***Supervision Experience***

(adapted from Ellis, Chapin, Dennin, & Anderson-Hanley, 1996; and Giordano, Altekruse, & Kern, 2000)

***What overall experiences are typical in supervision?***

¬ You can expect that your supervisor will sometimes not know what you need or want and that you may have to tell her or him. It's OK for you to do that! In addition, you can't get everything from one supervisor – get the most that you can, and remember that you are likely to have a number of supervisors throughout your career.

¬ You can expect to experience self-doubt, anxiety, self-questioning, and some concern about your performance and adequacy.

¬ You can expect to work with supervisors whose theoretical orientations are quite different than your own. There are a number of ways to deal with this: a) Identify their strengths and learn those skills that they are especially

competent at. b) Think about how their point of view may inform your own. How can you integrate apparently divergent material from your different perspectives? c) Consider what the supervisor has to offer you that you can integrate into your approach or way of thinking. d) Ask yourself if/how their perspective calls into question some of your cherished beliefs, and if those beliefs can withstand this scrutiny or if they need to be changed. This process, of course, can be very stressful because you are being stretched. But that’s exactly what may be needed to stimulate new growth in your understanding and application of counseling.

¬ In some settings, and perhaps in most settings, you can expect that your supervisor may not have as much time to spend with you as you might like. To the extent that you can, identify in advance what you need from your supervisor to facilitate the supervision process. In addition, you may find that you need to seek out other support. This may come from classmates and peers, from other supervisors at the site (where applicable), from peer supervision groups that you may join or initiate, or from outside supervision that you purchase yourself.

¬ You can expect to grow the most when you present your most challenging, difficult cases, especially when you take the risk to present the segments of audio-visual- recordings where things went badly or when you got stuck (i.e., the segments that are most difficult to view). It is equally important to present segments of recorded sessions where you did something exceptionally well.

¬ It is common for you to not want to disclose or discuss feelings and reactions to clients and therapy as well as feelings and reactions to the supervisor and supervision (e.g., sexual attraction; feelings of anger, shame, fear/scared, unsafe, distrust, resentment, guilt; mistakes, missing something important; your personal issues, biases, and values affecting therapy or supervision; and so forth). It is essential to do so. These are often indicators of important issues playing out in the therapeutic or supervisory relationship, and the greatest opportunities for growth and professional development.

¬ You can expect your growth to be discontinuous. At times, you may feel you've reached a plateau, where minimal growth seems to be occurring. At other times, you will feel yourself being stressed and stretched as new issues emerge for you and as you grow personally and professionally. Supervision can be wonderfully helpful as you struggle with new issues.

¬ It takes a long time (years) to acquire these skills. Trust yourself - trust the process.