



ATFE

Association for
Theological Field Education

2005 ATFE Biennium

**ISSUES IN PREPARING
SUPERVISORS**

Abigail Johnson

Issues in Preparing Supervisors

Abigail Johnson

Emmanuel College, Toronto School of Theology

Preamble

Within Theological Field Education, we depend on supervisors who are willing to offer themselves as spiritual companions, guides, mentors, and co-learners with those who are discerning their vocation in ministry. Whether we use a “training” model of preparing supervisors, or have a more fluid approach, there are a number of issues in ministry that require awareness and attention such as: theological reflection, spirituality, boundaries, power and authority, conflict, leadership styles, learning styles, intimacy and sexuality and styles of supervision. A draft handbook for supervision was presented addressing these issues with opportunity for feedback and discussion.

Introductions

After introductions of the presenter, the participants introduced themselves, offering name, school, supervision training needs and reason for attending the workshop.

Question for Focus

To engage the group with the question about training supervisors, the presenter asked the group to respond to the following question.

“As you think about supervisors and supervisory relationships, what are some of the issues that need attention?”

Issues collected reflected a need for supervisors with listening skills, expertise in theological reflection and conflict management, clarity about learning styles, personal and interpersonal awareness and communication skills, denominational knowledge, leadership and pastoral effectiveness, and so on.

Presentation

The presenter offered an outline for a workshop on a Ministry of Supervision course that included underlying educational androgogy, a schedule for a two-week residential program and accompanying learning modules. Learning modules included the topics of theological reflection, learning styles, leadership, supervision, conflict, intimacy and sexuality, power and authority, lay committees, feedback, closure. The supervisory practice group process and evaluation procedures were also presented. This presentation was followed by questions from participants. Materials from this presentation will be available in handbook form within the next year.