International Students in Supervision: Issues and Recommendations

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Purpose of Presentation

- Provide information about:
  - international students in the United States
  - issues that can occur in supervision with international students
  - provide recommendations
International Student Data

- International students are foreign-born students who attend U.S. colleges and universities and who are not permanent residents, immigrants, or refugees.

- 582,984 international students in the United States 2006/2007

- Country of origin
  - 48% from five Asian countries
  - India, China, Korea, Japan, Taiwan

- Other countries in the top 20 group
  - Germany, Nepal, Kenya, Vietnam, Saudi Arabia, Brazil

(Institute of International Education, 2005; 2007)
International Student Data

- Of the international students:
  - 45% of international students are graduate students
  - As a group, they make up 12% of U.S. graduate enrollment
  - About 8,300 international students are enrolled in the academic field of psychology (Institute of International Education, 2005; 2007).
  - 8.2% of students in counseling psychology APA accredited programs
International Students

• Acculturation
  • Culture of origin
  • Length of time in the United States
  • Language ability of host language
• Academic adjustment
• Social and emotional adjustment

• 76% of international doctoral level students have previous degree in the United States (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004)

(e.g., Sodowsky & Plake, 1992; Mori, 2000; Poyrazli et al., 2002)
Supervision, Data:

- Counseling self-efficacy
  - acculturation
  - prejudice
  - supervisory working alliance

- Supervisory working alliance
  - prejudice
  - preference/ability speaking English

Supervision, Data:

- **Role Ambiguity**
  - acculturation
  - prejudice
  - greater preference/ability speaking English

- **Multicultural discussion in supervision**
  - acculturation
  - perception of supervisor as expert, trustworthy and expert
  - satisfaction of supervision
  - supervisee’s perception of supervisor as sensitive to diversity issues.

(Nilsson & Anderson, 2004; Nilsson & Dodds, 2006)
Recommendations

- **Remember**
  - language barriers and cultural differences
  - therapy and supervision are based on westernized traditions and values

- **Setting the stage for supervision**
  Clearly express the expectations for supervision:
  - Supervisor’s role
  - Supervisee’s role with supervisor and clients
  - contextual expectations
  - expectation of performance and consequences
  - Involve the supervisee in this discussion

  - Supervision contract
Recommendations

• **Supervisory working alliance**
  • Show interest in supervisee’s cultural background
  • Share pieces of own cultural journey
  • Show openness and curiosity, express your own struggles
    (Killian, 2001)

• **Multicultural Discussions**
  • Allows for the building of an alliance
  • Allow for learning:
    • of own cultural identity
    • of the U.S. culture
  • Be a cultural mentor

(Nilsson & Wang, in press)
Recommendations

• Learn about your international supervisee
  • What training and experience did they have before coming to the United States
  • What are their future plans
    • 57% planned to return home (Nilsson & Anderson, 2004)
    • Preparations for returning home

• Enjoy the process
  • Challenging
  • Rewarding
  • Rich in learning
References