

***Leadership in Dealing
with Trainees with
Competence
Problems:
Administrative and
Interpersonal Aspects***

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Competence Problems

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Goals

Challenges leaders face with trainees with problems of professional competence:

- 1) administrative/program policy challenges
- 2) interpersonal challenges

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Transitions During the 2000's

- Definitional Perspectives
- Developmental Perspectives
- Competence Perspectives
- Ecological Perspectives

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Definition: From Impairment to Competence

- IMPAIRMENT a catch-all term
implies diagnosis
- Overlaps with ADA (1990) and 2008
Amendments (Falender et al, 2009)
- Recommended: TRAINEES WITH
PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE
PROBLEMS (Elman & Forrest, 2007)

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Shift to Culture of Competence

- Competency Assessment Toolkit for
Professional Psychology (Kaslow et al.)
- Competency Benchmarks (Fouad et al.)

**TEPP, (2009) Vol 3, #4, Supplement:
Establishing and Assessing Core Competencies in
Professional Psychology: A Call to Action**

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Systemic/Ecological Perspectives in Psychology

- From individual case/program to national conversation, shared goals
- Continuum across training & practice: doctoral/ internship/postdoc, APA, APPIC, Licensing Boards

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Systemic/Ecological Perspectives

- Addressing competence problems in training programs is PREVENTION for profession
- Ecological factors facilitate or constrain administrative actions & interpersonal effectiveness

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Systemic Challenges at the National Level – Extreme Examples

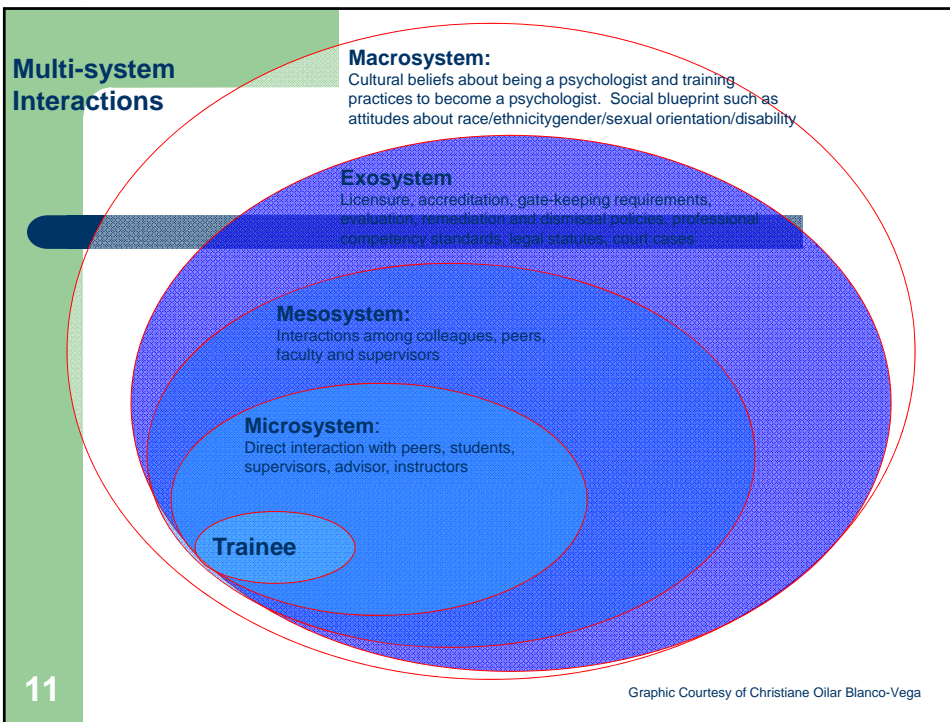
- Virginia Tech shootings (2007)
- Ft. Hood Shootings (2009)
- Christmas Day bomber attempt (2009)

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Possible Lessons from Extreme Examples

- Overall failure of system communications, sharing of knowledge
- Avoidance of cultural differences
- Possible over-reliance on confidentiality
- Lack of notice/releases
- Misunderstanding of legal obligations
- Role conflict: educate/protect vs. gatekeeping

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Exosystemic Context:

COMMISSION ON ACCREDITATION G & P (2009)

- Domain A.6 Eligibility
- Domain E. Student-Faculty Relations

APA CODE OF ETHICS (2002)

- Responsibilities for Self, Colleagues & Trainees

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Exosystem Administrative Challenges

- Establish/ publish policies IN ADVANCE OF TRAINEE WITH PROBLEMS OF COMPETENCE (nearly impossible to do both at once and do it well!)
- FOLLOW POLICIES!!

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Exosystem Administrative Challenges

WHO IS INVOLVED?

- Trainees
- Faculty
- Supervisors
- Administrators
- Attorneys

WHEN? EARLIER rather than LATER!!

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Exosystem Administrative Challenges

- Assure system is prepared
- Teach skills to address competence problems to all parties
- Assure intersystemic processes are in place

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Two Example Solutions

Recognize ecosystemic connections

- AAPI Certification (APPIC, 2009-10, online)
- Remediation Template (Work Group on Trainees with Competence Problems, 2009)

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AAPI Applicant Certification

Applicant has responsibility to produce “adequate information for PROPER EVALUATION OF MY PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE, CHARACTER, ETHICS, and other qualifications”

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AAPI Applicant Certification

- Applicant agrees personally identifiable information may be provided by academic program to internships.
 - Academic/professional qualifications
 - Performance
 - Character
- Following match, same may be provided by internship to graduate program and vice versa, and to APPIC rep

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Remediation Plan Template

- Document cycle of remediation
- Template available:
<http://www.apa.org/ed/graduate/competency.html>
- Feedback: to me or Cathi Grus at APA (cgrus@apa.org)

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Remediation Plan Template

- DELINEATE EXPECTATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT IN WRITING:
Where? How Much? How Long?
- STRATEGIES TO ATTAIN GOALS:
 - Training methods
 - Roles and responsibilities for all parties

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Interpersonal Challenges

PROFESSIONALISM IS A FOUNDATIONAL COMPETENCE

integrity, deportment, accountability
concern for welfare of others
professional identity, reflective
practice

self assessment, self-care

ASSESSING COMPETENCIES REQUIRES DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS

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Barriers to Difficult Conversations

- TIME
- Avoidance of conflict
- Threat or reality of being sued
- Empathy for the trainee
- Denial: hope problem will resolve or be dealt with elsewhere in the system
- Beliefs, attitudes about diversity impede our actions

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Barriers to Difficult Conversations

(Cont.d)

Grandiosity: Our nurturing, support will lead to trainee getting the message

Failure to translate “problematic behavior” into competence language

Lack of:

skills/competence to address competence

ethical framework for actions

extant policies, understood and utilized across the system

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Personal Factors that Increase Likelihood of Difficult Conversations

- Self-examination, management of emotions
- Consultation with colleagues
- Working knowledge of literature & resources
- Future oriented: Consider long-term consequences of avoidance

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Setting Factors that Increase Likelihood of Difficult Conversations

- Focused competence assessments
- Acceptance of gatekeeping role
- Faculty collaboration/congruence
- Consistency with program model and policies (due process)

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Take Home Points

THE LAW OF NO SURPRISES

- Policies in place, known to ALL
- Problems addressed in context of foundational & functional competence
- Professionalism & interpersonal functioning are foundational competencies

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Take Home Points (cont.d)

- Difficult conversations are essential – treat as competence of trainers and trainees
- Educate/mentor others in ecosystem to have difficult conversations
- Prepare to have difficult conversations **EARLY!!** - It is so much easier than having them later

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A Call to Action: Research

What are the professional outcomes of trainees with competence problems?

- Medicine only field w/ prospective data (Papadakis et al., 2005)
- INTEGRATION OF SCIENCE AND PRACTICE
- Capitalize on training ecology represented at this decade conference

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QUESTIONS?



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**PSYCHOLOGY TRAINEES WITH PROBLEMS OF PROFESSIONAL
COMPETENCE
A REFERENCE LIST FOR THE 2010
CCTC TRAINING CONFERENCE
February, 2010 Orlando, Florida**

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