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Mentoring, Supervision, and Cultural Considerations: Interview with Linda Carozza, PhD

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Douglas L. Beck, AuD, speaks with Dr. Carozza about mentoring, supervision, reflective practice, multicultural considerations, experiential learning theory, and more.

Academy: Good morning, Linda. Thanks for your time today.

Carozza: Hi, Doug. Nice to speak with you again.

Academy: Before we get to your new book, *Science of Successful Supervision and Mentorship*, please tell me a little about your professional career?

Carozza: I was educated in the New York schools and attended the NY School of Performing Arts and I went through the New York City college system. I've been a licensed and certified professional for some 35 years or so. In 2007, I joined the faculty at St. John's and soon after that I was approached to write the book based on my professional presentations.

Academy: I enjoyed your new book, which is more-or-less a comprehensive guide to supervision and mentoring. In fact, it includes philosophical as well as pragmatic guidelines for people who find themselves in the role of supervisor or mentor and generally being responsible for the training of less experienced professionals.

Carozza: Yes, thanks. My intention was to elaborate on those same issues while addressing the science of supervision, which as is stated in the book, includes evidence-based practice, professional standards, and ethical practice.

Academy: Although the readers know my inclination is very much toward the "science" of audiology, amplification and dispensing, I must admit, mentoring is indeed a mix of art and science.

Carozza: Exactly. Mentoring includes many people skills such as promoting creativity, managing diversity, and, of course, managing conflict and mutually beneficial collaboration among people.

Academy: What's the difference between a supervisor and a mentor?

Carozza: Good question. A supervisor is primarily concerned with the work production of the individual in the professional setting, and supervision is often time-locked for a specific time. A mentor does not have to be your supervisor, but is concerned primarily with your professional and personal development and a mentor is more concerned with the entire span of your career. I've been very fortunate to have had many national and international mentors.

Academy: Linda, please tell me about "reflective practice."

Carozza: In the book, we talk about reflective practice involving a deep understanding of "self," including personal beliefs and values and includes the examination of where I've been, where I am, where am I going, my goals, and more. I've been thinking about these issues for years, and I use it in my work with undergraduates, too. Reflective practice helps them understand how they learn and what works for them in their situation as they learn more about the scope and depth of what's ahead of them.

Academy: Very good. If you don't mind, can you tell me a little about mentoring and supervision with regard to multicultural and cross-cultural issues?

Carozza: Well Doug, as you know, I'm a Hispanic-American and as I grew up in New York and adopted two children via international routes, I am very involved in multicultural issues and realities and it seems to me we all benefit from exposure to, and the experience of multicultural exposure.

Multicultural mentorship has recently received attention in academic circles across many disciplines and it simply serves to enrich the entire experience. Staub (2009) argues that clinical supervisors have a practical and ethical responsibility to train their workers to be culturally fluent through "self awareness" to develop and nurture "responsive, reciprocal and respectful" relationships.

Academy: And as cultures vary, dialects, language, accents, word use, meanings and the entire lexicon can vary to meet the needs or the desires of a local population. And with respect to audiology, as we use test materials that are speech-based, we can readily run into problems with sentence tests based on a number of these same factors, and it becomes more problematic as we consider the cognitive processing ability of an individual, their working memory capacity and other factors that impact their ability to listen and repeat words and sentences. Of course, this poses a potential problem, as we generally don't consider the cultural sensitivity of the stimuli or the cognitive abilities of the patient when we apply sentence tests and other speech-based stimuli such as auditory processing disorder materials.

Carozza: I agree. This is an area very ripe for study. I recently returned from a conference where auditory discrimination,

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processing time and figure-ground issues were addressed, and to me, from a phonological processing viewpoint, when we examine the underpinnings of language disorders, we have to consider what allows us to process the phonology and bottom-up, sensory-based information involves so much more than “detect and repeat.” And so as we become more sophisticated and we develop a greater understanding of the linguistic and cognitive differences among people, we may move away from pencil and paper and behavioral tests and go toward more objective sophisticated tools such as fMRI and various neurophysiologic ally-based analytics.

Academy: Absolutely. In fact, with specific regard to auditory processing disorders, many audiologists have been saying (for years) we should use neurophysiologic and psychoacoustic tests to eliminate speech and language-based cognitive and linguistic differences and biases from the test battery.

Carozza: I think you'll see more and more neuroscience introduced into audiology and speech-language pathology with regard to diagnostics and treatment. And interestingly, as we push forward it's important to understand, and I think we'll see more examples of the mentor and the mentee actually not being in the same profession—and indeed they may be in complimentary, related or interdisciplinary professions.

Academy: Can you tell me a little about the concept of experiential learning theory?

Carozza: Absolutely. There are many components but the key points include; learning is and remains an ongoing process, all learning involves re-learning, learning requires the resolution of conflicts such as—what one knows and what one perceives, learning involves adapting to the world, learning involves synergies between the person and their environment, and learning is the process of creating knowledge.

Academy: Thanks very much, Linda. It's been a pleasure speaking with you. I hope our colleagues serving in the roles as supervisors, teachers, and mentors will take the time to read your book and apply this knowledge to their situations.

Carozza: Thank you, Doug. I appreciate your interest in the book and I enjoyed the chat, too.

Linda Carozza, PhD, is an assistant professor at St. John's University, in New York City.

Douglas L. Beck, AuD, Board Certified in Audiology, is the Web content editor for the American Academy of Audiology.

For More Information, References, and Recommendations

Carozza, Linda. (2011) *Science of Successful Supervision and Mentorship*. Plural Publishing.

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