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| **Exercise 5.5.4 Problem Statement and Arguments (Sample 1)** |

**Working Title**

Practicum Supervision in Psychology: A Call for Mandatory Training

**Problem Statement**

**To ensure the competence of graduating counsellors and to uphold the ethics of the profession of counselling psychology, it is necessary to develop mandatory formalized training for practicum supervisors.** **This training must cover the essential competencies and exhibit a strong emphasis on how to develop an effective supervisory alliance.** For the purpose of this paper, the term, *supervision*, will refer to interactions between supervisors and practicum students in counselling education programs.

**Key Arguments**

1. There are three functions of supervision: (a) to assist students in gaining the knowledge and skills to become competent practitioners, (b) to ensure appropriate treatment for the client, and (c) to protect society from incompetent practitioners (Alvise, 2017; Dunkan et al., 2015; Wentworth & Brown, 2018).
2. In addition to a duty to society, there are a number of ethical considerations involved in supervision, including informed consent, multiple relationships, competence, and self-care (Duncan et al., 2015; George, 2014; Noble & Cross, 2018).
3. Unethical supervision can range from ineffective to harmful, and research has demonstrated that this kind of practice occurs in some practicum settings (Broadmead et al., 2015; Steadman & Wise, 2016; Wentworth & Brown, 2018). According to the research, unethical supervision may have numerous negative consequences including harming the supervisee, and creating effects that can affect their work with clients (Broadmead et al., 2015; Noble & Cross, 2018).
4. A number of researchers have investigated which factors are involved in ethical and competent supervision, and a few core competencies have emerged (Frank, 2017; Humbolt & Reimer, 2018; Supervision Canada [SC], 2015). These include competencies in diversity, evaluation, adaptability to the development level of the supervisee, and the ability to create an effective supervisory alliance (Frank, 2017; Humbolt & Reimer, 2018; SC, 2015).
5. Of all these competencies, the supervisory alliance has been argued to be the most important factor in promoting positive, competent, and ethical supervision (SC, 2015; Trailor & Chimes, 2017; Whistler et al., 2016).
6. In addition to the practical research, the principles of learning theory and attachment theory offer strong support for the importance of the supervisory alliance (Bradley, 2014; Listman et al., 2018).
7. The supervisory alliance differs from a working alliance (Trailor & Chimes, 2017; Whistler et al., 2016).
8. Because there are fundamental differences between working and supervisory alliances (Trailor & Chimes, 2017; Whistler et al., 2016), graduate training in creating an effective working alliance does not necessarily produce the skills necessary for creating and maintaining an effective supervisory alliance (SC, 2015; Whistler et al., 2016).

**Purpose of the Study**

To identify the competencies practicum supervisors require to create and maintain an effective and ethical supervisory alliance with graduate counselling students.

**Note**: The sample problem statement, arguments, purpose, and citations provided here have been constructed for the purpose of this activity and do not necessarily reflect the current counselling literature.