

Creative Interventions Clearinghouse

An Experiential Eco-Mapping Exercise for Supervision

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Purpose:

The purpose of this creative intervention is to allow supervisors to assess the progress and needs of their supervisees, as well as to help new supervisees gain insight about clients feelings when asked to participate in experiential life-mapping activities.

Materials Needed:

Paper, pen/pencil, markers/crayons (optional)

Procedures:

The supervisee creates an eco-map, drawing a circle with their name at the center of a piece of paper and then identifying various entities (immediate and extended family, school, work, friends, religious community, important events, etc.) by drawing circles and writing the name of the entity inside. The relationship to the supervisee is depicted by where the entity is placed in relation to the supervisee's circle, and by various lines that are drawn to show the nature of the relationship (multidirectional or one sided, connected or disconnected, etc). The supervisee can determine the legend for the line meanings.

The supervisor looks at the map to see a visual representation of how the supervisee is handling their various life roles in relationship to their roles as a new counselor, and to assess functioning and progress in supervision. Additionally, the supervisee gains greater insight as to how eco-mapping can be used with their clients in session, and facilitates understanding of how clients may feel when asked to do activities such as eco-mapping. The map may also serve to identify areas for transference and countertransference that may occur in session.

Process Questions and Follow-Up:

What was the experience of creating your eco-map?

What surprises you when you look at your eco-map?

Which of your relationships surprises you?

Which relationships on your eco-map are you satisfied with?

Which relationships on your eco-map would you like to be different?

What beliefs do you hold about your relationships?

How do these beliefs keep the relationship from being what you would like it to be?

How can you change relationships that you are unsatisfied with?

Practice Setting:

Counselor Education

For full article and case examples, please see O'Brien, E. R. (2008). From theory to practice. *Journal of Creativity in Mental Health*, 2(3), 17-27