

PODCAST: Interview Chris Campassi (2022-11-21 10:04 GMT-8) - Transcript

Attendees

Christopher Campassi, Dr. Tara Sanderson

Transcript

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Dr. Tara Sanderson: Hi everybody, and welcome to supervision Smorgasbord. A podcast about the clinical supervision strategies. That will make your life as a supervisor easier, and more fun. I'm your host, Dr. Tara Sanderson, a licensed psychologist group practice owner, and supervisor in the wonderful state of Oregon. Thanks for joining me today. Today we are doing a supervisor interview and I am so excited. I got introduced to Chris Campassi, through catalysts counseling in Colorado. And as far as I know, and please recruit feel free to correct me if I'm wrong. Chris, you are a therapist and a clinical supervisor there. And you work with fire lights supervision, I can't remember the full, is it fire late supervision,

Christopher Campassi: Finally supervision yet. Yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah. It is so incredible. How you were kind of growing this supervision component of. Not only your professional practice, but what you guys are doing in the state of Colorado, and I can't wait to talk about that more. Um, but some of the things that I have, I've kind of learned about you, as we were getting ready for this podcast, is that you are active in helping therapists, who are struggling through burnout through supervision and support, that that's a passion area of yours. And that you like talking about doing things from a psychodynamic perspective. I saw on your website that you had a ton of other perspectives that you do too but psychodynamics stood out to me because that's very much not the camp that I live in. So excited to talk about that too.

Christopher Campassi: He?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: But thank you so much for being here.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, thank you. Thank you for having me. I'm really excited to talk about all of those things. And it's really cool. This project that you've got going on as well. So I'm excited to be a part of it. So thank you.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, absolutely. So I started off my podcast asking, everybody, it kind of personal question. It doesn't have to be like, you know, your deepest darkest secrets. But your specific question is, what was the most bizarre encounter that you've ever had in your life?

Christopher Campassi: Oh wow. Wow, that one's tough.

Christopher Campassi: Let's see, bizarre encounters. So I worked in an emergency room for three years. In Asheville, North Carolina, and maybe this will play in to kind of part of my passion of being in a burnout, working with people, with burnout and compassion fatigue. So, spent the last three years up until last fall working in emergency room in Asheville North Carolina very much, a very big hospital, a thousand emergent or a hundred emergency room beds, and then likewise a really underserved homeless population and substance dependent population, so we kind of were the triage center for the community. So I'd say the most bizarre is that I you asked, you asked about two years ago. We had a client brought in who is very psychotic from the jail. He was rubbing feces all over his health and

Christopher Campassi: And he they dropped them off and said We couldn't manage this guy, can you manage him? And I said I will try I have fewer resources than you and by the end of the night he had punched me and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: What?

Christopher Campassi: bit me on my forearm and he held on to for about three to four minutes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: oh,

Christopher Campassi: So I would say, Yeah. Bizarre because he certainly very psychotic and mentally ill and it was a very sad situation and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely.

Christopher Campassi: also just for me that was the first time in the field where I had been physically assaulted after 15 16 years in the field. So, yes,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Oh yeah.

Christopher Campassi: Maybe you're looking for a different kind of bizarre,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: I think that is

Christopher Campassi: but I felt like jumped into my head. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, I think that is so valuable because I do think that a lot of times we get into these situations of either being that there's so much support that you know, that could never happen for you or you are in a setting where that happens a lot, some of our mental hospitals or even some of our like group home experiences sometimes have that that level of physical violence and to be in the industry for, you know, 15 odd years before this happened, and then be in that moment and recognize like Oh this is a different level of pain than what I've I've really been experiencing with with clients before and yeah and...

Christopher Campassi: Yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: noticing how that transitions for you. It's definitely it's definitely bizarre. Yeah. Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: Yes, yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: So you mentioned that that might kind of sway into that idea of burnout or of compassion fatigue. How how what was that transition like for you?

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Christopher Compassi: Yeah. And you know, you made a comment just a second ago about, you know, noticing a boundary crossing a shift in the way that I would be working with clients and and what happened was the pandemic was happening. Our hospital had also been bought out by corporate entity,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: so they were changes in staffing mostly security reduction in security staff and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: you can't see By seeing me on the screen but I'm six three, two hundred and fifty pounds. And I in many ways had to take on roles that were were more similar to security than the therapeutic role that I was in, which was to, you know, evaluate and get people to treatment they needed. So yes, a big boundary crossing and it did turn into more, the norm that was the first of what turned out to be about four or five, assaults in a six-month period, which eventually led to me, and actually, I don't mind being very personal about this. I had a kind of a dissociative episode about a year ago after a night at the hospital and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: it required me to take time off of work. It required me to Enlist my own consultants into my life. I had already continued. I've seen a psychoanalytic therapist for 22 years and continue to but I stepped. In as this happened, I continued to work with her but then I brought in my own consultant did a little bit of brain spotting as a client and then was kind of trained a little bit more on that technique. And I think it was at that time that I recognized how over a period of two or three years, I had slipped away from a really strong structure of supervision and consultation, but working hospital,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Mmm.

Christopher Compassi: especially under the circumstances. We were we're very much a triage and crisis center, There, we certainly had supervisors available to us but it wasn't the the typical structure routine of meeting every two weeks meeting every month. So that you know, having that foundation, when things are going well. So that when things start to slip one, there's someone else watching over me when I have my blind spots and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: saying Chris Enough's enough. Take some time off, whatever it may be.

Christopher Compassi: And so, I think I carried that experience, my wife and I actually left Asheville. We traveled for six months through Central America,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Well.

Christopher Campassi: and then Greece and the Balkans from January to June. And it was very much a recovery time for me a time of healing.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: But what I brought out of it was

Christopher Campassi: This is happening to so many of us on different levels and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yes.

Christopher Campassi: we have really taken a hit as a profession. Through the pandemic, we've been the providers to so many people including the medical profession who, you know, there's certainly a lot of appreciation for the medical profession through the pandemic. And I do see how our professionals have really contributed to their well-being without much taking care of themselves.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely.

Christopher Campassi: So, I've seen this kind of, so I'm just trying to kind of transform out of that and recognize that I don't want this to ever happen to me again, and I really don't want it to happen to anyone else. And I really want to get ahead of it for the younger therapist coming into the field and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: really setting a foundation of self-care, like true self-care, not this reactionary. I'm gonna try to kind of recover from the last three months of burnout in a week to, how do we instill? Like this proactive self-care.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Okay. Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: And I just think that supervision and consultation is a huge part of that

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely it. In my opinion, it's all about prevention. It's, you know, just like everything should be in the medical community like it should be about prevention but especially for burnout.

Christopher Campassi: Yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: It has to be about prevention. It has to be about like, how are you building the systems in your world to, to navigate everything that could be coming instead of waiting? Till it kind of creeps up on you and then you crumple and try and claw back up from it?

Christopher Campassi: Absolutely, yeah. Yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: That's great. That's great. well, I want to I want to hear more about the psychodynamic consultation area and...

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Christopher Campassi: Okay.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: and what like what value you see that bring I have so many questions so like give us a little overview first and we'll dive right in

Christopher Compassi: Sure. And let me just like preface this. That I'm not.

Christopher Compassi: You know, I'm not trained in psychodynamic or psychoanalytic therapy per se. However, I have seen my own psychoanalysts. Since 2001, I saw her shortly. After 9/11, I was living in New York and you know, very much spent a lot of time with her, you know, six, seven years on my own kind of therapy. And it was about that time that I started to. I was actually college, baseball coach and in in New York and I transition into mental health. And so, her role then kind of changed from more therapists to kind of my supervisor and consultant. And so, from that standpoint, I've always been a client of psychoanalytic therapy, and you'll notice I'm using psychodynamic and psychoanalytic a little bit interchangeably, and I'm sure there's people out there that would love to dispute.

Christopher Compassi: That's appropriate to be honest. We use the term psychodynamic more as a marketing because people are more open to hearing about psychodynamic, use psychoanalytic and all of a sudden it's Freud and you know, all the, you...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: things that come up that and it gets dismissed really quickly. So that's kind of the background of how I came to doing this work.

Christopher Compassi: Um, in this style. And so kind of the big tenets of it is, you know, like many modalities, this certain modality, the modern psychoanalysis, kind of focuses on what's called like compulsive repetitions these. You know, repetitions these behavioral patterns, thinking patterns that we develop, you know, all the way back to our pre verbal, you know, zero to three years of age when we don't have language to verbalize our feelings. And we kind of develop these patterns of behavior to get our needs met.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: You know, if we have an aloof parents, we probably going to be more attention-seeking per se because that's what it takes to get. Our needs met as a young child and then that pattern kind of follows us through life and it emerges in relationships where we're not getting our needs met. And we start to pull, pull That's just one example of...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: how one of these kind of repetitions can be developed and then carried through the lifetime and and reenacted in other relationships. So a lot of the work individually is, you know, much like Freud and and other psychoanalytic and psychodynamic modalities talk about is being aware of transference and counter transference. Of course. um, and the idea being that if I gain insight into this repetition and where it came from, then I will therefore have the agency to, to, you know, Adapt from the maladaptive behaviors.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: oh,

Christopher Campassi: So that's kind of the premise of the, the kind of back the, the school of thought that my analyst comes from, which is very much been kind of on me. And then I've kind of just as we all do we develop a little bit of our own style and our own kind of, you know, how we craft it in our mind and how we conceptualize how this work looks and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Okay.

Christopher Campassi: So I think what I've come up with and I'm not a researcher all either. I read a ton of research I read as much as I possibly can and listen to podcasts and integrate as much as I can. But I'm certainly not. Good at like citing models. But kind of the basic thing that I've started to work with my consultees and supervisees, and interns is just becoming very aware of your own reactions to your clients in the room.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: Understanding where in our body am I feeling things? And these might be positive things. I might feel a lot of warmth to this person. I might have a little bit of that guarded feeling, Maybe I need a little boundary. I'm not sure what this person's gonna take from me, you know, because we have our own repetitions that we're bringing in as therapist. And so whenever and I use that with our with my supervisees when they're really stuck. So if they're at an impasse client, they come in. I'm really frustrated with this client and then they kind of launch into the story of what brands doing and so I really try to

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Christopher Campassi: Acknowledge and validate what's going on with the client, but bring it back to. So what are you feeling with this client? What do you feel when you're you know, in this impasse with this client and You know, oftentimes it's frustration. I don't know where to go. I don't know how to help this person. Certainly there's times where it's You know, maybe I don't like this client as much as another client, or I'm having a little bit of a barrier to that connection.

Christopher Campassi: Or it can be again, really warm feelings? And I really try to emphasize that we're not looking at counter transference, as a good or bad thing. It's just, we need to be aware of it. In fact, we could have really good feelings towards a client and that could impact Their treatment negatively because we might not hold them as accountable. You...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: if we fight for me, I think it was someone that I relate to kind of like, my little brother, I might give them a little bit of more of a break because that's the kind of relationship ahead with my brothers. I'm gonna, you know, it's okay,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yep.

Christopher Campassi: you know, might not push him as hard as I should and that and that could be a negative thing and the therapeutic relationship as well.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: For sure.

Christopher Campassi: So I kind of just work from there. And then I just work on what's coming up for you. And where does that come from for you? And this is where the parallel process begins is that if I can get you as the therapist to identify Where your own stuff is coming from, it'll kind of release you to let the client do the same.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah. Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: So yeah, that's kind of the base. Peace.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: And all of those things in my practice with clients and then and of course, all of that does leak out in my supervision stuff too, but I do recognize that there is one question. I ask my team a lot and it's whose stuff is this. And whenever they're stuck,...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: that's a question that comes up. And most of the time, they even will ask it themselves before I get a chance to. And they'll be, like, I know Tara who stuff is this? And then they'll sit for a minute. And a lot of times the answer is, It's their own, right? Like, when I'm stuck with this client,...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: or I'm feeling this thing like, Oh yeah, this is my stuff. It reminds me of, you know, how I respond when I'm in conflict with something else or when I feel like I can't, you know, make the direction or the movement that I want to or a value that I hold of mine. One of the ones that we we process a lot in my practice is, you know, when people are in like abusive relationships and we can see from the outside like you should not be in this relationship human, like, let's get you out of it. But no, that like telling someone they shouldn't be

Dr. Tara Sanderson: A relationship is not the best way to help them. Come to their conclusion and get out of it if they need to or fix what? They need to or whatever. But that stuckness where they keep coming for week after week after week after week. You know the client is saying like these are all these terrible things that happen and we get to the place of like wanting to pull our hair out saying Why are you still there? And we have to recognize that. That's, that's our stuff That's our values. Sitting in this space being applied to a human and...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: this isn't their stuff that's mine. I need to deal with my stuff in that.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah, I think what I've noticed a lot especially like with my interns and pre-licensurees that they immediately go to. I must not be a good therapist. If I can't break through this impasse and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: and it, what's even more interesting is I'll say, Well how long have you been working with this client? Like two, three months. I'm like,

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: Well well, it sounds like you're hitting up on something really important. So rather than like, you know, have this idea that you're not a good therapist. Let's look at what we're hitting up on. And so then I another element to. Yes, there's the possibility that this is my stuff, the counter transference piece and then there's kind of another, a couple of other ways that, you know, we can use our body to to inform us, what's going on with the client is that, you know, obviously, when they have transference then then sometimes what we're feeling is, you know, either what they are experiencing in their life that, you know, when, when one of my therapists comes and says, Oh, I just feel so stuck and there's all this going on and they just bring in all these stories and it just feels so chaotic, you know, it's taking a step and saying,

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Christopher Compassi: Do you think this is the way they feel in life?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: You.

Christopher Compassi: Is that are you getting a glimpse? Is what you're feeling, What we call like an induced feeling is that they're inducing you to feel The way they're feeling in the world. And it's certainly natural that you,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: you know, someone comes in and dumps chaos into your lap that you're going to be like Oh my gosh fks in my lap. But that the real like curative piece of it is being able to acknowledge for them that. Oh, I really, you really giving me a good glimpse into how it must feel. Walking through light every day. I feel this chaos and I literally feel it in the room with you. And I can imagine that this must be how you feel every day and that helps me inform where you're at.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Okay.

Christopher Compassi: And then the kind of final piece that kind of think of it, like kind of three prongs I guess is It can be the counter transference. What is my stuff? What am I feeling in the room? Is this my stuff? Is this? What the client feels? Or is this potentially, am I getting a glimpse of how other people in their world experience them?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Oh yeah.

Christopher Compassi: So when they come in and they say, you know, Oh my God, you know, I have all these friends and no one wants to listen to me and I try to talk to them and then they go on and on and on and they don't want to listen and they just seem bored and then you start feeling those things like who? I don't know, if I want to listen, I'm feeling bored. I'm feeling, you know, shutting down and that can inform us as well. That this is what the client experiences in the real world when they do reach out for help. And that's why it's so critical for us to not. Play into our own stuff or play into their repetition, which is,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: You know.

Christopher Compassi: You know, I try and develop these relationships. And then I get rejected and now I have to deal with rejection and we try and focus on rejection. But at some point, we do have to acknowledge that we're creating this rejection in our life through this repetition.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, absolutely.

Christopher Campassi: So you

Dr. Tara Sanderson: I love that component of being able to notice and being able to build the relationship with the client enough to bring it up in a way that can be therapeutized for them to make change, right? It's saying like being able to build the environment that says, Hey, I'm always gonna let you know, like what changed in the room when you did this thing like, how it internally made me feel not in the way of like, I'm looking for an apology but just to say, like, Let me give you some feedback of of...

Christopher Campassi: You.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: what happened in me when you did this thing. And I wonder if that's how other people in your life experience you is that how you were wanting to be experienced? Where does that come from in you, where you were, you know, trying to grab that all this attention, like where did that start? And, and you're, you're rebounding the information in a way that's going to be helpful and make change rather than being another person who says, they're bored with me, right?

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, right. Right. Exactly. Exactly. Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: I'm sure there's like fun, psychoanalytic words for rebounding, the thing or relationship, but I don't know what they are, but I feel like that's a thing,...

Christopher Campassi: I don't either.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: but that dynamic I feel like,...

Christopher Campassi: I don't either.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: especially, like, when we transition into thinking about that for supervision, right of being able to look at our supervisees and say, What I'm noticing when you're talking about this, when I'm getting the feeling that I'm getting from, you is this thing? I wonder if your client experience is that in the room that you're bored or that you're, you know, these pieces and and what what is it that you want them to get and how could you transition your part for for their experience to be different and for them to be able to grow and change?

Christopher Campassi: Great great. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, very cool. A very like, I don't want to call it different because I do think it's, you know, it's very similar to a lot of the things that we do. But I think it's a more. Maybe I could say it, like It's a process oriented supervision versus a skill. Acquisition supervision, right? Like I do think you are learning skills through that process as well,...

Christopher Campassi: Absolutely.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: but there I feel like sometimes I end up getting into more resource mode with my clinicians of like I need a tool or a worksheet or a book to read or whatever. So you know, I'm calling through my little library of things to like give them the stuff and this model, definitely leans, a little heavier into the experiential, kind of component.

Christopher Compassi: Yeah, yes. And and to that note, you know, there's not, you know, and there's no right or wrong way because the what I am not strong at is being able to provide those resources. You know that's when I do have to because there are times when the when the supervisor does need more technique or skills training and that isn't my strength. Thankfully for me I've got I'm surrounded by four other approved clinical supervisors here at firelight. So it's very easy for me to say Hey I will work with you on this. Go work with this person on that because they're gonna be able to give you a lot more.

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Dr. Tara Sanderson: One.

Christopher Compassi: And that is kind of, you know, Talking about just firelight supervision in general, that's what we're really trying to build here. Is this very like, you know, kind of varying degrees of experience, varying modalities and just varying presence. You know, we're all different people. We're all different people humans in the room and and it's good for for a supervises to get kind of that variety.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely, absolutely. I talked in another podcast with a supervisie who has three, who has three supervisors in his practice right now,...

Christopher Compassi: You.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: his primary supervisor, which is kind of like the go-to, you know, basic level of all the things. And then he has some groups supervision that he attends with people who are also doing a couples work, that it's a very focused in that couples work experience. And then he has a theoretical orientation supervisor, who is really kind of honing his skills in that area. And he talked a lot about being intentional about building this community so that he obviously had his bases covered for what he needed for licensure but was growing in the areas that he really wanted to hone in and...

Christopher Compassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: then knowing that over time some of those areas might grow and change after he feels like he's got, you know, maybe he does well with couples for a while and maybe he starts getting some more individ.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Clients. So, he may lean heavier on working with an individual therapist or, you know, supervisor or whatever. And we talked a lot about, you know, needing to continue that after your licensure requirements are done. And I think that's a big part of what firelight supervision talks about too, is like, you kind of need consultation supervision support, kind of for the life of you as a clinician, right?

Christopher Compassi: I think so. I think so. I think it's, you know, I think it's it's on the verge of negligence if you're not but more importantly. More importantly, you're just setting yourself up for the potential of a really rough burnout or stretch of compassion fatigue, and being lost. To figure out in and I can attest to this, you know. Thankfully, I have so many.

Christopher Compassi: Good people in my life that quickly rushed in a year ago and said, Hey you you need to check in with this person. You know, hooked me up real quick because in that moment you're lost and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: you're really struggling to kind of figure out where you need to go. So having it always there, the structures always there, there's no questions as to who do I go to? And most likely when I by the time I do, go to that person. They're already very well aware that this is going on.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: And either they have been gently trying to prove it to see where you're at. Or they have been giving you the benefit of the doubt that you can take care of yourself, but also watching with the cautious eye.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: So then when you do bring it up, they say, Well I'm glad you mentioned that because I've noticed this this and this the last few weeks and this is really good that we're gonna talk about this.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: It just again goes back to like you said that proactive versus Active and we we know as therapists. We don't encourage that in our clients. So then why would we not? You know, we don't, we don't think coming to therapy, just when you're in crisis, is a good idea. So why would we go to supervision only when we're burning out?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely. Absolutely. And I think we all get caught up in the when the rules of it all. So one of my supervisees struggled with some personal life stuff that happened and then, you know, was was eeking on the edge of burnout. And I said, Let's talk about a sabbatical. But would that look like for you, take, take six months off. Take three months off, take one month off, I don't like.

Christopher Compassi: so,

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Let's figure out what's doable for your life. I don't want to put you into a hardship, but I also think like if you don't do something now you're gonna be in a hardship later no matter what. So let's figure something out and the first words out of her mouth were like, but the board won't let me do that. And I said, Who says the board won't let you do that. Like Where does that even come from? And so we.

Christopher Compassi: what board?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, yeah. And so we, we researched it and talk to the board and gave gave the reasons why we were thinking about doing this and their answer was, Of course. Yeah, let's just write a plan and we'll come up with a plan and work together and we'll check in in three months and see where we're at.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Like shocking new news. Like you're human and the board recognizes that it's not this amorphous.

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Christopher Compassi: Uh-huh.

Christopher Compassi: Absolutely. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Taken care of and building that foundation of prevention and care for yourself. Instead of pushing so hard just to get it done.

Christopher Compassi: Yeah, yeah I do really. We do really try to emphasize that and it's in my bio, it's in my blogs. That if you want to just get supervision for your license, There's so many people in the world that can get you there and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah. Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: and and I don't want to, you know, disavow it's it's the most important like landmark of our career so I don't want to dismiss how important it is but yes you're absolutely right and we try to emphasize that. The you know that's just meeting the minimum requirement at the very beginning of a long career.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: If you're just meeting the minimum requirement at the very beginning of a very long career. We're not getting off to a strong start.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: So trying to really emphasize that, you know, this two years of pre-licensure in particular and you know, and for me I the way I'm working right now is with this continuum of internship into pre-licensure as...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: oh,

Christopher Compassi: if because I do have two interns right now that I'm working with that that maybe a year from now will be pre-licensure. So I'm trying to think about that kind of long-term and I really try to emphasize with them Every day, every week, I'm going to tell you to slow down, you know, I put it up front, we're not gonna go fast, we're not going to work on advanced skills. And we're not going to count hours.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Mmm. Yeah,...

Christopher Compassi: We will we will count the hours...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: of...

Christopher Compassi: because yes,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: but Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: you but not get into that. What we're doing each week is how many hours am I going to get? And just watching that you know for the interns at 600 just like tick off one hour at a time, which is brutal to watch anyway. But yeah it's really focusing on this is a time...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Oh my gosh.

Christopher Compassi: where you have to do this. Therefore let's take full advantage of it really focus on your development.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, absolutely. I'm thinking back to some of my I think it was my second year maybe it was my third year of having student interns. And I remember very clearly when you were saying that there were probably two or three sessions right at the very beginning where like every session it felt like they were just counting up their hours and predicting their future of. If I get this many than this is when I can be done and and I remember looking at them and being like, so the deal is you will get all your hours by the end of the year. You don't have to do all of this math all the time,...

Christopher Compassi: You. The right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: like it will happen because it happens. I've been doing it for several years. I'll be doing it for several more. Like we got this part. What I want you to really focus on is like Let's get really strong in your process of like What is...

Christopher Compassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: what are the first five sessions look like for you with Connions? Like Let's keep, talking about your theoretical orientation as you're trying on new pieces. Let's write down a little piece of like,...

Christopher Compassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: what worked this week and dissect? What theoretical orientation does that come from? Like what parts of

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Are just you that you applied in this situation like Let's do the fun stuff.

Christopher Compassi: All right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Math is not my strong suit, let's not count things for hours on it...

Christopher Compassi: Right. We all just barely made it through a statistics classes, right?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: but I remember like that's right. Yes, for sure version. Yeah it

Christopher Compassi: Well, I really like that PC said about what are you doing and what part of that is just you and that's something that I really focus on especially with my interns because they're like I don't know what I theoretical orientation is and I'm like that's fine. You shouldn't how could you without practicing?

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Compassi: So now tell me. What do you do? And then we'll name that. And in naming that, you'll probably find that that's the theoretical orientation that you gravitate to because it's more just your genuine self and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Totally.

Christopher Compassi: really dialing into that as that that's to me a very advanced skill to be able to truly dial into that. Whereas there's this idea that like, active listening and being present with the client, those

are just the simple soft skills that every therapist has and I'm like, well, they don't have it. If it's not natural and they don't develop it.

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Dr. Tara Sanderson: Truth.

Christopher Campassi: So all the advanced skills in the world don't really help if we're not authentic in the room and we don't develop that relationship with the client.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely. And I think that that is the probably one of the, the wisest things we can do as supervisors is hone in on those natural components with our supervisees and, and help them notice and tie, those too, how they see change happen for clients and give that a name. I encourage all of my people, like, as they're learning different theoretical, orientations to try new things for sure. Like See what happens when you do it. See if it feels natural to you or if you like it, see if you hate it, you know, because it is important for you to test your feet in lots of different pieces. But you know, don't get caught up in. Oh I just like this tools that this one uses because that's that may not actually resonate with who you are and part of our experiences of having so many counselors. And so many different theoretical orientations is that we are trying to meet the needs of millions upon millions of people.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: People and we can't be the right therapist for everybody. I tell people when they come into my practice that I'm a pretty, like I use the term aggressive, It's probably not true, but he's a dream aggressive,...

Christopher Campassi: Here. Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: but I'm an aggressive therapist, I'm gonna poke at things, I'm gonna ask you questions, I'm gonna like pull things apart and you may or may not like that maybe you want it there for two more I call them.

Christopher Campassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: The kind of the not in smile therapist, right? Who allows you to just take the session and...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: run with it where you go and and ask questions and does their job. There's nothing bad about that plan but they're just different than me.

Christopher Campassi: What? Yeah. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: And as long as you know who you are and you can relay that to the client and you're using good tools, as you have developed them over time. Like you're gonna be the right therapist for the right people because we can't be everything for everybody.

Christopher Campassi: Right. Right. Absolutely. And I think also back to your point about following rules, we can mix and match. We try I talk a lot like you mentioned style that you know just because someone who has more experience does something different than you, It doesn't mean that it's better. It might just

mean that you have a different style and I really want to empower our supervisees to to you know, really lean into that because that's who they are.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: And for me personally doing that more kind of cycling, psychodynamic supervision. It's easier for my client or for my supervisees to really dial into their authentic self. If they're not like, you know, encumbered with all these expectations of coming up with these fancy techniques and being evaluated at school, and once we remove all that and just go into like who are you? And, and I really like the comment earlier about What is your idea about change and how that happens And I asked that same question often is if you can tell me what you think. If you can tell me how you think people change, then I can probably help you find your theoretical orientation because that's what this is actually all about.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Absolutely. I think there's something really valuable about that experience of as you go throughout the week and you've walked out of a session and you feel like wow that was a good session my client did some really good work in there. Document the heck out of that session all the things. You said all the things they said like grab as much information as possible...

Christopher Campassi: You know.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: because that session is going to tell you a lot about what you brought to the table because clients of course can change spontaneously.

Christopher Campassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Sure we're all humans, we do that but there's something going on in your relationship. There's probably something you did that is gonna help guide us to the things that feel most successful to you. Because whatever happened in there happened, pretty naturally because you, you felt that walking out the door, he didn't go. Yes, that worksheet was the perfect worksheet ever.

Christopher Campassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Come very rarely is we do we have a worksheet. That's the best worksheet ever, right? But how we bring in those pieces is really valuable.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, it is a quick example. If we have time is my one of my interns She was seeing a client a few weeks ago and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yes.

Christopher Campassi: she, this intern a mother and the client was a mother and really struggling to be provide for her child, as well as she wanted. And and so with my intern, we we kind of really reflected on how that was for her and she was able to be honest, which was critical to say. And I don't like the way she. Relates with her kid, like it. I don't, you know like as a mother, you know, and I had to first acknowledge, okay. Good, good awareness on your part to if we need more work on that, let me get you hooked up with one of our supervisors who's a mother...

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Dr. Tara Sanderson: You.

Christopher Campassi: because I can't support you. And as much in this process, that's kind of a sidebar But she was able to acknowledge these feelings. and then through acknowledging those feelings, she was also able to connect into um, The challenges of being a Mother.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: Difficulty, you know, all the factors and it really kind of became a turning point for this intern in particular, the next session, she was able to come in with like that unconditional positive regard. We talked about humanistic theory a lot because I really think that is her kind of natural. You know, authentic self. And she really connected with this mother the next week.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Mmm.

Christopher Campassi: And to the point that she this woman then told her that she would like to follow her from her school, practicum site to her internship here at Catalyst.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Nice.

Christopher Campassi: So it was a real, you know, it was a great example of that she she took the risk to be honest, with feelings in our supervision and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: had she kind of denied that feeling, I think that it would have just sat there in the room with them. And she was able to get it out in the supervision room, then she could go in with her client and be authentic.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, gosh in as a, as a takeaway point that element of Being vulnerable with your supervisor and really asking yourself, those tough questions being real in that space so that someone else can ask you. Those tough questions is one of the biggest areas of your ability to grow, right? If...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: if we're doing that piece of the work, it makes the growth so much more organic and able to happen. And you can see your own progress in this field differently than if you're coming in with a presentation in hand, right. Like not that you shouldn't prepare for supervision,...

Christopher Campassi: No.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: people should prepare for supervision but but I think that that extra layer of like,...

Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: yes, of course, I've prepared these questions and I have these people that I want to talk about, but also I'm going to be honest about my stuff in this space because that's a piece of how we're gonna grow.

Christopher Campassi: Yes, yes, absolutely. I that was you put that so perfectly? Yes.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Make sure we get out there into the world.

Christopher Campassi: Um, you know, I guess just maybe circling back real quick for a little plug on what we're doing here.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Please.

Christopher Campassi: So, like you mentioned so catalyst. Counseling is our, you know, our private practice. Shannon hears is the owner. She and I actually developed this. This practice almost 10 years ago, eight years ago and then I ditched her. I went off to the Peace Corps for a couple years and left her and it was just kind of very much part time and then in the last three years, you know she's just worked really hard to develop this strong team of therapists and this group practice that offers individual and group therapy to adults and then over the last year,

Christopher Campassi: As I was returning to rejoin, Catalysts we started talking about her goal to create a supervision and consultation kind of parallel practice.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Hmm. Yeah. Oh my God.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, and, you know, she's always been really passionate about supervision. She was very much my mentor and my supervisor, as I was getting into the field. So I learned so much from her. She and I also talked a lot about body and what we feel in the room and then we've just developed this passion for Really wanting to bring in this next generation of therapists and really give them a solid like foundation. Rather than some of us, we kind of did the got our degree went into agency work, learn trial by fire learn a...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: Don't, I love community mental health and, you know, it would encourage anyone to get some experience there. Um but we really just want to be more proactive. And so firelight supervision was born out of this goal to reach as many supervisees and in, in a piece of that is having our internship program. And then now, we're really trying to offer consultation to, to licensed clinicians across the country because we're not bound by any state. Licensure. So we kind of have a few elements, our internship program, our pre-licensure supervising program, and then our consultation program and offering individual and group for for each,

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Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah I love that and I think when when we talk about it being kind of the lifespan of of your world as a therapist and recognizing that you do need a lot more intensive support as you are getting started and then of course as you were experiencing, what it's like to be a counselor as you're getting license and then after your license recognizing you still need support. And and there is a place for for you. And I love that you are serving the whole country. You know, there is a place for you to go get regular group supervision or regular individual and you know whether we call it

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Supervision or consultation. Like I know that there's probably some language words that are powerful in that, but I think it's really important for us to remember that like, we need to be sharing what we are going through in this process and building that community really intentionally so that we're not getting caught up later in any of the things that would cause us more harm than good. Yeah, prevent them right.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Coming back to that word, prevention. Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: I guess maybe. On the final note, I kind of think of it like a professional athlete or professional performer of any type that, you know, when you get to the pinnacle of like where you're at, you don't, you don't reduce the amount of support in your life. You actually increase it, you know, a college athlete,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: So true.

Christopher Campassi: who's from, you know, a trainer that is responsible for 70 people on a football team. You know, when you go into the NFL, you're gonna have your own personal trainer.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Right.

Christopher Campassi: You're gonna have your own dietitian, You're gonna have nutritionists, You're probably gonna might have a therapist or a performance, you know, based therapy, you know. So you know Why wouldn't we as therapist take that same approach that as we become more skilled, we actually want more and more support for that sustainability rather than we've reached this point.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah.

Christopher Campassi: And now we're going to stop working on ourselves.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Yeah, I love that image that like, completely completes my vision of of why it's so important to build a community around you. I always tell people that like their therapy is one of the loneliest jobs like you were talking to people all day but you're never really like, being like, it's not like you're chatting with your best friend all day. Like it is, you're doing a job and...

Christopher Campassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: you're providing the service, but it's, it's pretty lonely, unless you build that community. And, unless you build those supports, where you're connecting with people intentionally across those bounds. And, and I think that a lot of times students, especially as they get out of having to tape all of their sessions and do all these things are kind of like I just want to be licensed so I can do it myself. And like I don't need all of this other stuff but this imagery puts into words, what I've been thinking of like. No, but when you get out on your own and...

Christopher Campassi: Okay.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: now you're like, at the next phase, this is when you need more supports. They're not people who are directly like forcing you to

Christopher Campassi: Absolutely.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Do things in a certain way but they're the ones that are going to be honing your skills and...

Christopher Campassi: Right.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: helping you become the best that you could be. But super cool.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah, absolutely. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: I dig it. Very cool. Well, where can people find you? Chris

Christopher Campassi: So we are at [www.firelight Supervision.com](http://www.firelight-supervision.com). So that's that is our, you know, like I said we are catalyst counseling for therapy. But since this is more related to supervision firelight supervision,

Christopher Campassi: Com and you can see we've Shannon's done. Just done such a fabulous job of creating this incredible website that, you know, really outlines, who we are has all of our therapists Profiles. Also, lets you know, what services are available and cost points and...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Great.

Christopher Campassi: also breaks down kind of our different approaches and specialties. And, and then also on that note, we have a bunch of consultation groups that have different themes such as like an ADHD group,...

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Okay.

Christopher Campassi: working with client for clinicians working with clients with ADHD. They have a neuro divergence consultation group, which is actually for therapists, who identify as narrow divergence.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: That is so great.

Christopher Campassi: Yeah. So some of our groups are more geared towards a population and some of them are more geared towards like an orientation on the part of the therapist. Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Very cool. I love how diverse that is because I feel like, I feel like anybody could go there and probably see themselves in one of those groups. Whether it's this is about the clients that I'm trying to serve or this is about other people who are like me trying to do this work. Really cool.

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Christopher Campassi: Yeah.

Dr. Tara Sanderson: Well, thank you so much for being here. Chris and I hope you have a great rest of your day.

Christopher Campassi: Sure. Thank you, you as well.