

Louisiana OCS/Hunter College School of Social Work
Sponsored by NASW - Louisiana

**Advanced Practice Certificate Program in
Child Welfare Supervision and Leadership
Course Schedule 2009-2010**

Gerald P. Mallon, DSW
gmallon@hunter.cuny.edu
917 940-5455

"Supervision is practice – it is a process we use to assist one another in developing ourselves—it is through relationships that most change occurs. And it is with other people that our professional assignment – the achievement of a just society in which all people are treated with equality and dignity—can be achieved." Paul Abels

Purpose

This course provides an overview of models and specific skills used in child welfare supervision and consultation which are appropriate to both clinical and community practice settings. Interactional and structural theoretical perspectives inform the framework for supervision introduced in this course. While social work has historically viewed supervision as a necessary and inherent part of professional practice, the field today holds child welfare supervisors responsible for insuring quality control, professional growth, adherence to agency policies and concerns, and compliance with licensure demands. Supervisors are expected to mediate the pressures associated with over-burdened staff, funding constraints, escalating client need, and a volatile social policy climate. To be effective leaders, supervisors must develop skills to manage complexity, think systemically, and behave relationally.

Although the course emphasizes principles and practices of first-line child welfare supervision, it also introduces concepts and skills for supervisory leadership and supervisory management needed for effective team building, program or organizational innovation, group decision-making, and mediating intra-staff conflict as well as conflict between staff and administration.

The role of the child welfare supervisor is explored from cross-cultural perspectives. Themes of diversity as an organizational change process, and supervisory efforts to encourage diversity and promote multi-cultural competencies, are interwoven throughout the course. Ethical dimensions of child welfare supervision are critically examined, and specific legal obligations and related liabilities of supervisors are identified.

Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, individuals should be able to:

1. Define child welfare supervision in terms of its three functions of education, support and administration and identify the activities for carrying out those functions.
2. Identify commonalities and distinctions between child welfare supervision in clinical and community practice/macro contexts.
3. Demonstrate awareness of the middle management function of facilitating effective communication between staff and administration while mediating between program demands with staff capacity.
4. Understand the differential use of communication, relationship and problem solving skills in supervision and consultation.
5. Identify the role of the child welfare supervisor in coping with secondary trauma, managing stress, and mediating conflict between staff and larger systems.
6. Demonstrate knowledge of ethical principles, risk management and legal obligations in the practice of child welfare supervision and consultation.
7. Value and address issues of difference as these impact the child welfare supervisory relationships with particular attention to race, ethnicity, class, gender/sexual orientation, and physical and mental ability.
8. Understand the nature and uses of power and authority within the child welfare supervisory context, including use of self and related role and boundary issues.

9. Describe the uses and dynamics of staff groups, the child welfare supervisor's role in helping group process promote competent practice and staff development, and emerging approaches to group supervision.

10. Determine the most appropriate supervisory leadership orientation for the supervisor's role, practice situation, and agency/organizational setting.

11. Know and apply principles of adult learning in child welfare supervision and consultation activities.

Course Format

The instructor will use a variety of instructional methods, including experiential exercises, lecture, discussion, simulations of actual practice, guest speakers, case studies, and peer presentations . Assignments and activities will be geared to a variety of learning styles.

Expectations of the Instructor

The instructor will facilitate a classroom atmosphere conducive to learning and risk taking with regard to the development of new skills and sensitivities. The instructor will provide a clear structure for the course and each class session through the syllabus, statements of purpose for each class, guiding discussion, providing appropriate linkages between topics, and summarizing progress throughout the course.

Student assignments will include clear expectations; barring exceptional circumstances, student assignments will be returned within one week of submission. The instructor will be available to students outside of instruction hours for consultation and feedback, and will provide feedback to students that identifies strengths and areas for improvement in a constructive manner. Performance evaluation will be based on objective criteria.

Expectations of Students

Out of respect for other learners, students are expected to turn off cell phones and pagers while class is in session.

Social work is an applied discipline. Consequently, this class is structured around the application of didactic material to actual

experience. Students are expected to participate actively in class learning activities, drawing upon readings, assignments, field placements, and other life and work experiences.

Students are required to attend and to participate in all ten class sessions, unless they have notified and received permission from the instructor in advance, and to meet all responsibilities associated with in-class group participation. Since this is a practice course, participation is very important: ***Students who miss more than one class will not meet the minimum standards for being awarded a certificate for the course.***

Students are required to complete all assigned readings before coming to class and to complete and submit assignments on time within the guidelines provided.

Students are expected to use the Internet and other sources for research purposes.

Students are expected to offer the instructor clear, constructive feedback on the class.

You are expected to listen with an open mind to ideas and views of others that are different from your own. You are also expected to articulate your own viewpoints in a clear and respectful manner so that your peers may have the benefit of your perspective.

ASSIGNMENTS:

There are two written assignments for the course:

Assignment 1

Identify three critical incidents in child welfare supervision which you have experienced or observed and/or supervisory sessions in which you were either the supervisor or the supervisee which you feel would be fruitful points of departure for class learning. Briefly describe the incident or sessions including your view of the issue(s) of concern, the factors which obstruct and support problem resolution. These must be submitted to the instructor via email and labeled as such: example: YOURLASTNAME.07.27.09.SUPERVISIONCOURSE and be at least six pages in length, and provide enough situational detail so that the reader can understand the situation and its context(s).

Assignment 2

Critical Analysis of Face-to-Face Interviews with Two Social Work Supervisors

Choose two MSW-level child welfare supervisors who agree to be interviewed in person. *Assure them that the information they share with you will be held in confidence, except for the written narrative summary which will be shared with the course instructor, and that their real name will not be used in that summary.*

Neither of the individuals you interview should be your current supervisor.

The interviews are to be conducted **after** the 6th class session. The following topics should be explored with them, with attention to what they have learned from their child welfare supervisory experience:

- use of self and relationship in supervision
- issues of power and authority
- crossing cultures in supervision (race, class, ethnicity, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, disability, religion, immigrant status, etc.)
- work-related stress and/or secondary trauma
- performance appraisal and giving feedback
- ethics, boundaries, legal issues
- how they balance educational, support, and administrative functions
- mediating between supervisees and the larger system
- how would they describe their use of leadership

In order to prepare for these interviews, you will need to develop specific questions pertaining to each of the above topics. Ask the same questions for each interview, but feel free to ask individualized follow-up questions. Compare the supervisory styles and philosophies of the two supervisors you interviewed. Be sure to include a description of the setting/agency and the supervisors' responsibilities. Attach the list of the specific questions you asked of both supervisors as an appendix. Your paper should be 8-10 pages plus a reference page, submitted via email to the instructor and labeled as such: example:

YOURLASTNAME.07.27.09.SUPERVISIONCOURSE

A substantial portion of your narrative should focus on a critical analysis of what *you* observed and learned from your interviews, how compatible this material is with your own current expectations for

future supervisory practice, and how it relates to class readings and discussions. This discussion should demonstrate your ability to critically evaluate and apply important supervisory concepts and skills, given relevant contextual factors. Cite readings and class lecture/discussions to support your analysis.

READINGS

A collection of useful articles and many publications will be made available for you via a bibliography.

Students are encouraged to read widely. Without a broad and critical examination of the literature, they will be unable to grasp the course content, to contribute to class discussions, or complete the assignments. An extensive bibliography, organized by class session is part of this syllabus.

The following publications are required reading and will be given to each student:

Hess, P., Kanak, S. & Atkins, J. (2009). *Building a Model and Framework for Child Welfare Supervision*. NY and Portland, MN: National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement.

Potter, C.C., & Brittain, C.R. (Eds.). (2009). *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators*. New York: Oxford University Press.

The following Web sites are also critical to your learning in this course and you are strongly encouraged to review them:

www.nrcfcppp.org – National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning

<http://muskie.usm.maine.edu/helpkids/> - National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement

<http://www.dss.state.la.us/departments/ocs/Index.html>

Louisiana Department of Social Services, The Office of Community Services provides for the public child welfare functions of the state and administers the federal grants for services directed at meeting the special needs of Louisiana's most vulnerable citizens.

www.lcwcwp.org – Louisiana Child Welfare Comprehensive Workforce Project

<http://www.naswla.org/> - National Association of Social Workers - Louisiana

www.acf.dhhs.gov/programs/cb/ - U.S. Children's Bureau

www.childwelfare.gov - Formerly the National Clearinghouse on Child Abuse and Neglect Information and the National Adoption Information Clearinghouse, Child Welfare Information Gateway provides access to information and resources to help protect children and strengthen families. A service of the Children's Bureau, Administration for Children and Families, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

You also are encouraged to sign onto the NRCFCPPP Weekly Update – an electronic newsletter produced weekly. To become a subscriber, go to home page of www.nrcfcppp.org and in the lower left hand corner, add your email address. This weekly electronic newsletter will help you stay current on many of the issues relevant to this course.

Although no one is likely to read everything that is on the reading list, students are advised to read in sufficient depth to appreciate and understand the impact of multiple factors on seeking and delivering assistance. Experience has demonstrated that students who are more widely read, and who incorporate their reading into their work, practice more competently.

COURSE OUTLINE:

The following detailed outline provides a session by session schedule for the course.

SESSION I: OVERVIEW: HISTORY, ROLES, STYLES AND STAGES:

Historical perspective of child welfare supervision within the profession of social work will be discussed. The impact of changes in the broader environment on the current role and function of supervisors in social agencies. The various conceptual frames for supervision will be reviewed including roles, styles, and stages in supervision.

SESSION II: THE TRANSITION TO SUPERVISION: Identification of critical tensions in the shift from direct practice to the assumption of supervisory responsibilities. Basic concepts of leadership in supervision, providing specific opportunities for students to examine their own leadership styles. The relationship of leadership style to job performance and staff relationships.

READ:

Brashears, F. (1995). Supervision as social work practice: A reconceptualization. *Social Work, 40*, 692-699.

Cousins, C. (2004). Becoming a social work supervisor: A significant role transition. *Australian Social Work, 57*(2), 175-185.

Hess, P., Kanak, S. & Atkins, J. (2009). Section I: Elements of an Emerging Model for Child Welfare Supervision, In P. Hess, S. Kanak, & J. Atkins (Eds.) *Building a Model and Framework for Child Welfare Supervision (pp. 6-22)*. NY and Portland, MN: National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement.

Catherine Potter. (2009). Child Welfare Supervision: An Overview. In C.C. Potter, C.C., & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators (pp.3-22)*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Shulman, L. (1993). Chapter 3: "Preparatory and Beginning Skills in Supervision" (pp.35-77). *Interactional supervision*. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

SESSION III: ORGANIZATIONAL CONTEXT: Exploration of different patterns of organizational structure and communication as critical contexts for supervisory practice. Students have the opportunity to reflect on the organizational structure of their agencies and the impact of patterns of formal and informal communication. Discussion focuses on the implications of their analysis for their effectiveness as supervisory and middle management staff.

READ:

Brittain, C.R. (2009). Models of social work supervision. In C.C. Potter, C.C., & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp. 23-43). New York: Oxford University Press.

Hess, P., Kanak, S. & Atkins, J. (2009). Section II: Components of an Organizational Framework that Supports Effective Supervision in Child Welfare. In P. Hess, S. Kanak, & J. Atkins (Eds.) *Building a Model and Framework for Child Welfare Supervision* (pp. 23-33). NY and Portland, MN: National Resource Center for Family-Centered Practice and Permanency Planning and National Child Welfare Resource Center for Organizational Improvement.

Kadushin, A. and Daniel Harkness (2002). Chapter 2: "Administrative Supervision" (pp. 45-77). *Supervision in social work* (4th Edition). New York: Columbia University Press.

Perlmutter, F., Bailey, D. & Netting, F.E. (2001). Chapter 1: "Professional Challenges for Managerial Supervisors" (pp.3-23). *Managing human resources in the human services: Supervisory challenges*. New York: Oxford University Press.

SESSION IV: THE ADMINISTRATIVE FUNCTIONS OF

SUPERVISION: The administrative functions of supervision will be identified and discussed within the framework of organizational structure described in Session III. Issues related to differential goals, establishment of formal and informal reward systems, and participatory decision-making will be highlighted. The importance of communication skills in all aspects of supervision will be discussed. Ethical considerations in administration will be emphasized. Issues such as confidentiality, ethical dilemmas encountered by administrators, and the NASW Code of Ethics will be examined.

READ:

East, J. & Hanna, M.D. (2009). Management essentials in child welfare supervisors. In C.C. Potter, C.C., & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp.61-82). New York: Oxford University Press.

Fox, R. (1989). Relationship: The cornerstone of clinical supervision. *Social Casework*, March, 146-152.

Lynch, J.G. & G. Versen (2003). Social work supervisor liability: Risk factors and strategies for risk reduction. *Administration in Social Work, 27* (2), 57-72.

Reamer, F. (2005). Documentation in social work: Evolving ethical and risk management standards. *Social Work, 50* (4), 325-334.

Sing-sum Tsui (2005). Chapter 7: "Power Issues between Supervisors and Supervisees" (pp.91-106). *Social Work Supervision: Contexts and Concepts*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

Review "Legal Issues" and "Ethical Issues" sections of NASW's *Guidelines for Clinical Social Work Supervision*.

SESSION V: THE EDUCATIVE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION: The unique structure of educational supervision in social work agencies will be discussed in the context of adult learning theory. Skills of educational diagnosis (including the identification and utilization of learning styles), recognition of informal and formal teaching opportunities, and the development of learning contracts will be examined. Identification of dysfunctional supervisory strategies and the concept of the parallel process will be identified. The relationship between the teaching function of supervision and administrative and supportive roles will be examined.

READ:

Itzhaky, H. (2002). The secret in supervision: An integral part of the social worker's professional development. *Families in Society, 81* (5), 529-537.

Neufeldt, S.A. & Nelson, L.N. (1999). When is counseling an appropriate and ethical supervisory function? *The Clinical Supervisor, 18* (1), 125-135.

Lawrence Shulman (1993). Chapter 6: "Educational Function of Supervision" (pp.155-210). *Interactional supervision*. Washington, D.C.: NASW Press.

SESSION VI: THE EVALUATIVE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION: Common attitudes toward worker evaluation will be explored. The different uses of ongoing feedback and formal evaluation will be discussed. The process of setting objectives, measuring performance and stimulating worker commitment to growth will be discussed in the

context of developing goal-directed supervisory contracts.
Identification of specific types of evaluation will be reviewed.

READ:

Bell, H., Kulkarni, S. & Dalton, L. (2003). Organizational prevention of vicarious trauma. *Families in Society, 84* (4), 463-470.

Horwitz, M. (1998). Social worker trauma: Building resilience in child protection social workers. *Smith College Studies in Social work, 68* (3), 363-377.

Paul, M.E., Graef, M.I., Robinson, E.J., & Saathoff, K.I. (2009). Managing performance. In C.C. Potter, C.C., & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp.330-362). New York: Oxford University Press.

Alfred Kadushin & Daniel Harkness (2002). Chapter 8: "Evaluation" (pp.329-388).

Schultz, D. (2005). Suggestions for supervisors when a therapist experiences a client's suicide. *Women & Therapy, 28* (1), 59-69.

SESSION VII: THE SUPPORTIVE FUNCTIONS OF SUPERVISION:

The impact of societal changes and expectations on the helping profession will be explored. The importance of mentorship, maintaining and improving worker morale, and the effects of workplace support on employee morale will be highlighted. Identification of the symptoms of burnout in both workers and supervisors will be discussed, as well as the supports and strategies used to alleviate stress. Special attention will be paid to the role that risk and resiliency factors play in affecting burnout.

READ:

Brittain, C.R., & Potter, C.C. (2009). Developing worker competence. In C.C. Potter & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp.262-295). New York: Oxford University Press.

Dickerson, N., & Comstock, A. (2009). Getting and keeping the best people. In C.C. Potter & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare*

supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators (pp.220-261). New York: Oxford University Press.

SESSION VIII: Identifying Commonalities and Distinctions between Clinical Supervision and Supervision in Community Practice Settings

READ:

Coleman, M. (2003). Supervision and the clinical social worker. *Clinical social work practice update*, pp.1-4.

Ferguson, S. (2009). Clinical supervision in child welfare. In C.C. Potter & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp 296-329). New York: Oxford University Press.

Intensive review of Lawrence Shulman's Chapter 4: "Work Phase Skills in Supervision."

NASW Council on the Practice of Clinical Social Work (1994). *Guidelines for Clinical Social Work Supervision*, pp.1-15. [This is the most current *Guidelines* document available from NASW.]

SESSION IX: THE CHALLENGES OF DIVERSITY: The impact of race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability and other social characteristics in the supervisory relationship will be explored. Various perspectives on supervising and training for cultural sensitivity, cultural specificity and cultural competence will be examined. The special issues of supervising practitioners with special needs such as those who are victims of physical violence and sexual harassment, as well as those with histories of incest, mental illness, etc. will be examined.

READ:

Hird, J., Tao, K. & Gloria, A. (2004). Examining supervisors' multicultural competence in racially similar and different supervision dyads. *The Clinical Supervisor*, 23 (2), 107-122. Available online.

Ortega, D.M, & Mixon Mitchell, D.A. (2009). Beyond the question of color: Diversity issues in child welfare supervision. In C.C. Potter & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for*

supervisors, managers, and administrators (pp.203-219). New York: Oxford University Press.

Smith, S.H. (2003). An assessment of multicultural competence in supervision: Implications for continuing education. *Professional Development: The International Journal of Continuing Social Work Education*, 6 (3), 4-12.

SESSION X: LEADERSHIP

Just as in any other profession child welfare agencies need leaders that possess a wide range of abilities and traits. Knowledge of legal and regulatory requirements is important, as are issues such as the understanding of corporate compliance in funding practice, hiring procedures, etc. Executive leadership is also expected to be responsible for business and marketing strategies, including fiscal understanding and promoting the organization within the community. But these abilities are only part of the picture of a good leader in the child welfare community.

In addition to professional savvy, child welfare professionals have to remember that in child welfare, the *business* at hand is vulnerable children, youth - and their families. Thus, there are specific traits that should be evident in top administrators. Heading this list is emotional intelligence. Certainly, the ability to perceive, assess and manage our own emotions, as well as tending to the emotions and needs of others is very important. We need to recognize our own strengths; our own limitations, but it is essential in our work to recognize the needs of our clients and their families. Leaders in our field must be able to convey these needs, and develop effective strategies to meet them. From the concept of emotional intelligence come the more humanistic traits that are necessary for supervisors within child welfare organizations.

READ:

Anderson, G. (2009). Supervisors as leaders. In C.C. Potter & C.R. Brittain, C.R. (Eds.) *Child welfare supervision: A practical guide for supervisors, managers, and administrators* (pp.44-60). New York: Oxford University Press.

Mary, N. (2005). Transformational leadership in human service organizations. *Administration in Social Work*, 29 (2), 105-118.

Schmid, H. (2006). Leadership styles and leadership change in human and community service organizations. *Nonprofit Management & Leadership, 17* (2), 179-194.

Tickle, E., Brownlee, J. & Di Nailon, M. (2005). Personal epistemological beliefs and transformational leadership behaviors. *Journal of Management Development, 24* (8), 706-71.