



## **Building Professional Excellence - Part 6**

### **Session 1: Supervision Dynamics With Counselors of Color**

#### **Webinar Follow-up Question and Answer Session with LaTonya M. Summers**

##### **Question from Amanda Baker**

What keeps us from talking about race in our daily counseling practice?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

My answer is not comprehensive, as I am sure there are several other barriers to discussing race in counseling and supervision, but here are a few I have experienced and heard from others: it is uncomfortable to talk about race, our sociopolitical climate is racially charged and it is too tense to talk about race, we are afraid of what might happen if we talk about race, we don't feel equipped to facilitate discussions about race, and we don't want to offend others, and we don't want to appear racist.

---

##### **Question from Ashley Bonvillain**

Have you ever had a supervisee of another race who had inaccurate pre-conceptions of your race or a race outside of their own? If so, how do you address this in supervision?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

Yes, I have had some awkward encounters with supervisees who were racially different from myself. Once I was supervising a young White supervisee who during our getting-to-know-one-another conversation about our upbringing she told me she was "as lily-White" as the town she came from. Her practicum happened to be at a Title I school where her caseload was 100% students of color. During supervision, she told me could not get one of her students to talk about anything other than food. At the next session, I asked about the wellbeing of the student and the supervisee asked, "Who, the fried-chicken girl?" That was a pivotal session for us, but one that supported my decision to teach and research cross-racial supervision. I feel blessed to be called to this work.

---

##### **Question from Ronald Byrd-Cordova**

Does the research suggest that the lack of power for Black supervisors with non-black supervisees is based on perception of race and class?

##### **Answer from Presenter**

Remember, research from the perspective of supervisors of color is new so my response is not informed by scholarly literature—other than my dissertation study. I believe the answer to your question is yes. When the existing literature does not include the voices of supervisors of color, and people do not know (or believe) they exist you cannot help but feel powerless.

---



**Question from Dr. Lynn Duffy**

What about Biracial supervisors?

**Answer from Presenter**

Interestingly, I have not seen any literature from the perspectives of biracial supervisors. During the webinar, I made reference to the Biracial Identity Development Model which could be helpful to expand the literature on cross-racial supervision with biracial supervisors. Check out *Life in Duality: Racial Identity Development* (Perkins, 2014).

---

**Question from Delores Livingston**

Have you noticed that it is difficult for persons of culture to obtain supervision to become a supervisor on the Masters level?

**Answer from Presenter**

I have not noticed any barriers for counselors of color to become supervisors. I know many of them who are Black, but I only know a few who are Asian American, Latino, etc.

---

**Question from Allen Vosburg**

What would you suggest could be a first step with a supervisee to address this topic of broaching to advance positive progress?

**Answer from Presenter**

During the webinar, I mentioned getting the names right. People of color often have multisyllabic names with apostrophes and accents, and can be difficult to pronounce. But, one of the very first ways to honor someone who is culturally different is to get their name right. You would be surprised how many times people in power shorten or change my name for their convenience. How disrespectful. Additionally, I would say create the safest environment you can to have discussions about race. Be honest, open, and curious. Oh, don't forget to use those statements I provided by Chang, Hayes, and Shoffner (2004).

---

**Question from Rayvene Whatley**

Who was mentioned as the supervision guru?

**Answer from Presenter**

There are plenty, but I mentioned Bernard and Goodyear (1998), authors of the textbook *Clinical Fundamentals of Supervision*. For cross-racial supervision, I would add Chang, Hays, and Shoffner (2004), Madonna Constantine, Nick Pendry, off the top of my head. My dissertation is chock full of them.

---



**Question from Kris Sandra Wheatley**

What about ageism? The age differential between supervisor and supervisee. People that are from different generations like X Y and Z.

**Answer from Presenter**

Yes, this exists (I know because I am older now and my supervisees prefer Dropbox and not recorders) but I have not studied it much. Sue & Sue address it in their Counseling the Culturally Diverse and I am sure there are articles that can help us become culturally competent in this area.

---

Enjoy our webinars? Please [support](#) our efforts. Donate [here](#).

---