

Abstract for IPPA conference

An Appreciative Model for Clinical Training and Supervision

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Our research project is an application of positive psychology and appreciative inquiry to graduate level clinical training and supervision. We use a combination of empirical and conceptual tools to explore the relationship between character strengths, professional strengths, and the enhancement of clinical and supervisory skills. Students are asked to take the VIA survey and reflect on the ways in which their strengths inform their clinical and supervision practices. Clinical supervision is then videotaped “live” with an observation group utilizing the supervisor’s VIA assessment results, and reflecting back instances of professional strength and relational inspiration. We have found that this empirically driven, dialogical model of strength-based inquiry enhances therapist, supervisor, and supervisee growth and offers a different perspective from the traditional deficit-based training focus of: “*What is your problem?*” therapy or “*Where are you stuck?*” supervision. Our appreciative model for clinical training and supervision asks what we want more of in our therapy and supervision practices and inspires the cultivation of personal and professional strengths, creative learning, and the expansion of one’s clinical repertoire.