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The Role of Supervision in Youth Work: Perceptions of Students Preparing to be Youth Workers

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Abstract

Working with youth involves mentoring and guiding youth through development of their physical, emotional, intellectual, and social skills, as they become adults. One would assume a great responsibility of working with young people comes with extensive training in one particular field; however, this is not always the case (Barcelona, Hurd, & Bruggeman, 2011). The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions expressed by undergraduate students preparing for a career in youth work regarding their knowledge and competence of supervision in a park and recreation setting. It was found in the pre- and post- surveys that future youth workers believe they are confident in supervision. There was statistically significant difference in confidence levels and abilities to take a supervisory role. In addition, students indicated significant growth in their confidence and ability to properly follow risk management procedures. Furthermore, three themes emerged: first, future youth workers welcome the challenge and responsibility of supervision duties; second, risk management is important to future youth workers; and third, future youth workers want to engage in supervision responsibilities and practices. The findings of the study suggest future youth workers may not realize the gravity of their decisions to combat issues of victimization among youth participants or may not fully understand what it looks *like to be negligent as it relates to supervision responsibilities.*

Key words: supervision responsibilities, risk management, supervision in youth work

Introduction

Youth work, much like its definition, is challenging and demanding (Jenkinson, 2010). Working with youth involves mentoring and guiding youth through development of their physical,

emotional, intellectual and social skills, as they become adults. One might assume that responsibility for working with young people comes with extensive training in one particular field; however, this is not always the case (Barcelona, Hurd, & Bruggeman, 2011).
Youth workers provide positive experiences for young people through mentorship and guidance during various developmental stages of young people's lives. A key role of youth workers is to provide proper supervision for those in their care. In the literature there is a lack of attention to the issue of whether youth workers understand their responsibility related to the concept of supervision. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions expressed by undergraduate students preparing for a career in youth work regarding their knowledge and competence of supervision in a park and recreation setting.

Literature Review

Youth Work and Supervision

Jeffs and Smith (2010) indicate supervision is a vital part of youth work practice. Research concludes supervision goes beyond simply watching youth (Appenzeller, 2005; Ammon & Unruh, 2007; van der Smissen, 2007). Morrongiello and Schell (2010) suggest three dimensions for supervisors who work with youth. The dimensions include implementing attention (extent of watching and listening), proximity (being within versus beyond arm's reach), and continuity of attention and proximity (constant/intermittent/not at all) and any change that could result in an increase of injury.

According to van der Smissen (1990), there are three types of supervision strategies that youth workers may need to utilize in order to address all the dimensions of supervision—specific, transitional, and general supervision—and it is essential for undergraduate students preparing to work in this field to know their roles and responsibilities related to supervision. Specific supervision includes constant and continuous monitoring of participants, either in a one-on-one relationship or within a small group. This type of supervision is common when the supervisor is giving instructions, the activity performed is high-risk, or there is a potential for serious injury (van der Smissen, 1990).

Transitional supervision includes observing and overseeing participants as they rotate between general and specific activities (van der Smissen, 1990). A supervisor's level of involvement in transitional supervision will vary depending on the interaction among participants between activities, movement by groups of youth within the facility, and the resources needed for the

activity. It is important for future youth workers to learn general supervision skills and have the flexibility to turn those into specific supervision skills as the nature of the supervisees and type of activity of lesson are altered.

General supervision includes overseeing participants involved in an activity. General supervision occurs when a supervisor manages behaviors of participants within a facility or given area (van der Smissen, 1990). General supervision could include overseeing a group of spectators watching a sporting event, youth participating in open gym, or youth participating at 4-H workshop.

Supervision Training in Youth Work

Supervision is an essential skill and should be embedded in staff development, training, and support (Christian & Kitto, 1987; Tash, 2000) but the nature of youth work does not often require supervision training (Jenkinson, 2010). Adequate professional development can assist with the acquisition of skills that can create positive environments for youth; therefore, it is important for youth workers to receive professional training. Jenkinson (2010) found that most professionals who work with youth indicate formal supervision training is essential to their success as a supervisor. Youth workers indicate "gaining a clear understanding of the elements of supervision provided a framework on which to base their practice, and also a basis for the evaluation of the supervision process" (Jenkinson, 2010, p. 160).

Proper supervision is an important component of youth work because it provides the basis for the relationship among youth and the youth worker. Supervision training should address issues of accountability by offering good standards of work and ensure policies are understood (Jeffs & Smith, 2010). By outlining clear training and supervision requirements, future youth workers have a clearer understanding about what is expected of them and feel able to perform essential job responsibilities (Jenkinson, 2010).

Purpose of Study

The literature supports the notion that supervision is a key component in youth work training. The purpose of this study was to examine future youth workers' supervision knowledge and their self-perceptions of their abilities to perform supervisory tasks in a park and recreation setting. There has not been an examination of how undergraduate students are prepared for

supervision responsibilities in youth work. In fact, there is no evidence future youth workers are competent and confident to supervise youth in extension and recreation programs. If the goal of youth organizations is to provide safe, meaningful experiences, then the topic of supervision needs further exploration to investigate how future youth workers understand supervision, knowledge levels and their own perceptions of themselves as being able to perform the tasks associated with this role competently.

The researchers were interested in having a better understanding of supervision experiences, knowledge, and confidence levels of undergraduate students pursuing careers in youth work. Therefore, the following research questions were addressed in the study:

1. Are undergraduate students studying for careers in youth work aware of proper supervision practices?
2. Does previous experience as a youth worker impact undergraduate students' perceptions of their supervision responsibilities?

Methods

To answer the research questions, a mixed-methodology approach was utilized. Hanson, Plano Clark, Petska, Crewsell, and Crewsell (2005) state mixed methods "has emerged as a viable alternative to purely quantitative or qualitative methods and designs" (p. 233). In mixed methods, data analysis and integration occur at any point in time (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003). The multiple stages of data collection and analysis of this study allowed the researchers to build a common lecture and shared understanding of undergraduate students' understanding of supervision from the beginning of a semester to the end. The following methods section will describe the participants and setting, the process of the data collection, and data analysis.

Participants and Setting

The participants of this study (referred to as future youth workers) were undergraduate students enrolled in leadership and program planning courses in two departments of parks, recreation and leisure studies at four-year universities in the Midwest, referred to as university A and university B. The courses were chosen specifically based on similarity in course objectives, assignments, and content taught to the students. Students in each course were required to plan and implement a youth recreation program in the community and work in

teams to do so. They were placed in teams of four to 10 members at each institution and were asked to lead youth activities in an after-school setting.

University A offered two sections of a course on leadership in leisure, youth, and human services, meeting twice a week for 75 minutes in each class period for 16 weeks. There were 30 students enrolled in the first section of the course with grade classification of six freshmen, 10 sophomores, 12 juniors, and two seniors. There were 27 students enrolled in the second section of the course with grade classification of one freshman, 13 sophomores, 11 juniors, and two seniors. Age of the students was not collected.

University B offered a recreation program planning course that met three times each week for a total of 50 minutes per meeting for 15 weeks. There were 42 students enrolled at University B with grade classification of one sophomore, 13 juniors, and 24 seniors. The students enrolled in the course at University B were more advanced in their degree program than the students enrolled in the course at University A; however, this did not statistically alter the results.

Data Collection

Data were intentionally collected throughout the semester to assess change over time. The study involved a mixed methodology approach to answer the research questions. Darlington and Scott (2002) indicate combining both qualitative and quantitative data allows studies to be driven by the research purpose to investigate the different components of the study. Using both forms of data, allowed us to enrich the results and collect data sequentially with an integration research process (Creswell, Plano Clark, Gutmann, & Hanson, 2003).

During the second week of the semester, the instructors had students complete a 26-item pre-test questionnaire examining the students' self-efficacy to perform various supervision activities including risk management, addressing conflict among participants, socializing with participants, and facilitating activities. The questionnaire was a modified version of the self-efficacy scale developed by Sherer et al. (1982). The scale was modified to reflect course content and outcomes. Faculty outside of the research project at both universities reviewed the questionnaire to ensure items sufficiently examined the students' perceived self-efficacy to engage in supervision activities.

In the fifth week of the semester, students were required to write a three- to four-page paper on the topic of supervision. The sixth week of the semester included a lecture and discussion on

the topic of supervision including supervision duties and responsibilities (Kaiser, 1986; Jordan, 2007; Morrongiello & Schel, 2010; Mull, Beggs, & Renneissen, 2009). Information presented in the lecture detailed the importance of supervisors' paying attention and determining the continuity of attention and proximity (Gaskin, 2003; Gaskin & Batista, 2007) to participants in a recreation activity. The final component of the lecture was on programming and handling difficult situations among participants, especially youth. Information was presented on the importance of adequate equipment, hazardous situations (Sawyer, 2013), experience levels, monitoring proper techniques, leading activities (Lussier, 2013), obtaining certifications (such as first aid, CPR, etc.), communication, and three types of supervision practices (van der Smissen, 1990).

Embedded within the course requirements during weeks 12 through 14, students at both institutions were required to complete a one-time special event in the community. Specifically, students were placed in teams of four to eight members and were asked to plan, lead, and supervise a one- to two-hour special event at an assigned agency. Agencies included after-school programs organized by community nonprofit organizations and other local agencies providing youth services.

Students from both universities completed a reflection paper on successful supervision practices and were prompted to consider supervision approaches, the role supervision plays in recreation activities, and their understanding of strategies of supervision responsibilities. All students completed a 26-item post-knowledge questionnaire during the last week of the semester.

Data Analysis

As described in the methods, a pre- and post- 26-item questionnaire was developed to gather an understanding of the undergraduate student's supervision knowledge and confidence levels. No significant differences in scores were noted between institutions ($\alpha = 0.24$; $p = 0.81$), genders ($\alpha = 0.97$; $p = 0.58$), or among grade levels ($p = 0.42$). The Cronbach alpha coefficient for the questionnaire was 0.485. While statistically this would limit the reliability of the survey or indicate that it is not unidirectional, the authors used this to triangulate the data to explain and better understand the entire supervision experience as it related to the other data points, including reflection and supervision papers. The researchers felt the survey could reliably examine undergraduate student confidence to perform supervision responsibilities; however, the concept itself was difficult for the students to assess until they were placed in a situation where they had to use these various skills.

Qualitative analysis was also chosen to better understand occurrences where little is known and to gain more in-depth understanding (Strauss & Corbin, 1990) for the papers written by the students. The authors conducted a qualitative analysis of the supervision and special event evaluation paper through coding data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). The researchers first used inductive reasoning to explore responses. They then created a template and inserted the undergraduate students' statements to the open-ended questions by identifying patterns in responses.

The responses were then examined, compared, and grouped to allow for examination of emerging themes (Patton, 2002). The data analysis process included search for systematic meaning (Hatch, 2002) and to gather comprehensive understanding (Merriam, 2009; Patton, 2002). Both researchers reviewed comments and found similarities among students' responses. Deductive reasoning process occurred to assemble common responses, sort responses, and develop categories within responses. The researchers each separately developed categories. Once both researchers identified categories, a debriefing occurred between the researchers to identify discrepancies and reach agreement on codes. Peer debriefing strategies were used as outlined by Creswell (2007) for reliability and trustworthiness of the data.The categories were used to organize and merge the data, allowing for themes to emerge. The data were analyzed to determine themes, categories, relationships, and other circumstances that would answer the research questions. All participant names were replaced with pseudonyms in the results section.

Results

We were able to get a better sense of future youth workers' awareness of proper supervision practices. Using the pre- and post-program implementation questionnaires, individual reflection papers, and supervision activity, three primary themes emerged: (a) future youth workers welcome the challenge and responsibility of supervision duties, (b) the importance of risk management, and (c) the need to engage in supervision.

We learned future youth workers are confident in their supervision abilities. Table 1 illustrates youth workers' openness to the challenge and responsibility of supervision duties. While the changes from pre- and post-supervision questionnaire were not significant related to their openness to the responsibility, we noted statistically significant difference in their self-efficacy to

assume a supervisory role to anticipate harm (a = .01; p < .001), maintain control during activities (a < .05; p > .05), and save a life (a = .004; p < .001) (Table 2).

Welcoming the Challenge and Responsibility of Supervision Duties

Table 1. Future Youth Workers' Openness to the Challenge and Responsibility of Supervision Duties

Item		Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Total
When I supervise participants, I am certain I can do a good job.*	Pre	1	14	74	89
	Post	1	3	82	86
I find it difficult to get the participants attention when I lead an activity.*	Pre	47	23	19	89
	Post	55	23	8	86
When I set important supervision goals for myself, I rarely achieve them.	Pre	64	22	2	88
	Post	74	10	2	86
I avoid difficult situations when it comes to supervising others.	Pre	50	20	19	89
	Post	48	22	14	84
If a situation seems too complicated, I will let another supervisor handle the situation.	Pre	36	26	27	89
	Post	49	22	13	84
I avoid trying to teach participants how to properly play an activity because I find it difficult to explain the rules to them.	Pre	80	4	5	89
	Post	75	6	3	84
I do not like supervision situations where I have to do a lot of socializing.	Pre	8	13	69	89
	Post	70	11	5	86

*Findings are significant at p < 0.05.

Future youth workers were confident in their supervision skills prior to engaging in the supervision activity. Some important changes occurred throughout the course of the semester. Perceptions that changed the most were feelings about getting participants to pay attention during activities (Table 1) and feeling that through supervision, the youth workers, as supervisors, could save a life (Table 2).

Table 2. Perceived Confidence in Ability to Engage in Risk-Management Responsibilities

Item		Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Total
Through supervision, I can save a life.*	Pre	0	13	73	89
	Post	2	14	73	86
Through supervision, I am able to manage risks.*	Pre	2	14	73	89
	Post	0	4	81	85
Supervisors anticipate foreseeable harm in the environment.*	Pre	4	16	69	89
	Post	0	6	79	85
Supervisor's behaviors can lead to either positive or negative leisure experiences.	Pre	1	1	87	89
	Post	0	2	83	85
I am competent and confident to intervene when inappropriate behaviors occur.	Pre	67	20	2	89
	Post	74	9	2	84
I can uphold my legal responsibility when I supervise.	Pre	77	9	3	89
	Post	81	4	0	85
When I supervise others, I find it difficult to anticipate the potential dangers that come with an activity.	Pre	59	25	5	89
	Post	67	17	2	86
No matter who my participants are, it is simple to maintain control of the participants during an acivity.*	Pre	25	25	38	88
	Post	10	27	46	86
If a medical emergency were to arise during a program or activity, I have the confidence to administer first aid to the victim.	Pre	21	29	39	89
	Post	10	27	49	86

*Findings are significant at $p < 0.05$.

While we were not able to link these findings directly to one instructional item, they are telling about the importance of supervision preparation. They suggest that future youth workers need additional training on strategies to keep youth engaged in an activity, and they also require specialized training to effectively address situations that are more dangerous.

We also learned risk management is an important topic for future youth workers. Table 2 illustrates perceived confidence in their ability to engage in risk management responsibilities. Overall, it seems future youth workers still feel they have much to learn when it comes to risk management. The lack of significance from pre- to post-activity scores can be better explained through the qualitative data, which provides more depth into the thoughts on risk management and their recognition of the importance of risk management in supervision. In their narratives, students indicated that risk management was a key supervision skill and a necessity in youth work. One important item to note is future youth workers are still unsure of what their legal responsibilities are as it relates to supervision and their inability to foresee potential harm. This is alarming and telling of the need for increased education in this area, noting that this will vary depending on the agency and the job training provided.

Student narratives included repeated statements indicating risk management is difficulut. Evan stated, "It is a big responsibility because potentially the lives of others are in your hands." Trevor reflected:

> *When supervising participants I think the two most effective principles are rending emergency care and developing and utilizing a supervision plan. Rending emergency care is important because, as a supervisor, you are responsible for the participants that you have under your supervision. If an individual was to get hurt under your [supervision] it is up to you as a supervisor to make sure that individual is not harmed any further. Many agencies require you to have your CPR/first-aid certifications for an extra precautionary measure. Developing and utilizing a supervision plan is also an important principle. This plan would help train and educate new supervisors and leaders as well as remind current leader and supervisors of their roles as leaders. A written plan will not only aid in training, but it will also help as a guide, should a participant be injured, or equipment or facility damaged. The risk of liability is minimized by having a supervision*

plan and following it properly. All great supervisors practice supervision principles.

The Importance of Risk Management

Future youth workers were asked to illustrate their knowledge of supervision responsibilities and practices for future endeavors. Results indicated there was a significant difference, ($p < .001$; $\alpha < .001$) at the beginning of the semester and at the end of the semester related to understanding of supervisors' responsibilities and confidence levels of general supervision practices (Table 3), indicating students' knowledge expanded over time

Table 3. General Supervision Responsibilities

Item		Disagree	Unsure	Agree	Total
I know general supervision practices.*	Pre	5	22	62	89
	Post	0	4	81	85
I am confident with transitional supervision practices.*	Pre	6	46	37	89
	Post	0	13	72	85
I am confident with specific supervision practices.*	Pre	6	34	49	89
	Post	1	10	74	85
I feel confident in my ability to make sure a facility is safe for participants.	Pre	3	8	77	89
	Post	1	5	79	85
No matter who my participants are, it is simple to maintain control of the participants during an activity.*	Pre	25	25	38	88
	Post	10	27	46	86
If a medical emergency were to arise during a program or activity, I have the confidence to administer first aid to the victim.	Pre	21	29	39	89
	Post	10	27	49	86
*Findings are significant at $p < 0.05$.					

Based on a content analysis (Hatch, 2002) of the students' reflections on the topics of supervision responsibility and one's ability to supervise, two sub-themes emerged: (a) future youth workers reported supervisors must be familiar with transitioning from one activity to the next, and (b) they shared the necessity of knowing participant backgrounds.

Transitioning from activity. Many future youth workers commented on the challenge of getting participants' attention to transition to other activities or getting them to pay attention to the leader. Some also mentioned not knowing exactly which member of their team was responsible for leading the group at various moments throughout the event. For example, Jessica shared the following:

> *It was a challenge to transition from one activity to the next. When we switched activities it was hard to tell who was leading the whole group and it wasn't very consistent, because it was a new leader for each activity*

Sara shared how her experience allowed her to practice transitional leadership.

> *I handled supervision responsibilities very well at the event by always making sure, as a team leader, I knew what everyone in my group was doing and where they were. I made sure to pay attention if a child left with their parents or if they had to go the bathroom that they actually returned back to my group. I felt prepared because before the event our group had a plan in place, if a child was injured or wandered off.*

Kenzie stressed her challenge of keeping children engaged came during the special event.

> *The biggest supervision challenge that I experienced was keeping each and every child engaged and active at all times. It's really hard to make children content while we had to transition from one activity to the next.*

Knowing participants' backgrounds. Knowing the names of the participants and background information about them provides a socioemotional element shows belonging, comfort, and acceptance. Comments included:

> *In order to be successful I would make sure I have knowledge of the participants, the activity, and the environment. I would make*

> *sure I understand the differences between the individuals that are participating in the activity. (Marcus)*

Joyce expressed the importance of knowing the audience and how that contributed to the success of the program saying, 'Knowing the audience was huge in our event. We had to understand them and know what abilities and limitations may be present as well."

Engaging in Supervision Responsibilities

The third research question explored previous experience and whether it impacts perceptions of their supervision responsibilities. Three sub-themes emerged: *competency, communication, and responsibility.*

Competency. Recognizing that practical supervision duties are intended to prepare future youth workers for professional endeavors, the students mentioned the importance of being competent and obtaining the appropriate credentials to perform the job. The majority of future youth workers recognized the importance of competency for successful supervision. For example, the following vignettes highlight their perspectives.

> *All great supervisors are competent. This means that they are qualified to perform an act. Leaders are expected to have an understanding of a variety of things like direct leadership, techniques, behavior management, human development and emergency care. Supervisors should be competent in several components which include but are not limited to: knowledge, age, experience, credentials, and attentiveness to duty. Knowledge about the participants, the activity, and the environment is important. The leaders' age should be appropriate to the activity requirements. The level of experience should also be appropriate when supervising for a particular task. If [certain certifications] are required, then persons filling those positions should have those credentials. Leaders in park, recreation, and leisure services should be attentive to the duty at hand. (Brandon)*

Isaac reflected on how his previous experience with supervising youth basketball required him to pay attention to details and be respectful.

> *I believe I am very competent to supervise youth. I am very attentive to details. I pay attention to the little things. I also feel*

> *confident enough to respect and be respected in any duty I do. For example, if I was to supervise a youth basketball program. I would have great knowledge of the game, and a lot of experience to add to the table. I would have the credentials to be trusted to supervise young basketball players. (Isaac)*

Ava and Scout discussed how supervision provided a safe experience for the participants and these skills will benefit them in future positions where they will be responsible for supervising children.

> *I consider myself competent supervising youth. As I stated [earlier], the last two years I have been involved in summer camps for elementary aged youth. From the time supervising children I have learned that it is important going over specific rules in order to keep them safe. My position during camp would be considered loco parentis, this means that I must provide care at even a higher level than a parent. (Ava).*

> *I feel that supervision can definitely show a person's competence; it can show whether or not you are responsible enough to handle the lives of the people you're supervising, as well as if you are able to follow rules and regulations accurately, and ultimately if you can keep people safe. (Scout)*

Cory also shared similar thoughts related to his ability to apply what he had learned in class to his supervision experience:

> *Knowledge is important in the leadership setting because others look up to a leader and if the supervisor does not know what he or she is doing, the people who look up to them for advice and help will not be looking to the supervisor who is not knowledgeable….Having the knowledge and credentials are also important.*

Communication. Future youth workers repeatedly mentioned the importance of communication when working with the youth participants and working with their peers in their groups for the assigned project.

> *I believe one of the most important practices of supervision would be effective communication amongst co-workers, parents, clients, and the community. Communication is key to any successful story. Communication can range from sending professional emails, conducting effective team meetings, and communicating with your clients. Getting to know your clients, and caring about them. Without communication supervisors would be useless. Supervisors are constantly communicating while supervising. Another very important practice in supervising would be responsibility. As a supervisor you are responsible for your participants, for the organization you work for, for the building you are working it. (Duncan)*

Jim captured the voice of his fellow students who shared communication was about listening and respecting others.

> *A big component of this success is communication….People like to be heard and be able to voice their opinions, and if there is not a sense of assurance that they will be able to share their thoughts and ideas, a leader-follower relationship can be difficult. Being the supervisor, you have to understand that your opinion isn't the only opinion that matters. By listening and processing their perceptions, it gives them the satisfaction of knowing that what they said was taken into consideration. When a supervisor realizes that their own opinion is not the only meaningful one, they are able to build a more positive leader-follower relationship.*

Clementine and Joey expressed the concern for having participants trust them and stated that communication can build relationships and trust.

> *One of the most important assets while working in a group is good and professional communication. If I was ever in the situation of supervising I don't feel quite competent. How I would ensure my success is by communicating the objectives clearly. Another important aspect in communication is making it so that your participants feel that they can communicate with you. (Clementine)*

> *If I were in charge and was told to supervise a group I would first make sure that everyone knows that I need to be respected but that I am also approachable and there to assist. Communication is key to almost anything. If the people I am supervising know that I will listen and take their thoughts into consideration, then that will allow things to run smoother. (Joey)*

Responsibility. Another important theme that emerged from the future youth workers reflections on their practical supervision experience was responsibility. Many commented on the need to keep participants safe.

> *If young children were involved I believe I could supervise them and make sure they stay safe, as long as I wasn't in a large environment such as a campsite in the forest, or an amusement park. As long as I would have a controlled and decent sized environment, I believe I could supervise them well. I can relate to kids well because I'm still a kid at heart, which would make being their supervisor a heck of a lot easier and more entertaining. (Andrew)*

Some mentioned supervisors must be organized and have a set plan of action to accomplish goals.

> *All great supervisors are responsible in order to be successful. Planning would be huge in being a successful supervisor. Part of planning is having goals and strategies or activities to accomplish those set goals. (Marcus)*

Many stated they had never really thought about the extent of supervision and as a result of their participation in the supervision activity, they had a chance to learn. For example, Joyce shared,

> *Before starting this event and before we learned about supervision practices, I had never thought about it. I didn't know there were different ways one could supervise. One of the greatest things I learned about being a supervisor during this event is knowing who you are going to be working with and which kind of supervision will be most effective for them.*

Conclusion

In an age of increasing accountability, youth workers are responsible for providing participants with a high quality of care through supervision. The findings of the study suggest supervision is not common sense or innate. Furthermore, what seems like best practice to one person is not best practice to another person. Future youth workers may not realize the gravity of their decisions to combat issues of victimization among youth participants or may not fully understand what it *looks* like to be negligent as it relates to supervision responsibilities. It is important for them to recognize these issues as they continue to impact recreation engagement among young people (Garner & Hinton, 2010).

Youth workers need opportunities for mentorship and communication. In the study, future youth workers shared their biggest challenges while supervising youth during a recreation activity was providing general supervision and monitoring the activity as a whole. They felt that active engagement with the youth was a challenge because they were unsure of how to effectively engage them in conversation. Having opportunities for youth workers to come together to share challenges, may provide an opportunity for mentorship. Allowing and encouraging staff to communicate with one another can empower them to feel as though their responsibility as youth supervisor is important to the overall program.

More robust training could reduce the number of legal cases involving parks and recreation programs for youth, especially noting the link between poor supervision and negligence (van der Smissen, 2007). Without directly seeking out formative information from future youth workers, we cannot fully understand their perceptions related to professional preparation.

That being stated, the intent of the study was to investigate future youth workers' understanding of and confidence in providing youth supervision, and we felt students learned more about youth supervision through their experience than was originally anticipated. Future youth workers not only indicated a thorough understanding of the course content on supervision but were able to analyze their experience and behaviors and how the theories from class were directly applied to the supervision activity. Specifically, Chelsea, wrote, "The habits that we start making now, will most likely be the same habits we have as we grow older." Because supervision has layered responsibilities and is context specific, it is important that future youth workers are provided with situations where they are asked to perform multiple roles, sometimes simultaneously and in a learning environment.

It is, therefore, recommended that future youth workers have opportunities to discuss and learn youth supervision is a process. The supervision process begins with planning and continues through the ability to provide direct services to those they are supervising. By knowing and practicing youth supervision ahead of time, youth workers can feel more confident and competent in their abilities to supervise. Though, the authors did note an essential element to this teaching and learning process. Initially future youth workers may feel overconfident in their abilities to perform supervision responsibilities; however, after being engaged in challenging situations, they felt overwhelmed. Other times, they underestimated their abilities to handle supervisory situations. Thus, understanding the term and recognizing which elements are to be enforced cannot supersede opportunities to be given supervisor responsibilities in practical situations.

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