supervisors act upon the power they have in the supervisory relationship. Supervisees, on the other hand, also have power. Yet according to their experiences and perceptions, their power is often limited; they see supervisors as holding more power. Power is not always seen as negative; that is, power can be used effectively to facilitate growth and enhance the supervisory relationship for both participants in that relationship. The subthemes to be

discussed in this section related to supervisor power are: *power discussion, perspectives and assessment, empowering supervisees, safety, collaboration, favoritism, imposition of style/orientation, call-ins, expectations of supervisees,* and *supervisors' misuse of power*; subthemes to be discussed related to supervisee power are: *supervisees' withholding information, supervisee-peer power*, *supervisees as consumers*, and *supervisees' misuse of power*.

Power discussion. Supervisors often begin the supervisory relationship by discussing power; supervisees may also broach the topic of power at the beginning of supervision. Supervisors have direct or indirect conversations about power; power discussions can also be non-existent. When supervisors directly discuss power with supervisees, they help define appropriate roles in the supervisory relationship:

> I think she may have asked me about what I thought about being in that room with her because we had worked together at a, we did co-therapy at one time, not for very long, but for a little bit, and she asked me how that was and, you know, feeling that out, kind of, you know, the power exchange, or how is this different from that and…but that was the only person that I've talked to about that [power] overtly, I think. (Celine, 132-133)

> I wouldn't necessarily say ongoing, it [power] is something that has been addressed, yeah. I mean we have brought it up, we know it's there, there's really not much we can do to get rid of it because she is at a higher level than I am but I think I respect that. (SC, 052)

When supervisors lead a discussion about power, supervisees appreciate that their supervisors are aware of the issue, even though they may not be able to eliminate the power differential. The following quote illustrates the value of having direct discussions about power:

> I think that my experience with supervision in, not even just with supervision in counseling but as somebody who used to be in another career and had supervisors, is that oftentimes I think it's kind of become the fashion to talk about how we're very collaborative, and we're very egalitarian, and, and I think that that is good,

> but I think of you do not make it overt that even though you may be collaborative and even though you may strive to have a, as flat a power structure as you can, there is still power involved, and if you don't make that overt to the people that you're working with, I think you do need to…because they're thinking that they're your colleague, and that's not what really is going on. So, anyway, for me I think that sometimes unfortunately the power differential isn't made overt. (Betsy, 032, 034)

Few participants said their supervisors had a direct conversation with them about power. Supervisors appeared most likely to have an indirect conversation about power, often by describing roles and responsibilities at the beginning of supervision when establishing a contract.

> Maybe the very first time that the faculty member, we discussed it [power], it wasn't that we discussed power issues, that this is how it's going to work. (John, 055)

> One other one, but it wasn't as in-depth, I think because with talking with her, this is a supervisor who isn't on staff here, part of our faculty, and so I think we had him [talk] about what his role was, he was a practicum leader, and we had a conversation with him about what his role was, how he viewed supervision, how he expected us to participate, how he was going to participate, that he would be evaluating us. (Betsy, 100)

> I don't think we've ever like, you know, we're going to talk about power now, this is what we're going to talk about, I don't think it's ever been anything like that. Like at the beginning of the semester here, there was a, my supervisor kind of gave me a letter or statement talking about what her responsibilities would be in the supervisory relationship, and what my responsibilities would be…so I read that and signed it, and I think when I brought it back we talked about that a little bit. (Betty, 081-082)

Even though the word "power" may not have been brought up in these indirect power discussions, supervisees interpreted, at least on some level, that roles, responsibilities, and evaluation are related to power.

A lack of discussion (non-existent) about power in the supervisory relationship was also common. Supervisees seemed uncertain as to why power was not directly addressed:

> As far as in my Masters program, I could not tell you why we didn't talk about it…we probably really didn't address a lot of cultural issues, we really didn't address a lot of hierarchy, power. We knew it was there. It was kind of like something we didn't really speak about. (SC, 059-062)
> It doesn't seem like that's been a huge piece that's been discussed, of the power of this relationship and what the implications are, and so, I guess I would have to say not much. (José, 123)

Deciding how to talk about power in the supervisory relationship with supervisees is in itself a use of power. Supervisees did not report negative experiences in supervision based exclusively on whether or not power was explicitly addressed in supervision. Talking about power is empowering for supervisees; it helps demystify an elusive yet present aspect of the relationship:

> …sometimes it's [power] like the pink elephant in the room that people just don't want to talk about. (SC, 207)

Perspectives and assessment. One of the most important elements of the supervisory relationship is *perspectives and assessment*, which encompasses both the supervisor's offer of different perspectives to the supervisee, as well as feedback and evaluation. This subtheme is related to learning, which is structured into the clinical supervisory relationship, particularly within academia. Supervisors, however, are not alone in evaluating supervision; supervisees also evaluate the supervisory experience. Supervisees shared their ideas with supervisors in open meetings as well as in formal evaluations that take place at the end of each semester. Each of these will be discussed below.

Supervisees appreciate hearing supervisors' and supervisees' perspectives in supervision; nearly all the participants in this study described this as "bouncing ideas" off others. Power is present in all forms of *perspectives and assessment*, although evaluation tends to be the most power-laden. When supervisors offer perspectives, they share ideas

that focus on cases, offering different approaches to working with clients. One example of offering perspectives is examining a case from different theoretical approaches.

To be able to "bounce ideas" off others is valuable for supervisees, no matter what stage they are in their clinical development:

> I think at this point in my career, if you will, I appreciate the opportunity to be able to bounce ideas, to really…I think the biggest thing is that I can take what I've done, what I'm thinking, and to just explore that with others, so that they have an opportunity to inform part of what I've done, perhaps to add depth or clarity to a piece that I'm already doing. (José, 008-009)

Many participants valued bouncing ideas off of supervisors and other supervisees. Being able to choose interventions and think about different perspectives offered by supervisors, because they had more experience, however, was the essence of what perspectives means to supervisees:

> I like being able to talk to professionals who have more experience than I do, who have some more experiences, I guess you could say…they've seen a lot of stuff that I haven't seen yet, and so I can bounce ideas off of them. (Betty, 011-012)

> I also like the mid-session breaks, going in and having somebody to bounce ideas off of, especially if you've had clients just dump their whole load on you in the first session, it's nice to have somebody to draw you back in and focus you on what's going on in the session. (Bob, 016)

> I present this side of it because that's my view of it, although there's a whole different side that, perhaps that's where the expertise, or the informed nature of the supervisor may help to flush out and expand into that other…and dig for those other pieces. (José, 073)

Feedback is a more power-laden offering of advice by supervisors to supervisees. Feedback can be focused on case content, but is usually directed towards the improvement of the supervisee as a therapist. Feedback involves supervisors giving their expert opinions on how supervisees need to grow, and suggestions as to what they need to do with their clients. Participants did not describe receiving feedback from peers;

comments received from peers were seen as offering different perspectives to a case. Supervisors tell supervisees what they are doing well, as well as help them with weaknesses or growth areas. Supervisors have more knowledge and experience to give directions to supervisees.

> …I understand that they have more knowledge than I do, so I take their advice to heart. (Bob, 059)

Providing feedback is often seen as a positive, growth-enhancing experience. Comparing the following quote from Bob, who also was quoted above under perspectives (Bob, 016):

> Oftentimes they'll go behind the mirror and watch our case, and give us feedback mid-session and after, or they can also provide that supervision prior to going in the case if you have some idea of what you're going in with and what needs, they provide that. An example of that would be I was seeing a younger client, and during the session, the client was seven years old and he was on his knees drawing, and I was sitting in a chair and I was relatively higher than he was, and I got down on my knees to talk with him, and the supervisor gave me some feedback and talked about how the client drew in and started to talk when I got down on my knees and got more down on his level. (Bob, 011, 014)

In each of these examples given by Bob, the supervisor took a mid-session break and talked with the supervisee. The examples are quite different; in the first quote, the supervisor helped Bob focus, whereas in the latter quote, Bob got feedback on his own actions and how they facilitated communication with the client. This was an example of the supervisor giving Bob positive feedback. Below is another example of feedback given to a participant:

> And during mid-session break, I went back and he said, "Gwen, you're being passive with them, you know, I see you normally doing more things with them," and that made me real uncomfortable and I started observing myself more in the session. (Gwen, 023)

The supervisor is giving direct feedback to Gwen, focusing on the developing her clinical skills. The supervisor's comment clearly was not another perspective for her to consider; the supervisor's feedback influenced Gwen, making her feel uncomfortable, resulting in her self-reflection.

Because learning is so much a part of supervision, supervisees expect to get feedback from their supervisors. A lack of feedback can be disconcerting to some supervisees:

> Sometimes I don't get enough feedback, like, constructive criticism. It's good because they, they give back positive things to you, and tell you what you're doing well. But sometimes I feel like I'm never going to grow and be better if somebody doesn't challenge me and help me look at what my weaknesses are. (Jennifer, 019-021)

Supervisors' reluctance to offer constructive criticism can be harmful to supervisees, or at least make it difficult for them to learn and grow. Most often, supervisors do provide adequate amounts of feedback to supervisees:

> We talk about stuff with clients, she gives me good consistent feedback about what I'm doing good, about things I need to change. (Betty, 172)

Evaluation of supervisees by supervisors is the most power-laden exchange in supervision, under *perspectives and assessment*. This is for two reasons: permanent records are kept of evaluations (whether they are in the form of grades, letters of recommendation, or supervision evaluations), and because of the potential impact on supervisees' careers. It should be made clear, however, that participants expected to be evaluated:

> They're your supervisor, they're going to be evaluating you. (Betsy, 033)

> So and then there's other things like grades and evaluations and stuff like that you can't change, so I mean, it's, that's necessary to get the degree and go on. (Betty, 165)

Evaluation is seen as formal by supervisees, because how they are evaluated has an impact on their future in the program and their careers:

> Sure they have power. I mean everybody recognizes them as faculty and recognizes them as having some influence as to what kind of therapists we're going to be or whether we're going to proceed through the program. (Bob, 069)

> And I eventually needed her letter of recommendation to get into graduate school. (Katie, 098)

Evaluation is not inherently negative, especially for supervisees who look forward to learning about themselves:

> I think it's good to have evaluations to figure out what your strengths are, your weaknesses are, and maybe some stuff that you don't see. (Betty, 170)

> I think they get to know me the best because we have an annual review where they come in and we talk about our strengths and weaknesses, what we've gained, what we've learned. (Gwen, 304)

Supervisees also participate in sharing perspectives and offering feedback to their supervisors, primarily using two methods: in open meetings and in semester-end written evaluations. In evaluating supervisors, supervisees demonstrate power of their own. Supervisees expressed different opinions about the effectiveness of these two methods and, in turn, on the power they feel they have to evaluate their supervisors.

The first method for perspective sharing occurs during open meetings. One participant described open meetings, elaborating on this method as a means for supervisees to express their thoughts:

> We also have an open meeting that everybody's required to attend at the end of each semester to talk about what kinds of things we see going on in the program that we want changed, they're very open to that, and you know whether it does actually change or not is, you have to wait and see, you know, after that semester, but I think most things they're open to hearing, and if there's not, there's somebody that's open to hearing it, and will do their best to effect that change. (Bob, 280)

Open meetings provide supervisees an opportunity to publicly express their concerns to those with power to make changes. Furthermore, open meetings appear to be valuable for this participant because he perceives supervisors as open to hearing supervisees' concerns. Not all participants agreed about supervisors' openness to hearing supervisees' ideas during open meetings:

> In another respect, they have the open meetings, they want to supposedly hear what you have to say to make you feel like you have more power in the decision making process, but really nothing ever gets done, it just kind of gets shoved underneath the carpet, and no one really wants to hear what you have to say, and no one feels comfortable, there's a very big power differential during that time because no one feels comfortable telling them what they really feel and think about things. (SC, 179)

Formal, written evaluations are another way for supervisees to express their ideas about supervision. Some participants felt as if they had little power in the formal evaluation of their supervisors, whereas other participants were very aware of the effect these evaluations have on their supervisors:

> I think you know students have like this false sense of power, that they can write evaluations for their supervisors at the end of each semester…and so I guess even that one opportunity for power is kind of false because it's pretty risky to put something in, on paper that can be tracked back to you…when sometimes a supervisor only has a couple of supervisees, it would be pretty obvious who says what. (Katie, 101-104)

Two participants described the power they have to affect their supervisors through formal evaluation:

> I think part of that is the amount of power that's allowed, and so I think that you do, because you do have a little bit of evaluative power and if they get negative reports consistently, then there'll be more to be said then, that would take a little while, I'm sure to make some real changes there. (José, 062)

> Just the same way that I don't get to grade them, you know in some way that it does affect their future here, or how it's viewed, or just [being] sensitive to long-term goals…so that's a lot of pressure and you want to be constructive, yet, can you be, you know, some of your real concerns may just go unvoiced and

> unarticulated because you're concerned about repercussions and maybe that's the same reason that I haven't got a lot of feedback, that they fear that too. (Jennifer, 204-205)

Jennifer, in the above quote, speculated that perhaps supervisors withheld feedback from her because they are afraid of repercussions in written evaluations—which suggests that this supervisee has some power. It is clear that evaluations of both supervisors and supervisees have potential repercussions for both parties, meaning that both supervisors and supervisees have some power in the evaluative process. It may be argued, however, that supervisors still have more power in evaluation because of the possibility of immediate repercussions for supervisees; for example, not being allowed to continue in the program. For supervisors, a clear pattern of consistent negative evaluations is likely to be needed before action is taken that affects their careers.

Empowering supervisees. Empowerment involves supervisors using their power to benefit therapists-in-training. This subtheme includes supervisors sharing and encouragement of power use by supervisees. Although empowerment is often an ambiguous concept, it stands out as an extremely beneficial, positive use of power by supervisors. Not all participants agreed on what empowerment meant for them, yet it seemed to involve giving supervisees choices, allowing them to take power and control, and affirming their experiences. It is evident that when supervisors engage in empowerment, they are *not* giving up their own sense of power in the supervisory relationship. This suggests there is not a limited, definite amount of power available between supervisor and supervisee. Supervisees expressed a *lack* of power struggles in supervisory relationships in which they felt empowered. Supervisees became more powerful in different ways, which did not appear to threaten supervisors.

To empower is to lift up, affirm, and allow supervisees to make decisions:

> As far as the respect that I've been given that I do have some wisdom, I do have some knowledge, I do have things to share, and they allow me to do that. I think they give me free reign, I think as far as, you know, ethically, if they see me doing something that I should not be doing, I think they're going to say something, of course. But that's never been an issue, so I think they pretty much give me free reign to do what I feel like is best, and that is very empowering, when they trust you and they don't have to guide you as much as they think that they need to, so I think that's very powerful. (SC, 043-044)

Supervisors demonstrate empowerment by emphasizing and capitalizing on supervisees' knowledge and wisdom, as well as allowing supervisees to make decisions regarding their cases. Affirming supervisees' experience and knowledge is a way of giving power to supervisees:

> It's really neat that they get excited with you with the work, and when they see things happening in the, on the tape or live that once they say oh I see this, I see what you're talking about, I see how you use that, and it reconfirms what you are starting to know…And she kind of confirmed what I was feeling and that I'm coming into my own as a therapist, I'm starting to become what I think I'm going to be, type thing. (Celine, 039, 041)

In the above example, the supervisor used her power to help Celine realize her own sense of power as a therapist. Respecting supervisees' decisions about clients is also seen as empowering:

> And I think they empower you here. They make it very clear that you have the final say of what goes on in your session, so if I say I don't want to go there with my clients right now, there's immediate respect. (Bob, 099-100)

One participant described what empowerment was and what it was not:

> And one of the things that I've experienced here is that the supervision is very empowering, and they challenge you and try to get you to take that power and to run with it and understand it. (John, 024)

> "My goal is to empower you and to give you some, a lot of say in how this whole process works," so that it's, and I don't know if that counts or not, but if it does, I think it would be of a very positive nature, it wasn't like, "I'm in charge." (John, 056)

> I get the feeling it's more of an empowering thing and they bring you up, lift you up to see that this is where we're at. (John, 197)

Empowerment includes having respect for and helping supervisees develop their own power. None of the participants described empowerment in negative terms.

Safety. One commonly discussed theme was safety. Supervisors are seen as the purveyors of safety; they set the tone of safety for supervisees. Safety is associated with appropriate use of power by supervisors in supervision. Because safety plays a large role in how supervisees experience power in the supervisory relationship, it will be discussed in detail. First, responsibility for and the creation of a safe environment for supervisees will be discussed. Second, supervisee vulnerability and its connection with safety will be described. Confidentiality is central for supervisees in expecting safety in supervision. Finally, possible repercussions or consequences for supervisees will be discussed as indicative of a lack of safety in the supervisory relationship.

Creating an atmosphere of safety in supervision—individual as well as group supervision—is of utmost importance for supervisees. Participants found it difficult to articulate what was involved in creating an atmosphere of safety. In general terms, safety is associated with an effective use of power; conversely, a lack of safety is associated with inappropriate uses of power:

> And the people that should have power, should be using their power effectively aren't, and that, that goes back to safety. (Jennifer, 161)

> We knew throughout the time with our supervisor what the boundaries were, and then because we knew, I think we felt safe to do different things, to talk about different things, we knew he was going to keep us safe, and that, that was good, but it was also that he wasn't going to abuse his power. (Betsy, 113)

When supervisors create an atmosphere of safety, they send a message to supervisees that time in supervision is protected:

> But that just affects safety, and when that's not protected and held sacred, sometimes it's not, it makes it really hard to get to another side of your training. (Jennifer, 130)

Fostering a safe atmosphere may mean that supervisees believe they can challenge and confront supervisors without fear of being treated differently at some point in the future:

> I would like for it to be more safe feeling for everybody because I know that a lot of the students don't feel safe when it comes to bringing up things to supervisors…and they also fear that the [supervisors] are going to treat them differently if they bring up things, and it's just, not a lot of people feel safe. (Gwen, 283, 290)

Although supervisors do have responsibility in creating an atmosphere of safety, it appears as if supervisees also have some role in this:

> And then the faculty will say, "well, if the students create safety…" I don't believe that. I think it's both the responsibility of students and faculty, and the faculty sometimes is really good at shirking the responsibility that they have. So I think that the faculty could, or the supervisors could work together to create an environment that's more supportive and safer. (Celine, 382, 415)

The assurance of safety in the supervisory relationship helps supervisees feel as if they can explore themselves both personally and professionally—to make themselves vulnerable so they can learn to be better therapists. Being vulnerable was seen as positive and helpful to their clinical development, provided that safety was established in the supervisory relationship:

> I think, with the supervisors I've felt really safe with, I have felt a personal sense of power, not power over my supervisor, but having some personal power that it was OK to be vulnerable, it was OK to talk about really deep self-of-the-therapist things. (Katie, 054)

> The other one I liked, but it still just, it wasn't quite as secure or a feeling that what we talked about in supervision, you know, the stuff I'm doing with clients, is that what I need to be doing, self-of-the-therapist stuff. (Betty, 062)

> I know that it's safe to ask questions, to push the envelope if I need to, to be vulnerable if I need to. (Betsy, 064)

In each of the examples above, participants' willingness to be vulnerable was dependent on the presence of safety in the supervisory relationship. Supervisees offered examples of what happened to their willingness to self-explore when their sense of safety had been violated in supervision:

> Well if I feel unsafe because of power in the relationship, then I'm not going to ask the questions that maybe I need to ask to help myself become a better therapist. (Katie, 114)

> Well I think that if you're not feeling safe and secure and comfortable with your supervisor, you're obviously not going to be getting the kind of supervision that's going to be of the most benefit to your client, because you may not feel like you can take risks that you need to take, or be upfront, or be vulnerable or be frustrated and angry at this person who keeps doing these dumb behaviors that you just want them to stop. (Betsy, 160)

> And I think that, in those ways it can be, that can be harmful that way, depending on if it's not a safe relationship, power can be very negative, it can be horrible, it can just be something to get through, something to be endured, and you hope that it's not like that, but it's out there, it happens. (José, 204)

Safe supervisory relationships are those in which supervisee confidentiality is maintained. In exposing oneself and being vulnerable, supervisees trust their supervisors to ensure that personal information will remain within the boundaries of the supervisory relationship:

> Yes I, well, the power in, OK, the fact that there's confidentiality, it creates a safe haven, when I have, with power being knowledge, it creates a safe haven in that I know that I can come to my supervisor to get information to where I can help my clients more. (Gwen, 192)

> I guess it relates to power in that, like secrecy and who's safe to tell things to, and what you can expose even, like self-of-therapist, or concerns about the program or about your clinical training. I feel like there's a real issue of power when, when you're trying to decide who you can tell, who you can talk to, and who's safe, you know, and not being able to tell people that you feel like should know, it's not safe to do so, the way that they use that power, that's hard, I think. (Jennifer, 056-057)

Keeping personal information within the confines of the supervisory relationship is expected in a safe supervisory relationship. Supervisors have the power to maintain supervisee confidentiality.

Confidential information can be used in different ways by supervisors, which can create supervisees' fear of future repercussions. Two supervisees shared their fears after making themselves vulnerable in supervision:

> Feeling like you can't get what you need out of that time because it's not safe to disclose things because you know that people use things against people, whether it's personal stuff or whether it's professional concerns or whatever. (Jennifer, 128)

> I guess from my experience, I've had some of these pieces, some of the self-of-the-therapist used almost against me in other situations… (José, 082)

It is important to note that many supervisees expressed a general fear of repercussions, without having knowledge of whether personal information was actually used against them at any time. It may be difficult for them to know whether supervisors have shared information with others:

> …because I can't think of any direct consequences I've had. Although things I may not know about, things that may get said about me in faculty meetings, or things that get said about me to other students, perhaps there are consequences I just don't know about. (Katie, 049-050)

Although most fears or repercussions are unrealized or unknown, one participant did share an experience of professional consequences after making oneself vulnerable in supervision. This was the exception in the study, yet repercussions can and do occur for students after sharing about themselves in supervision.

Collaboration. Being open, flexible, treating supervisees as equals, and enhancing supervisees' styles are hallmarks of collaboration in the supervisory relationship. Collaboration does not mean supervisors give up their power; rather, supervisees are still

aware of and respect the power differential between themselves and their supervisors. Collaboration and empowerment of supervisees overlap to a great extent. Collaboration focuses on supervisors' actions and treatment of supervisees, whereas with empowerment, supervisors help supervisees recognize their own power. In collaborative relationships, supervisors treat supervisees as equals, in that they are open to supervisees' input and work to enhance supervisees' current style of practicing therapy.

Soliciting and valuing supervisees' input is necessary in collaborative supervision.

> If I have questions or dilemmas, to be able to feel like I can go and talk to them about that…probably the best thing that I have noticed about supervision is when it's a collaborative kind of relationship. (Betsy, 021)

> The main thing I probably dislike is if it's not a collaborative process for me, if it's more of, "OK, here you go, here's your sheet of paper, this is what I want you to do, and this is what we're going to do for the whole semester," that I would not like at all. (SC, 016)

In a collaborative relationship, supervisors treat supervisees as equals; yet power is still present:

> You know I feel as kind of the, the student teacher type thing, it's more of a professional relationship of collaboration and being on a, closer to equal power with them. (Celine, 027)

> Obviously in just the standpoint of, you know, you're the student, they're the professor, and then there's an obvious differential there that, even if they are very collaborative, the final word in a sense will still go and defer to that professor. (José, 040)

Supervisors and supervisees are open to hearing each other's experiences and ideas:

> And if you say, "well I don't like that idea," or, "I don't think that would work," they're not, you know, "I'm in charge here," kind of…it's not like that at all, so I don't feel like I have power but I feel like it's just a more equal standard. (John, 051)

> But again I've had terrific relationships with these supervisors, and most of them treat me as an equal, and it's just somebody behind the mirror that wants to help

> me out with problem-solving in the session and what I'm doing, so it hasn't been a huge power differential, if any. (Bob, 058)

Collaboration involves working together to expand each other's ideas about how to approach therapy:

> I would rather a faculty member be, I mean I think with me, I just understand the difference that, in most of the faculty members here I think are open to you challenging them or just, not arguing their ideas but expanding on maybe their original ideas and things like that, but it doesn't make me feel really anxious. (John, 044)

> And I see my supervisors that I've had good experiences with, which has been most of my experiences, that they're very knowledgeable and then they will, like I said try and enhance what I'm already doing, and say, "well have you thought about this." And but they make sure it fits with my style and that's wonderful, and I see that as very powerful. (Gwen, 034-035)

Power is still present in collaborative supervisory relationships; participants reported maintaining respect for supervisors' role. Collaborative relationships are highly valued and seen as positive supervisory experiences by participants.

Favoritism. Favoritism is present when a supervisor demonstrates having a special bond with a particular supervisee; one person appears to get special treatment. Supervisees are afraid that, in comparison with supervisors' favorites, they will experience different or negative treatment. Nearly all participants identified favoritism as being present in supervision.

> And there's been a couple of occasions in practicum group where the supervisor may have had a better bond with a couple people and were, had a favoritism type thing, but when discussions would happen, sometimes. (Celine, 054)

> I think if he or she is seen as the favorite, kind of like that, this is my favorite little supervisee, pat pat pat on the head type thing, and we know who those people are. (SC, 195)

In the two examples above, favoritism is described as being present, yet perhaps not having negative or positive effects on other supervisees. Most often, however, favoritism does negatively impact supervisees (who are not the identified favorite).

> I haven't touched on this but it seems like supervisors, they don't seem, they may not seem to like you or they seem to have their favorites among students, so that might be a factor if you have to have supervision with them too, you might be viewed badly. (Natalie, 153)

When another supervisee is seen as the favorite, some supervisees begin to question how supervisors view them.

> I think probably the other characteristic that I think influences power in relationships is when or if supervisors have favorites, I think that then gives, it not only is just in that relationship the power gets a little weird, but other people around start noticing that there's some different, oh so-and-so has a special relationship, there's some power to that. I think that makes it pretty awkward… (Betsy, 197)

Supervisors demonstrate power in selecting favorites, as this has an impact on how others feel they are viewed in the supervisory relationship. Sometimes the effect of favoritism is more apparent, as when a particular student is selected to receive a scholarship:

> I just think a lot of times they make a lot of decisions that affect everybody, and either it's as simple as giving someone a scholarship, I mean, that's a good thing, I'm glad they do it, but other people may say, "hey, why is it that person, why not other people, why is it that this one person got that scholarship and no one else has opened up the chance to get it," or that type of thing… (Celine, 422)

Participants felt uncomfortable with favoritism. Although no participants self-identified as a favorite of any supervisors, they indicated that supervisees as favorites have their own power. The following quote refers to the favoritism one student received because of his/her race:

> Because I can see in other people, other students, that ethnicity and, I don't really like to use the term "race," but as a different ethnic background has a lot of pull here because there's fewer students and they tend to…I don't even like to use the term minority background, but they have more pull…they have a lot of power

> because maybe they're scared to, I don't know, there's preferential treatment, or they're scared that the person's going to perceive something differently. (Gwen, 222, 236)

Imposition of style/orientation. Supervisees are in school to learn. Participants appreciate when supervisors guide them in the therapeutic process, allowing them to come to their own conclusions about therapy. A theme regarding a negative use of power emerged: supervisors' imposition of their own style or theoretical orientation/perspective on supervisees. This imposition appears to be in contrast to the subthemes of *perspectives and assessment* and *collaboration* discussed earlier. Imposition of style/orientation means supervisees do not have a choice in implementing a certain technique with a client.

> I would say if it hinders at all, it would be feeling like you have to go a specific direction in order for the supervisor to think positive of you, and I, that's very rare. (Bob, 184)

> Well I think they try sometimes, in both individual and with co-therapy type things, to tell you what interventions you need to go in and do next and that kind of thing. But there's been a couple of times where I or a co-therapist have felt like if we don't do this, they're going to slam us or something, so we'll try it, but it's not something we want to do. (Celine, 144)

The fear of negative implications is enough for supervisees to follow their supervisors' directives, although Bob mentioned that such directives by supervisors are rare.

The imposition of supervisors' styles and theoretical orientations onto supervisees can be contrasted with collaborative relationships in supervision:

> I've definitely had a supervisor say no no no no no, that's not what we need to be doing here, here's how I think a better way to think about this is, and again, it it's more of a collaborative kind of role—"hey, wait a minute, let's think about this." For me though using the "I can't believe you just did that," or telling you, "this is the only way you must look at it," those types of things are difficult for somebody like me to work with, and so I think that they use their power to help you, to educate you, rather than to orchestrate what you're doing. (Betsy, 055, 057)

When supervisors impose their ideas and interventions on supervisees rather than offering choices, they appear to be exerting power in the supervisory relationship. Particularly with novice supervisees, imposition of a supervisor's ideas may lead a supervisee to question her developing competencies:

> And then when someone tries to impose theirs on you, it's, you know, doesn't feel good and makes, made me doubt, you know, maybe what I'm doing isn't effective, and it just was not a good experience. (Gwen, 076)

Call-ins. Call-ins can also be seen as an imposition of a supervisor's voice onto a supervisee. The use of phones by a supervisor to call-in to a session is seen as a use of power. Most participants described call-ins as unnecessarily interrupting a therapy session unless an ethical violation has occurred.

> The call-in, you know, I'm OK with people calling in, I'm OK with people knocking on the door and walking in, if it is like an ethical issue that I have overstepped my bounds or something, which, I feel like I'm very ethical, so that's never going to be an issue for me. (SC, 084)

Supervisees are likely to be accepting of call-ins when they are seen as appropriate. At times, supervisees have made an explicit request for the supervisor *not* to call in, which was ignored:

> There was one instance I was doing co-therapy, and this person that was supervising me but not my co-therapist, and the co-therapist said you know, I really don't want someone calling in, and so we talked beforehand, said please don't call in, if you, we'll do a break, we'll talk after session, but she's not comfortable with that right now, and they called in anyway, and it wasn't an emergency, it was something really light, and it, it really kind of upset that, the rhythm of what was going on. (Celine, 095)

Other participants had different views of supervisors' power with call-ins. Below is a quote from a supervisee who saw himself as an active mediator of the power the supervisor has with call-ins:

> Well the supervisors do have the power to call-in on a session, and I think that the therapist in that situation can manipulate some of the power that the supervisor is displaying by calling in. They have the power to interrupt your session, that's power. And how I handle that with my clients is a big deal. If I just get a deer-in-the-headlights look on my face, I think, "oh no, I'm in trouble, I'm doing something wrong," when I go to pick up the phone, that's going to impact my clients a lot. However if I treat it with a smile on my face and say just a second and go and answer the phone and hang it up and put that into whatever is going on in the session, then that power displayed by the supervisor impacts differently. (Bob, 163-164)

Bob felt he was in control of how his clients interpreted his supervisors' call-in. His sense of control in this situation does not negate his supervisor's power, yet Bob saw himself as being able to modify how his supervisor's power was displayed to the clients.

Expectations of supervisees. Supervisors, by virtue of their role, have expectations of supervisees. These expectations instill a sense of responsibility in participants; supervisees seek to please their supervisors and, in turn, please themselves.

> I find myself more anxious about what their response is and how they, you know, wanting to please more and to be better in that role as a therapist. (John, 175)

Most supervisees expressed a desire to please their supervisors; many used this desire to please as motivation:

> …and this is something that I'm seeing with my current supervisor, is there something that I know that I need to do, I need to get done, because I tend to be a little bit of a procrastinator on things, and so I will tell her, this needs to get done, and she'll be like, "well, I look forward to hearing from you that you did it next time," or something, and so I use it as motivation. And when I see her, I know that she has expectations of me, I see that as powerful just the way that she holds herself, and knowing that she expects you to be responsible. (Gwen, 042-043)

Expecting supervisees to be responsible is seen as a positive use of power. Participants may not enjoy the process of being held responsible, but they enjoy the end result:

> I hate doing paperwork, but the forms actually make me think harder about things, and make me come in more prepared, and help him to know more about what's going on, and makes me responsible for things. (Betsy, 238)

Supervisors' misuse of power. Many uses of power described to this point have been positive. Negative power uses, for example when supervisees have felt that they needed to follow a supervisor's theoretical orientation, were uncomfortable for supervisees but were not viewed as misuses of power. *Supervisors' misuse of power* was determined to be its own subtheme theme because it did not neatly fit within other themes or subthemes. First, one may be able to conceptualize power uses as on a continuum. Power to maintain confidentiality, for example, can be appropriately used or can be misused. The continuum concept cannot be applied to other subthemes, such as supervisors' meeting their own needs. Second, features of this subtheme could easily fit under many other subthemes. Respect for supervisees' beliefs and values could be a part of *empowerment*, *collaboration*, or *imposition of style/orientation*. Therefore, this category consists of three features: violation of confidentiality, supervisors meeting their own needs, and failure to respect supervisees' beliefs or values.

Confidentiality is extremely important to supervisees. Violation of confidentiality can take different forms, including taking information about a supervisee out of context by failing to be respectful of different roles supervisors occupy (of supervisor, professor, for example) by sharing personal information with other supervisors, who in turn inappropriately share information with others.

> They're not the best supervisor to have, they weren't, they revealed some things that were confidential about me, and getting that word out… (Celine, 102)
> I've also had supervisors who, you know, [you have] in supervision, then they're your professor, and you may say something in class that is then brought up in supervision, you know, maybe taken out of context, and not respectful that they're two different roles. (Betsy, 048)

Supervisors may have valid reasons to share personal information about supervisees with others; however, supervisees expect their confidentiality to be maintained. When

confidentiality is violated, one assumes the information inappropriately shared is true. One participant described her concern about false information being shared with others:

> I mean, I guess, you know other possible things are like if you're in a class with them that semester, you know, letters of recommendation, grading, being concerned about untrue things being said about you in faculty meetings or to other people, or even true things that just are nobody else's business. (Katie, 191)

Supervisees expect some information to be shared with others, particularly other supervisors, although supervisees expect that some very personal information will remain within the confines of the supervisory relationship.

Another misuse of supervisor power is when supervisors meet their own needs, to the detriment of supervisees. It is important to distinguish between situations when supervisors inappropriately versus appropriately meet their own needs. One participant described the appropriateness of his supervisor meeting his/her own needs:

> No, the only thing I can think of, and I don't believe this would even qualify, is just having the supervisor encourage me to schedule an appointment when they are going to be here. But I don't see that as an abuse of power, as much as this will be very convenient for all involved, you know, because I am your supervisor, I feel like I can watch these. (John, 060-061)

In this example, the supervisor is meeting his/her own and the supervisee's needs. The supervisor's explanation seemed to be reasonable, respectful, and considerate of the supervisee's needs. In contrast, supervisors' abuse of power in meeting their own needs occurs when they needlessly meet their own needs to the supervisees' detriment. At times, supervisors exert power because of their feelings of insecurity:

> I've had an experience with a supervisor, haven't really had it as an individual supervisor, that a lot of students will challenge her and she exerts power in that she'll let you know that her decision is what goes, and that, you know, kind of creates a barrier around her using her status, I guess, out of insecurity because a lot of students challenge her, so she has to exert power to maintain position, and I feel unsafe around that supervisor. (Gwen, 060)

The supervisor in this example appeared to have a need to exert her power to maintain position. Other examples of supervisors meeting their own needs involved signing out therapy rooms:

> Another example that just chapped my butt at that point was a particular supervisor usually has a particular room signed out, I think for practicum or whatever, and I had a client, and we ran a little bit late, and that room was not signed out, that supervisor had the audacity to call into my room and to let me know that not only did I go over, which is not a choice that she made, it's a choice that I made to go over, whether it was negative or positive, it was a choice that I made, and to let me know that she needed that room for practicum when there were probably four or five other rooms that she could have used. (SC, 183)

The supervisor may have had a right to be upset in this situation, yet from the supervisee's perspective the supervisor could have used other rooms but decided instead to exert her power. A final example of supervisors meeting their own needs is the failure to show up for scheduled supervision sessions:

> Other than, you know, a supervisor not showing up for appointments multiple times, not taking responsibility for it or not apologizing for it, and me feeling powerless to do anything about it. (Katie, 082)

Another misuse of power involves supervisors who fail to respect supervisees' beliefs or values. Related to this is a failure to treat supervisees with respect especially concerning supervisees' values and beliefs:

> In general, other times is where you felt like someone was, didn't respect you and didn't respect some of your beliefs, and obviously, you know, I think we have such an emphasis on issues of the clients that, oftentimes, I guess in my experience, at times that the supervisor has disregarded the values and the, some of the ethics of the therapist that, and you don't have access to that because of the situation as it's set up, how it's structured and, you know, the political nature of it. (José, 021)

This quote represents a participant's abstract thoughts about a failure to respect supervisees' beliefs. Other participants gave more concrete examples of supervisees' lack of respect for them:

> …the supervisor making assumptions about my therapy style, assuming that I would be the same with all clients. And not being sensitive to my concerns about the client, telling me that I'm passive when I was really, I was scared. (Gwen, 127-128)

> And that person has not respected that [supervisee's request to refrain from calling-in], and has called in with just comments, and it's, that's difficult because that's not the way I work. I think maybe if I'd have been used to it all along, I might feel differently about it, but it wasn't, hasn't felt to me very respectful, because I will take a break and go back and talk, that didn't feel very respectful, it felt like a power trip to me. (Betsy, 121)

Supervisees need to feel as if they and their concerns are respected. Misuses of power occur when supervisees perceive supervisors as unjustified in their decision to challenge or confront supervisees.

Supervisees' withholding information. Supervisees have power in the supervisory relationship. Previous themes have focused on supervisors' power; however, this theme focuses on the different ways in which supervisees have power. First, there will be a general discussion of power as it relates to supervisees. Then, four main subthemes pertaining to supervisee power will be described: withholding information, supervisee-peer power, supervisees as consumers, and supervisees' abuse of power.

Supervisees have less power than their supervisors, especially if power is considered to be associated with knowledge and experience. Supervisors may have more knowledge and experience in terms of understanding of marriage and family therapy, yet supervisees are experts on themselves and their experiences. This gives them a sense of power that cannot be diminished by supervisors:

> As far as the knowledge issue of understanding something, I've always been really good at kind of laying it out and saying well this is what I know about this, and not kind of holding it over them, and be like well I know all about that subject… (Celine, 242)

> Sometimes, I mean because they're my cases and I know I have more inside knowledge than my supervisor does, so maybe in that way I have a little bit more power. (Natalie, 039)

Supervisees feel that they have power by being able to make choices within the supervisory relationship, which may or may not meet with their supervisors' approval. Choices include asking for a new supervisor and choosing which interventions to use with clients or how to conceptualize a case. Participants were aware they were in charge of their sessions and could choose the direction of therapy for their clients:

> You can choose advisor-wise, usually you're set up with your very first supervisor, you go through a semester with that person, and then you can choose if you want to change, if you feel like things aren't working out, but I'm sure that if you're getting in a couple of sessions and you're like, "this isn't working out personality-wise or power-wise." However, I know that there's a method for getting that changed, and to get with someone who is more suitable for your characteristics. (Bob, 286-287)

> Well I have an example of when I exerted power within the supervisory relationship, when I had the student supervisor that things were not going well, and I requested a new supervisor. (Gwen, 084)

> And when you go into the room doing the therapy, you're the one that's making the decision to implement something, not them, so that's the power you have in your sessions. (Celine, 109)

Most supervisees reported feeling as if they had power in supervision.

> But I think throughout the other experiences that I've had in supervision, I think I've had some sort of power in one form or fashion. (SC, 038)

Supervisee power may not be viewed as positive by supervisors:

> I think some of them [supervisors] do realize that we have power. I think others wish that you didn't. (Betsy, 078-079)

Knowledge and information are power; supervisees decided what personal or professional information to share with supervisors. Some participants described

withholding information as a means to protect themselves; others wondered if it was acceptable to ever withhold information from their supervisors:

> I mean I pretty much, you know I decide what I'm going to share with them, and what I don't. I pretty much structure our time usually in what I want to talk about, and the cases that I want to discuss and stuff, so in that way, it's directly by me. So I've got some power. (Jennifer, 078-079, 081)

> Can I be honest and forthright, or should I give the answer that's going to make them happy, should I do exactly what they say… (Betsy, 066)

Withholding information from supervisors can include personal or case/client-related information. The example below is from a supervisee who withholds case-related information, and the second example is withholding personal information:

> If the topics are really up to me, that I can really steer it one way or another, I could very easily steer it away from a client that I didn't want to talk about or a situation…well I don't want to say it like I hide things all the time, or anything like that (José, 061, 066)

> I don't have to tell them everything, I don't have to bare my soul, and if you're not safe to do that, I'm not doing it, and that's a power decision I've used. (Celine, 238)

Just as supervisors have the ability to use or refrain from using information, supervisees also have the ability to choose which information to use. The next subtheme involves supervisee group power, in which information is not withheld but shared with peers.

Supervisee-peer power. Supervisee-peer power refers to the power supervisees have to be influential when sharing information with their fellow supervisees. Supervisees can influence their peers' thinking about supervisors and gain power from other supervisees when they "stand together" on issues.

> And so that's been kind of the neat thing, to be able to educate them [supervisors] on things as well as having the power of peer relationships with other supervisees… (Celine, 100)

The power of a group of supervisees is much greater than the power of just one:

> I mean as a group, we might have more power than our supervisors and we influence what happens by going to the director of the program or whatever if we're not satisfied with what's going on. (Natalie, 140)

Similarly, supervisees can get together as a group to present a united voice regarding a concern they have about the program:

> The hours issue…we all saw a problem there and decided to do something about it, and that impacts how powerful we are. We stand together on issues, and we talk about issues together as a group. (Bob, 259-260)

Conversely, issues that divide supervisees may lead to supervisors having to use their power:

> When students don't come together and call each other on things that they're not doing right, that creates problems for the faculty and [they] may have to exert more power on the students. (Gwen, 257)

Participants feel the power of the group when they use one united voice to identify concerns to their supervisors. This suggests that groups, in some ways, may be more powerful than individuals in effecting change in the program.

Another aspect of supervisee-peer power is the ability of supervisees to share knowledge about particular supervisors with other supervisees.

> …when they do supervision, what comes through me is going to go out to other students, I'm going to let people know about what vibe I get. So there is power there (Celine, 101, 103)

> Well we talk about different supervisors, what their styles are, what we like about them, what we don't like. So I guess in a way that kind of gives the students power because then they kind of have some information about different faculty. (Betty, 145-146)

It is unclear in the above quotes whether information shared is favorable or unfavorable to the supervisor. The ability to warn peers is also powerful for supervisees:

> I think you can change the processes that, you can change the training program by going to [others], word-of-mouth. (Natalie, 166)

> You could undermine them, based on they're a crappy supervisor, or they're incompetent or they're not respectful…experiences come up, but talking with other people that are seeking degrees, and steer them away from the possibilities at times, or just to say let me inform you of my experience and then you can make your decision. (José, 104-105)

Supervisees use their power to inform others of their experiences and make changes in the program or dissuade a prospective student from attending the program. Based on what a supervisee has heard from peers, she/he may decide how much power to give to a supervisor:

> But I do know of a therapist who hasn't had good experiences with supervision, that affects how I, what kind of power I'm going to give that supervisor. (Bob, 267)

Supervisees as consumers. Supervisees are consumers of a service, which gives them power in the supervisory relationship; however, being consumers of supervision services does not guarantee that supervisees feel a sense of power. One supervisee, who saw herself as a consumer and therefore powerful in the supervisory relationship, explained her power:

> Yes I do because the supervisor is in essence working for me in that time, that's the way I look at it, as that they're in there to help me, I am the consumer, so that's how I look at that the supervisee has power. (Gwen, 063)

Another participant saw herself as a consumer, yet she distinguishes between being a student-consumer, and being a consumer in the "real world":

> I think as a student it's forgotten that we're also consumers, even though they're training us. We pay a lot of money and make a lot of sacrifices to be students. But yet it's almost like my dollar carries more weight in the real world when I'm paying someone weekly, instead of paying a big chunk of money when I pay my tuition towards my supervision credits, so it seems almost like it's forgotten that we're consumers, and that since we're paying for this service, if we're unhappy with it, then there should be some action, or we should be able to select our own supervisors since we're paying for the service. (Katie, 185)

Supervisees are consumers, yet how much power they feel because they are consumers seems to depend on the supervisee. Participants described paying for a service, but their sense of power does not directly come from the consumer role.

Supervisees' misuse of power. Supervisors can misuse their power; it is also possible for supervisees to misuse their power. Most supervisees reported being unaware of misusing their power at any time. Those who described abuses of power often discussed possible misuses. Very few incidents of supervisees' abuse of power were reported. Nearly all abuses of power concerned a violation of supervisors' confidentiality, and/or failing to address concerns directly with supervisors.

> An issue came up and I learned something about one of my supervisors that I didn't know was secret at the time I learned it, and so I revealed it to somebody else…and at the time I revealed that, I learned that it was not common knowledge, and so that may be an abuse of, just the knowledge maybe, I wasn't trying to be malicious or anything like that. (Jennifer, 104)

This incident, as construed by the participant, was an abuse of power. Another example illustrates a possibility of an abuse of power by a supervisee:

> But I guess those could be used, as far as you go out and you talk about, I mean if you're breaking a little of the confidentiality, you can go out and hurt them, in the sense of talk about them to other colleagues, and explore things and say things. (José, 103)

The other hypothetical abuse of supervisees' power would be one in which supervisees failed to follow proper conflict-resolution channels, by talking to a higher-up rather than the supervisor about a problem:

> So I think if I had gone to someone above and gone to the Dean, that would have been a misuse of my power. (Celine, 236)

There may be a fine line between use and misuse of power by supervisees, especially regarding supervisor confidentiality. Supervisees can and do share information about

experiences with their peers, yet it remains unclear at what point sharing information with others crosses the line into a misuse of power.

Chapter Summary

Three main themes were discovered in participants' experiences of power in the supervisory relationship. Two themes, *structure* and *individual characteristics* shaped the third theme of *power use*. Given the variety of factors that influence *power use,* participants' experiences in supervision were overwhelmingly positive. They demonstrated knowledge of structural factors, such as *academic setting*, the process of *learning, physical structure, program issues, supervisor relationships, dual relationships, supervision arrangements,* and *supervisor role,* which impact power in the supervisory relationship. These structural factors, in combination with *individual characteristics,* such as supervisors' *experience and age, gender*, and *personality*, and supervisees' *social characteristics, clinical development and age, gender*, and *personality* impacted power. Finally, supervisors could use their power in a variety of ways, including: *power discussion, perspectives and assessment, empowering supervisees, safety, collaboration, favoritism, imposition of style/orientation, call-ins, expectations of supervisees,* and *supervisors' misuse of power*. Similarly, supervisees also had power in the supervisory relationship, such as: *supervisees' withholding information, supervisee-peer power, supervisees as consumers*, and *supervisees' misuse of power*. The developed theory of power in the clinical supervisory relationship has implications for researchers and clinicians alike, which will be discussed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

The results of this study appear to indicate that, according to supervisees, power is present in the supervisory relationship; moreover, both supervisors and supervisees have power. There are three main components to supervision: structure, characteristics of the individuals involved, and ways in which power is used. The first two constitute the contexts for the third. Within each theme are a variety of subthemes, which constitute components of the major themes. The first section of this chapter will describe how participants' views, as represented by these themes and subthemes, fit with the three theories of power. Second, a theory of power in supervision that is grounded in the participants' views will be presented. Third, implications for future research and clinical work will be described. Fourth, the limitations of the study will be delineated.

Understanding the Results within the Framework of Three Theories of Power

In Chapter 2, exchange theory, feminist theory, and French and Raven's theory of social power were presented as the guides the researcher used through her study of power in the clinical supervisory relationship. Each of these theories has been relevant in providing conceptual understandings of power. In this section, the results of the current study will be compared and contrasted to common tenets in each of these theories.

Exchange theory. According to Willer et al. (1997), a definition of power within exchange theory is, "structurally determined potential for obtaining payoffs in relations where interests are opposed" (p. 230). The first theme, *structure*, appears to be consistent

with this idea. Supervisees in this study are working towards the goals or payoffs within the context of an academic institution. These include graduation, clinical membership, licensure, or other career advancement. These students' supervisors also may be attempting to meet structurally defined goals in the supervisory relationship but this is not shown by the data because it was neither a topic in the interviews nor was it elaborated on by participants. For example, supervisors may be working toward tenure, which would be reflected by the subtheme *supervisor relationships* because tenure appears to affect the amount of power supervisees perceive faculty members have. Interviews with supervisors may lend more support for this idea.

Supervisors and supervisees do not always have opposing interests. Evidence for this can be found in power use subthemes of *empowerment* and *collaboration*. Supervisors who use their power to empower supervisees seem to be working in the best interests of supervisees who are seeking to learn, thereby increasing supervisees' knowledge and power. Furthermore, the concept *collaboration* seems to indicate that supervisors' and supervisees' interests are so similar as to nearly and temporarily suspend any power differential between them.

Supervision does hold the possibility of obtaining payoffs in relations where interests are opposed. Supervisees are likely to comply when supervisors impose their style/orientation onto them with the goal of obtaining a payoff, for example, a letter of recommendation or a good grade in practicum. In short, payoffs, or rewards, are possible in the presence of opposing interests.

The amount of power supervisors (and supervisees) appears to be related to academic structure in other ways. For example, although tenured faculty have greater job

security and are, therefore, able to exercise greater power, power does not seem to be completely determined by structure. Supervisors may also have power associated with individual characteristics such as personality and experience. Furthermore, some power held by supervisors appears to be determined by how much of it supervisees will allow them to have.

Conflict may arise between supervisors and supervisees when supervisees assert their power; that is, when power is *not* structurally determined. In summary, the definition of power from an exchange perspective provided by Willer et al. (1997) is consistent with some of the results of this study, yet that definition appears inadequate because it does not account for supervisees' power, or the possibility of exchange relationships where interests are *not* opposed.

Blau's (1964) definition of power suggests that it is, "the ability of persons or groups to impose their will on others despite resistance through deterrence, either in the form of withholding regularly supplied rewards or in the form of punishment." From this study it is clear that the supervisor is likely to have the ability to impose his/her will onto supervisees despite resistance. For example, when supervisors impose their style/orientation on supervisees, those supervisees may feel imposed upon and may comply out of fear of possible repercussions. In this manner, Blau's definition accurately reflects supervisees' experiences. However power may be much more than the ability to impose one's will on others. In fact, not all uses of power were negative for supervisees. Beneficial uses of power included empowerment, creation of collaborative relationships, and having expectations of supervisees.

Blau's definition of power also appears to be consistent with supervisees' ability to impose their will onto supervisors despite resistance. For instance, supervisees can overcome supervisors' resistance when they collectively act to make changes in the program. Supervisees can withhold regularly supplied "rewards" by withholding information about a case or, in a more extreme case, by deciding to select other programs to attend. Moreover, supervisees can "punish" supervisors with negative evaluations that may go on their permanent record and negatively impact their ability to become tenured. Thus, both relationship participants appear to have the ability to impose their will on each other, and power can also be positively used to exert influence in the relationship.

Feminist theories. Feminist postmodern conceptualizations of power are abstract and undefined, as power is ever-shifting depending on the relationship participants and the social context in which the relationship is situated. Feminists suggest power is defined by the participants rather than an objective, static phenomenon. Feminists do agree that power is present in all relationships; this was the researcher's assumption in asking participants questions about power in the supervisory relationship. Most participants reported that power was always present in the supervisory relationship, which supports feminists' assertions. For example, one expressed feeling equal with supervisors outside the context of the supervisory relationship, but was aware of the power in supervision sessions. Thus, power is seen as constantly shifting in relationships between any given supervisee and supervisor.

Postmodern feminists view power as the ability to shape what eventually becomes knowledge. Supervisors have that power because they are viewed as knowledgeable by supervisees. Also, supervisees give supervisors that power, particularly in an academic

setting, because they attend graduate school to learn about therapy. Supervisors shape supervisees' knowledge and behaviors through ongoing feedback and formal evaluations. Their ability to select and privilege some topics over others may be, in itself, power.

If knowledge is power, then it is clear that supervisees may have power by virtue of what they know about cases and clients. Supervisors' knowledge of supervisees depends in large part on what supervisees personally share about themselves, as well as what they share about cases. Furthermore, supervisees are more knowledgeable in some topic areas than supervisors. For example, a supervisee may have received extensive training in how to treat domestic violence, above the training the supervisor has had on that topic. In these ways, supervisees have knowledge and power in relation to their supervisors.

Postmodern feminists also conceptualize positive uses of power in relationships. For example, supervisors can use their power to empower supervisees to define their own reality and understanding of a therapeutic process. Another beneficial use of power can be found in supervisors' expectations of supervisees; these expectations often are motivation for supervisees to want to please their supervisors and, in turn, inspire or motivate supervisees to develop and grow.

French and Raven's theory of social power. Several aspects of French and Raven's (1959) theory of social power can be found in participants' accounts of their experiences in the supervisory relationship in this study. Supervisors have the ability to reward supervisees for preferred behavior. Rewards come in the form of good grades, positive reference letters and recommendations, and positive feedback for supervisees. Good "fit" between personalities and demonstration of competency in clinical skills bring

other rewards, such as collaboration and empowerment in supervision. Favoritism may be a type of "reward" given to select supervisees who submit to supervisors' ideal of a "good" supervisee.

Participants also described examples of coercive power, which appears to be related to the threat of punishment or the need to follow or conform to the influence attempts of the more powerful supervisor. Some supervisees described a fear of reprisal for failing to follow their supervisors' directives, even though such fears may be unfounded. The threat itself may be enough for supervisees to follow supervisors' influences. Coercive power was present in supervisees' account of a lack of safety in the supervisory relationship. Lack of safety was characterized by fear of supervisors' using information against them. Participants described occasional use of coercive power by supervisors.

Supervisors have expert power, based on the perception that they are more knowledgeable or skillful than supervisees. Students enter training programs with the expectation they will learn about therapy; they necessarily need to learn from the teachers/supervisors in the program. The supervisor role provides for having more knowledge, experience, and skill than supervisees have, particularly when they enter a training program. Supervisors also have more knowledge in areas other than therapy; supervisors take on dual roles as teachers, committee members, and assistantship coordinators. Thus, evidence for French and Raven's expert power was clearly demonstrated in this study.

Support was found for the existence of legitimate power or the internalized valuation of the more powerful individual according to the role occupied. Supervisors

occupy many legitimizing roles, such as professor/teacher and committee member, which may further add to their legitimate power. Supervisors use these roles to foster positive expectations of supervisees, who in turn internalize these expectations for themselves.

Minimal support was found for referent power or the ability for the less powerful to identify with the more powerful. Some participants described their wish to emulate their supervisors with whom they have positive experiences. Other participants, female supervisees in particular, identified with their female supervisors regarding the similar life experiences they had.

French and Raven's theory of social power seems to primarily focus on the different forms of power held by the more powerful member of a dyad. Since supervisees in this study clearly were aware that their own power existed along with that held by supervisees, French and Raven's theory falls short in considering how those with less power nevertheless still do have it. Supervisees can be powerful by virtue of their personality characteristics; supervisees can use their power as a collective to have a voice in dealing with program issues. A welcome addition to French and Raven's theory would be to add categories of power for those with less power.

A Grounded Theory of Power in Supervision

As outlined in Chapter 4, many themes and subthemes emerged from the data. Considered together, these create a theory of power in the clinical supervisory relationship. There are three main themes: *structure*, *individual characteristics,* and *power use*. Within each theme are many subthemes. Grounded theory involves understanding relationships between themes discovered in the data. To facilitate understanding of the theory, relationships between the three major themes will be

discussed, as will relationships between subthemes within each major theme. Second, relationships between subthemes across major themes will be articulated.

Relationships among and within the three major themes. At this point, the relationship between the three major themes should be clear. *Structure* and *individual characteristics* of the supervisors and supervisees appear to create the context in which *power use* occurs. *Structure* refers to the relatively uncontrollable, pre-existing elements that shape what power may be available to relationship participants. *Individual characteristics* are those characteristics unique to supervisors and supervisees that contribute to how they—and others—see themselves. *Power use* appears to be an active "use" of power, over which participants have some degree of control. Each of these three themes seems to be important in determining how power is played out in the supervisory relationship.

The first theme to be considered is *structure*. The academic setting provides unique subthemes for *structure*. Since learning is central in an academic setting, it is more likely to be a goal of supervision in academic setting in comparison with other settings. Part of the supervisor's role in an academic setting is to facilitate learning for supervisees. Supervisors bring knowledge and experience to their roles, which helps facilitate the goal of learning and may give them power.

Supervisors serve a number of functions in academic settings. Supervisors have relationships with each other which, for better or for worse, impact how program issues are dealt with. These relationships are likely to hold an element of power in themselves since supervisors can be assistant and associate professors, tenured, and program director. Clearly, within an academic setting, supervisors who hold higher academic ranks hold

greater levels of power. Supervisor relationships also can be related to physical structure; supervisors who are most powerful may have offices in the most advantageous locations.

The number of dual relationships is likely to be high in academic settings. In addition to the supervisory role, supervisors fill many others in relation to students, such as teacher, mentor, committee member, and assistantship advisor. The dual relationships affect the power a supervisor has, especially if there are a number of settings in which supervisees fear reprisals if they are in an unsafe supervisory relationship.

Academic settings are likely to have distinctive physical features. Because of AAMFT guidelines, therapy rooms need to be equipped with one-way mirrors, phones, and video or audio recording equipment. As will be described below, taping and observing sessions can decrease supervisees' sense of power in relation to their supervisors, although this appears to be moderated by supervisee personality.

Program issues are likely to dictate supervision arrangements. Just as programs often face a shortage of space and clients, programs may also be dealing with a large number of students in relation to a small number of faculty. Furthermore, doctoral programs may wish to provide supervision experience for SITs. As a result, students are more likely to be supervised by SITs in doctoral-level training programs. Being supervised by an SIT, as opposed to a faculty member, is likely to lower the supervisor's power especially if they do not give grades in practicum.

There are many relationships between subthemes under *individual characteristics*. Supervisees' experience of power appears to depend in large part on the interaction of personalities in the supervisory relationship. It is important to note that no one type of personality appears to be associated with power. Preferences for supervisor personality

depend on supervisees' personalities. Students expressed general preferences for supervisors with similar personalities as themselves. Differences in personality are likely to present additional hurdles for relationship participants to overcome. For example, quiet supervisees are likely to have to adjust to outgoing, direct supervisors. Similarly, outgoing and direct supervisees may need to ensure they respect the power present in a relationship with an indirect, quiet supervisor who does not emphasize his/her power. In sum, supervisees know what to expect from supervisors with similar personality characteristics as them. On the other hand, power differences might not be apparent to supervisees working with supervisors whose personalities are different from theirs.

The interaction of supervisor experience and age, and supervisee clinical development and age seems to play an important role in supervision. Supervisors who are older and have vast amounts of experience are more likely to have power attributed to them by supervisees, regardless of supervisees' age or level of clinical development. Supervisors who are younger and relatively inexperienced are likely to experience difficulties in supervision, particularly with supervisees who are older and who have more experience and, therefore, be accorded less power.

Gender of supervisor or supervisee may not be a deciding factor in the amount of power individuals have. Instead, male and female supervisors each have power, but they appear to display it in different ways. Because of this, supervisees do not seem to enter supervision with preconceived ideas of how a male or female supervisor will use power. However, misuses of power may be attributed to a supervisor who is over-emphasizing their gender role ("I am male, hear me roar").

Supervisees seem to face some challenges in the supervisory relationship, according to social characteristics, for example, being single. When supervisors do not attend to characteristics supervisees feel are important, supervisees are likely to experience diminished power. Similarly, supervisors may have certain expectations of supervisees depending on their social characteristics. Lack of attention to, or inattention to, social characteristics also appears to leave supervisees feeling like they have less power in the supervisory relationship.

There are many relationships between subthemes under *power use*. When there is imposition of style/orientation, it is unlikely there will be collaboration or shared power. Collaboration seems to involve supervisors treating supervisees as equals. When supervisors impose their theoretical orientation onto supervisees, they appear to be taking an authoritarian stance, which is likely to give them power over supervisees, especially when supervisees are not given much choice in deciding whether to follow through with directives.

On the other hand, supervisees tend to feel empowered when supervision is collaborative. Supervisors seem to be using their power to help "lift up" supervisees to a collegial status by refraining from emphasizing power differences. Supervisees feel as if they have choices and power, akin to that of supervisors when collaborating, which is likely to increase supervisees' sense of empowerment.

Students who feel safe in the supervisory relationship seem to make themselves vulnerable, which in turn tends to allow them to learn more about themselves as well as how best to approach therapy with clients. Feeling safe may give supervisees a sense of power, which means there are few, if any, fears of reprisals from supervisors. In these

situations, students seem to trust their supervisors to keep personal information confidential and to use this information to help supervisees grow in supervision, which increases supervisor power.

In contrast, supervisees may withhold information from supervisors when they feel unsafe in supervision, especially if they feel they need to protect themselves. In these cases, supervisors may already have breached supervisees' confidentiality or supervisees may feel their grade will be affected if they allow themselves to be vulnerable in supervision. Withholding information may serve to increase a supervisee's power by decreasing the likelihood of a power assertion by the supervisor. Supervisors cannot attend to a problem of which they are not made aware.

One way for supervisors to establish safety in supervision may be to have direct and ongoing discussions of power in the supervisory relationship. Students who have such discussions report feeling safer in the relationship, in part because they are likely to know what is expected of them, as well as being aware of how to resolve conflicts should they arise. This tends to increase supervisee power. Students reported more problems in supervision when power was not discussed in any way. Supervisee power may be increased when supervisors address power inherent in supervision contracts, grades, and role differences.

Supervisees often feel empowered when they are formally evaluated because they have a desire to learn, which may be facilitated by a discussion of their strengths and weaknesses. Similarly, students feel disempowered when they are not given enough feedback and are not informed of their weaknesses. Providing consistent and frequent feedback, coupled with formal evaluations, appears to be empowering to supervisees.

Relationships between subthemes across themes. A better understanding of the theory can be afforded when relationships between subthemes across themes are articulated. This section describes several important possible relationships.

Supervisor clinical development and age differences appear to affect supervisees, particularly if supervisees are older. It may be more difficult for a supervisee to ascribe power to a supervisor who is considerably younger and/or more relatively inexperienced. Relationship difficulties are likely to arise when the role of the supervisor/supervisee appears to be inconsistent with one's individual characteristics. For example, because a supervisor is expected to be knowledgeable and experienced, an older supervisee may have difficulty reconciling the supervisor's power by virtue of role with the supervisor's lack of experience. On the other hand, if the supervisee does not have such expectations, the power difference is less likely to exist.

The presence of video cameras and mirrors, as well as call-ins, may give supervisors power and may increase feelings of vulnerability for supervisees. However, participants who feel safe may find it easier to make themselves vulnerable by showing supervisors their work on videotape. Similarly, supervisees in a safe relationship may be likely to welcome live supervision where they are observed from behind the one-way mirror and not feel their power to be diminished.

Supervisees who feel unsafe may have a fear that they will experience repercussions in other relationships they have with supervisors. The more dual relationships supervisors and supervisees are involved in, particularly if supervisees perceive the relationship to be unsafe, the less power they are likely to feel. Conversely, poor relationships between supervisors and supervisees in other settings may be reflected

in power displayed through negative evaluations for supervisees. The number of relationships supervisors and supervisees are in together is likely to be positively related to supervisees' fear of reprisals, when in unsafe relationships, thus the power difference appears to be exacerbated.

Supervisor and supervisee individual characteristics, most notably personality characteristics, seem to moderate nearly all the relationships between power themes and subthemes. For example, supervisees who are confident and outgoing are more likely to experience enough power to challenge supervisors who attempt to impose their style/orientation onto them. Supervisee personality characteristics, however, do not entirely account for how they or their supervisors use power. For example, a supervisee who experiences enough power may state her preference for her supervisor to refrain from calling-in to a session. Despite her request, her supervisor may still choose to call-in, which may decrease her power. An insecure or inexperienced supervisee who feels even less power may refrain from sharing preferences with a supervisor, which, in essence, may give the supervisor even more power to decide what is best for the supervisee.

The present theory of power in the clinical supervisory relationship, developed from supervisees' experiences, appears to be consistent with previous theories, yet it also challenges them. As those theories suggest, supervisors and supervisees can choose to use their power in the supervisory relationship, but within limits defined by context. Further, the person of the supervisor or supervisee appears to be influential in how power is used in the supervisory relationship. Some uses of power are familiar, and consistent with previous theoretical descriptions of power. For example, concepts including imposition of

style/orientation, empowerment, collaboration, and assessments are familiar. Other concepts revealed in this grounded theory are relatively new, including those pertaining to supervisees having power, the role of favoritism, and the influence of supervisees' expectations. This theory examines power use among supervisors and supervisees, within the limits of structure and with consideration to the various individual characteristics both supervisors and supervisees bring to their relationship. The theory has implications for both researchers and clinicians.

Implications for Researchers

Researchers have only recently begun to explore the supervisory relationship. There has been little theoretical literature in this work. French and Raven's (1959) theory has been most commonly used as a foundation for explorations of power, but work examining different aspects of supervision, such as developmental level of the therapist and factors affecting the supervisory relationship, can be examined through a lens of power.

Developmental models in supervision. According to Stoltenberg's (1981) developmental model of supervision, the key issue in development of therapists' skills appears to be a shift in their dependence level on supervisors. This grounded theory lends support to Stoltenberg's model in that power struggles appear more likely to occur if the supervisor fails to consider the supervisee's current developmental level. Furthermore, Nelson's (1997) claim that supervisors should use less power as supervisees become more clinically skilled, to empower supervisees, appears to be supported by this theory of power. Future studies should examine the impact supervisors' levels of experience has on the development of therapists' skills and how the two are related to power. A mismatch

between supervisors and supervisees in developmental level may lead to negative uses of power in supervision.

Factors affecting the supervisory relationship. The most frequently studied variable affecting the supervisory relationship is gender; mixed results have been found regarding the effect of gender on the supervisory relationship. This theory posits that supervisees appreciate supervisors of both genders; men and women as supervisors are valued for the understanding given to supervisees of the same sex as well as the challenges offered to supervisees of a different sex. Granello (1996) suggested that men and women supervisors use different methods of influence that can be considered to be power. Consistent with this notion, this theory suggests that the male and female supervisors demonstrate their power in different, albeit equally effective, ways. In addition to further exploring these variables, it would be an important contribution to study other factors affecting the supervisory relationship, such as supervisor/supervisee race/ethnicity, religious preferences, and sexual orientation. Moreover, this theory suggests that the impact of structural factors on power in supervision needs to be examined, such as the presence and use of video and audio recording equipment, availability of therapy rooms, rank of supervisor, and number and type of dual relationships.

Power in the supervisory relationship. Researchers commonly have focused on negative power uses such as boundary violations, sexual contact/harassment, providing therapy to supervisees, forcing supervisee self-disclosure, overemphasizing supervisee mistakes, psychopathologizing supervisees, verbally attacking supervisees, and forcing adherence to a supervisor's theoretical orientation (Bonosky, 1995; Martinez et al., 1999;

Porter, 1985; Porter & Vasquez, 1997; Sanderson, 1989). This theory suggests that, apart from being forced to adhere to a supervisor's theoretical orientation, they may not occur as often as other studies suggests. Moreover, this theory would not define such occurrences as misuses of power. This theory defines misuses of power, in part, as situations where supervisors meet their own needs at the expense of others. These circumstances, however, have not explicitly been studied and deserve attention. In addition to these kinds of misuses, it may be also important to study the frequency of misuses of power. Perhaps more research energy should be invested on misuses that may be more common, such as those addressed by this theory.

The theory's description of supervisees' possible misuses of their own power, however, is reflected in the literature. Previously described supervisee misuses of power included withholding information from supervisors, demanding to be able to evaluate supervisors, and impacting the reputation and careers of supervisors (Salvendy, 1993). On the surface, it seems as if this theory provides support for the presence of these misuses. However, a better understanding of the context in which these behaviors occur is necessary. For example, when supervisees withhold information from supervisors, they oftentimes feel justified, particularly if they do not feel safe. Supervisors may be more likely to see withholding as a misuse of power, whereas supervisees are likely to see it as protecting themselves and/or their clients.

According to AAMFT standards, supervisees are supposed to evaluate their supervisors. However, it is difficult to imagine supervisees *demanding* to evaluate supervisors. This may be more of a factor in agency settings where evaluation of supervisors may not be expected. Finally, supervisees are aware their evaluations may

impact the careers of their supervisors. In this theory, supervisees envision themselves misusing power if they fail to discuss concerns with supervisors before sharing information with peers or department heads. These views of abuse of power need to be examined in further detail, with consideration to the context and the person defining *misuse* of power.

One implication for researchers, as a result of this theory, is the need to further explore *positive* uses of power, and how these uses can be facilitated to enhance the supervisory relationship. Previous research has touched on this important theme. Hawes (1998) suggested open discussions of power between supervisors and supervisees. Participants' experiences of open discussion of power were mainly beneficial, although further research is needed. Kaiser (1992) indicates is it imperative for supervisors to model appropriate uses of power for supervisees, so these therapists-in-training will appropriately use power with their clients. Future research could explore the isomorphism between, for example, empowerment in the supervisory relationship and empowerment in the therapeutic relationship.

Positive uses of power in supervision ultimately may have beneficial implications for clients in therapy. It is assumed, to this point, that supervision is necessary and helpful for all clinicians, particularly novice student clinicians. More research needs to be done to examine how the supervisory relationship impacts the therapeutic relationship and, in turn, how the supervisory relationship affects client outcomes. If indeed supervision is beneficial for therapists and clients, then the importance of understanding power and its effects on the supervisory relationship is further warranted.

Implications for Supervisors/Supervisees

There are many implications for supervisors resulting from this grounded theory. Supervisors can recognize and acknowledge that power exists in the supervisory relationship. They hold more power than supervisees do, particularly in academic settings. This theory, along with other theories and research, suggests that those with more power are less likely to be able to see the power they do hold. Supervisors can reflect on their experiences as supervisees to help them facilitate an understanding of how supervisees view them as having more power. Supervisors can take another step in acknowledging power in the relationship by having direct, ongoing conversations with supervisees about power. Because of the presence of power, supervisees may withhold certain elements from conversation, yet this study suggests that having direct ongoing conversations about power may be likely to reduce the possibility of misunderstandings and power struggles in supervision. Supervisors can demonstrate they value power discussions by overtly addressing it in their relationships with supervisees.

In this theory, safety is clearly identified as being very important in supervision. Supervisors can think about what they can do to facilitate a safe environment in supervision. One method of doing this may be to discuss confidentiality with supervisees, particularly the limits of confidentiality in an academic setting. Because supervisors have relationships with other supervisors and faculty, the possibility of information being shared about supervisees needs to be addressed. Supervisors can discuss with supervisees what information will remain within the confines of the relationship; for example, certain personal information may be regarded as unnecessary to share with other supervisors. However supervisors decide to approach confidentiality, their approach should be made

transparent to supervisees, so supervisees can know what to expect from the relationship, and they can determine for themselves how much they wish to share in supervision.

This theory shows that benefits accrue if supervisors are mindful of their own and their supervisees' personal characteristics, and how these characteristics impact the relationship. Supervisors can anticipate problems and work to resolve them before they occur, in a preventive approach. As with clients, supervisors may wish to talk with supervisees about potential personality "clashes" which may lead to difficulties in the relationship. Openly talking about such issues is likely to encourage the development of a "safe" environment in supervision.

There are many gray areas in dealing with power, since it is a multi-faceted concept. For example, supervisors are using their power when they impose their own style or theoretical orientation onto supervisees. Supervisors may feel this is necessary to help supervisees grow, or to challenge supervisees to try therapy from a different perspective. However, if supervisors are open with supervisees about their reasons for such impositions, it is less likely that supervisees' power will be diminished even if after an open discussion, the supervisee feels their supervisors negatively used power. This is especially likely if the supervisors' assertion increases the supervisees' skill level, and hence their power. Supervisors can also be respectful of supervisees' wishes, for example, regarding call-ins. If they make their needs known upfront by informing supervisees that they will call-in if and when they feel necessary, supervisees are less likely to feel as if supervisors are imposing on them, regardless of whether or not they agree with those actions.

This theory also has implications for supervisees. They can know and recognize their own power, and work to prevent power abuses of their own. The theory recognizes that even when supervisees feel absolutely powerless, they may find comfort in knowing they are consumers of a service, and there are nearly always other people to go to if they have a complaint about supervision. They can work with other supervisees to present a united voice to faculty about an issue of concern to them. Supervisees can take a proactive approach and ask supervisors what is expected of them. Supervisees have different definitions and experiences of power. The process used in conducting this study allowed for participants to create their own definitions of power. As a result, some supervisees reported feeling more powerful than others within the supervisory relationship.

This theory recognizes that it may be difficult for supervisors and supervisees alike to cope with the knowledge that they have misused power; this may make it difficult for them to recognize when power misuses have occurred. Supervisees may feel justified in using their power, for example, in withholding information from supervisors. Supervisors also are likely to feel justified in actions supervisees perceive as misuses. Power uses and misuses are difficult for one to recognize in oneself. Supervisees, therefore, can talk with their peers to determine whether a certain course of action constitutes a misuse of power.

Limitations

Despite the strengths of this study and the theory it grounds, it has limitations. First, only supervisees were interviewed. Supervisors are likely to have a different perspective of power in the supervisory relationship, which would alter some concepts in

the theory developed from supervisee interviews. For example, in this study, supervisees described a number of ways their supervisors used power but described fewer ways in which they themselves used power in the supervisory relationship. If supervisors were interviewed, it is possible they would be able to expand upon the way supervisees use or misuse power. Thus, interviewing supervisors would add to the richness of an understanding of power use. Supervisors may also be able to contribute to a greater understanding of the impact of various structural factors affecting power use.

Supervisors may also have different experiences of (and use different labels for) the power uses attributed to them by supervisees. For example, participants identified favoritism as a use of supervisor power in which certain supervisees get special treatment. Supervisors, if asked about favoritism, may see the same situation as merely a good supervisor-supervisee "fit." This would be a more positive manifestation of power. Supervisors may also say that supervisees have a role in creating favoritism for themselves by being a cooperative supervisee. In short, much more information may be gathered on supervisees' power use in supervision by adding supervisors' perspectives.

To help facilitate a sense of safety in the interviews, supervisees were instructed to reflect on all their supervisory experiences. Although it is difficult to determine how many supervisors were referred to when supervisees talked about supervision, one could argue that the precise nature of any *one* supervisory relationship was lost. For example, when a participant described a negative experience of power, it remains undetermined how much that one experience affected that particular supervisory relationship. Supervisees, however, may have been reluctant to describe a particular or current relationship if they felt they could not protect the confidentiality of their supervisor, as

specific details may have been discussed in general terms. In short, critical details about power use in one supervisory relationship were lost for the benefit of a general understanding of these relationships.

Since only supervisees in an academic setting were interviewed, many of the identified structural elements that shape power use were limited to that setting. It is likely that different structural elements would be found in an agency setting. For example, a focus on learning may be less likely to occur in agencies. Although learning probably does occur in other settings, it is a more explicit expectation in academic setting because of graded practica. On the other hand, formal evaluations do occur in agencies through performance evaluations. The explicit expectation of learning is unique to the academic setting.

Similarly, dual relationships may certainly exist in agencies, although not to the same extent as in an academic setting. A supervisor can play different roles, such as a co-therapist or boss. The opportunity for multiple roles is limited in comparison with academia. Supervisees at an agency may need to participate in workshops or perform co-therapy with a supervisor. Supervisees in these settings are unlikely to need a supervisor to be on a thesis/dissertation committee, teach a class, or direct assistantship duties.

Furthermore, interviews took place in only one academic setting. Although this provided the benefit of intense focus on one program, other academic programs may have different structural power elements that influence power in supervision. It may be particularly difficult to compare and contrast power in supervisory relationships because the structural factors across programs are likely to be quite different. For example, other academic training programs may only have Masters- or Doctoral-level training.

Supervision arrangements in these programs are not likely to include SITs. If other programs have fewer students (because they have only offer an MS or PhD), then there may not be program issues such as lack of space or lack of clients. Other program issues may be present which were not described in the current study.

Since the interviews were semi-structured, participants may have felt limited in their answers or restricted in fully developing their views of factors that influence power. On the other hand, participants did describe uses of power that were not specifically asked about in the interview, including the role of supervisor experience and supervisees' clinical development. Furthermore, favoritism was described in most interviews without prompting by the interviewer. Related to this concern, the researcher asked participants to describe their experiences of power in supervision. However, participants might have chosen a word other than "power" to describe hierarchy within the relationship if given more latitude. For example, one participant said that "influence" was his word of choice. A different interview format would have produced different answers from participants.

Of substantial concern was a lack of ethnic and racial diversity among the participants. If participants were more ethnically and racially diverse, the composite of interviews would have possibly resulted in a more complex picture of power. For example, supervisees of color may have elaborated on power differences they experienced in working with Caucasian supervisors. Furthermore, demographic information was not gathered for the supervisors described by supervisees, so it is impossible to determine how supervisor diversity (or lack of) affected supervisees' views. Power dynamics may be different in supervisory relationships in which supervisors and supervisees have different social characteristics.

Conclusion

Based on participants' experiences, a theory of power in the supervisory relationship has been presented. Using three previous theories of power as a basis of understanding power, gaps in theory and the literature were explored to determine the question of how supervisees experience power in the clinical supervisory relationship. Power is no less abstract and ambiguous after this study has been completed; that is, power is contextually situated in structural and individual characteristics. There are many uses of power for any two participants in the supervisory relationship. Power will continue to be an important topic to explore. Future studies can address the limitations presented by this study. The theory presented here can provide a starting point for future studies of power in the clinical supervisory relationship.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

SUPERVISEE QUESTIONS

The questions I am about to ask you have to do with power in the supervisory relationship. That means the relationship between you and a supervisor. I would like to start by talking about power itself.

1. When you think of power, what do you think of?

2. Have you and a supervisor ever discussed the topic of power in the supervisory relationship?
   - How was this topic brought up?
   - Who brought it up?
   - In what context was it discussed?
   - Tell me about the discussion.

3. Do you believe a supervisor has power in his/her relationship with you as a supervisee?
   - How is this exhibited during the supervision session?
   - How is this exhibited outside the supervision session?
   - When these power exhibitions are demonstrated by a supervisor, how do you know this is power?
   - What makes you think this is power?
   - How do(es) this/these power exhibition(s) make you feel?

4. Do you feel you have power during the supervision session? How do you know this? (Probe for examples).

5. Do you feel you have power in your relationship with a supervisor outside the supervision session? How do you know this? (Probe for examples.)
   - What happened when you exhibited your power?
   - Did the supervisor know when you exhibited your power?
   - What was the supervisor's reaction to your power?

6. Have you ever felt that a supervisor misused power in his/her supervision of your clinical work?
   - If so, how?

7. Have you ever felt that a supervisor misused power outside of a supervision session?
   - If so, how?
   - How did this impact the supervisory relationship?
   - How did this impact your relationship with the supervisor outside supervision?

8. Do you think you have ever misused your power in this relationship with a supervisor in the process of him/her supervising your clinical work?
    If so, how?
    How did this impact the supervisory relationship?
    How did this impact your relationship with the supervisor outside supervision?

9. Do you think you have ever misused your power outside of a supervision session that affected a supervisor?
    If so, how?
    How did this impact the supervisory relationship?
    How did this impact your relationship with the supervisor outside supervision?

10. How does power in the supervisory relationship affect your clients?

11. How does power in the supervisory relationship help you in your training?

12. How does power in the supervisory relationship hinder you in your training?

13. What aspects or characteristics of your self influence power in the supervisory relationship?
    (Such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religious preference, or personality characteristics.)
    How do these characteristics affect power in the supervisory relationship?

14. What aspects or characteristics of a supervisor influence power in the relationship?
    (Such as race, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, disability, religious preference, or personality characteristics.)
    How do these characteristics affect power in the supervisory relationship?

15. What aspects of the clinical facility or training program influence power in the supervisory relationship?
    How does your relationship with other supervisees influence power in the supervisory relationship?
    How does your relationship with other faculty members influence power in the supervisory relationship?

16. What other factors might influence power in the supervisory relationship?

17. Is there anything related to power that you would like to change in the supervisory relationship?

18. Is there anything you would like to change in your relationship with your supervisor?

19. Is there anything else you would like to add?

APPENDIX B

SUPERVISEE INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM

I, _____, agree to take part in a research study titled "Developing a Theory of Power in the Clinical Supervisory Relationship," which is being conducted by Megan J. Murphy (phone: 515-292-6173) from the Department of Child and Family Development at The University of Georgia, under the direction of Dr. Sharon Price (phone: 706-546-6091), Department of Child and Family Development. I do not have to take part in the study; I can stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty. I can ask to have information related to me returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

The reason for this study is to develop a theory of power in the clinical supervisory relationship based on participants' thoughts and experiences.

If I volunteer to take part in this study, I will be asked to do the following things:

1) Give written consent to participate;
2) Understand that the interview will last approximately an hour and will be audiotaped;
3) Answer questions about past and/or current experiences and relationships with my clinical supervisor(s); and
4) Answer a brief demographic questionnaire.

I will not benefit directly from this research. However, my participation in this research may lead to information that could:

1) Expand clinicians' and supervisors' knowledge about the clinical supervisory relationship; and
2) Promote beneficial uses of power, and minimize abuses of power in the clinical supervisory relationship.

The discomforts or stresses that may be faced during this research include the moderate possibility of reflecting on uncomfortable situations in relationship to a past/current supervisor or supervisee.

The risks of participating in this research study include the rare possibility of creating conflict in a current clinical supervisory relationship.

No information about me, or provided by me during the research, will be shared with others without my written permission, except if necessary to protect my rights or welfare (for example, if I am injured and need emergency care); or if required by law. All information concerning me will be kept private and confidential. A pseudonym of my

choice will be used as an identifier for my interview. If information about me is published, it will be written in a way that I cannot be recognized. However, research records may be obtained by court order.

The interview will be audiotaped. I have the right to review and edit the tape(s) of my interview if desired. Only the principal researcher will have access to the tapes. The audiotapes will be kept in a locked cabinet in the researcher's home; the audiotapes will not be used for educational purposes. The audiotapes will be erased after they are transcribed.

The researcher will answer any further questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached at (515)292-6173.

I understand the procedures described to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to participate in this study. I will be given a copy of this consent form.

_____ _____

Participant's Signature Date

_____ _____

Researcher's Signature Date

For questions or problems about your rights, please call or write: Human Subjects Office, University of Georgia, 606A Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706)542-6514; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu.

APPENDIX C

DEMOGRAPHIC AND BACKGROUND QUESTIONS

What pseudonym would you like to be used for this interview? _____

What is your age? _____

What is your ethnicity? _____

What is your religious preference? _____

What is your gender? _____

What is the highest level of education completed? _____

How long have you been in training as an MFT? _____

How long have you been practicing (seeing clients) MFT? _____

About how many supervisor/supervisees have you had? _____

What is your career goal? _____

APPENDIX D

THEORY OUTLINE AND DESCRIPTION

A Theory of Power in the Clinical Supervisory Relationship

The three core categories are indicated in Bold and are Underlined.
The main themes under each core category are indicated in Bold.
The subthemes are indicated in Italics.
Explanations of the concepts are in parentheses.

Structure

- **Academic setting** (supervision takes place in an academic setting)
- **Learning** (supervisees are to gain knowledge and experience)
- **Physical structure** (presence of phones, one-way mirrors, videotape equipment, location of faculty offices)
- **Program concerns** (lack of clients, lack of space, decision making)
- **Supervisor relationships** (relationships supervisors have with other supervisors)
- **Dual relationships** (multiple types of relationships supervisees have with supervisors)
- **Supervision set-up** (use of SITs as supervisors)
- **Supervisor role** (supervisor power based on role, related to supervisor knowledge and experience)

Individual Characteristics

- **Supervisor experience and age**
- **Supervisor gender**
- **Supervisor personality** (quiet, outgoing, trustworthy, etc.)
- **Supervisee social characteristics** (e.g., marital status)
- **Supervisee clinical development and age**
- **Supervisee gender**
- **Supervisee personality** (quiet, outgoing, trustworthy, etc.)

Power Use

- **Power discussion**
  - *Direct* (overt)
  - *Indirect* (in the form of contracts, expectations)
  - *Nonexistent* (lack of conversation, in any manner, about power)
- **Perspectives and assessment**
  - *Perspectives [by supervisor]* (different ways to approach a case)
  - *Feedback [by supervisor]* (more direct ideas, usually about the therapist)
  - *Formal evaluation [by supervisor]* (more formal)
  - *Open meetings [by supervisee]* (offer feedback about the program in a group setting)

Formal evaluation [by supervisee] (written feedback provided to supervisors)

Empowering supervisees (use of supervisor's power to "lift up" supervisees)

Safety

Atmosphere/Environment (establishment of an overall "safe" or protected environment)

Vulnerability (supervisee's ability to feel vulnerable or to expose self in supervision)

Confidentiality (limiting conversations about supervisees to supervision)

Repercussions (fear or not knowing about negative ramifications for supervisee career)

Collaboration (although power is present, supervisor and supervisee relate as peers)

Favoritism (supervisor's giving preferential treatment to selected supervisees)

Imposition of style/orientation (supervisor insist supervisees approach a case from the supervisor's theoretical orientation)

Call-ins (use of phones to call-in to a session)

Expectations of supervisees (supervisor instills a sense of responsibility in the supervisee)

Supervisors' misuse of power

Violation of supervisee confidentiality

Supervisors meet own needs (Supervisors meet their own needs, at the expense of or to the detriment of supervisees)

Failure to respect supervisees' beliefs or values

Supervisees' withholding information (supervisee choose what to share with supervisor, either about cases or about self)

Supervisee-peer power (power to influence peers' perceptions of supervisors, and power to influence supervisors through "standing together" as a peer group)

Supervisees as consumers (supervisees are educational consumers, pay for the service of supervision)

Supervisees' misuse of power (violating supervisor's confidentiality, or failing to resolve conflicts through proper channels)