

Envy and Jealousy in the supervisory triad

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Abstract

This paper considers a neglected topic, namely the manifestation of envy and jealousy in the psychotherapy supervisory triad constellated by patient, therapist and supervisor. It begins by defining and distinguishing these troublesome related feeling states and identifying their component aspects, before discussing those characteristics of the supervisory relationship conducive to the stimulation of envy and jealousy in the supervisee. Using supervision case illustrations, various manifestations of envy and jealousy facilitated by the figure of the supervisor are demonstrated in the therapeutic and supervisory dyads. It is argued that the supervisor's attitudes toward the supervisee, both conscious and unconscious, may catalyse, intensify or ameliorate the supervisee's experience of jealousy or envy. The paper concludes with a discussion of the implications of parallel process phenomena for conceptualising the supervisory relationship. While most envy and jealousy brought to the supervisor's attention typically arises in the therapeutic dyad, the supervisor's role and experience does not inoculate him or her from these feelings in the supervision context. A case featuring a supervisee's enactment in the supervision setting is used to demonstrate the supervisor's integration into a triadic circuit of mutual affective influence.