More than a Checkbox: Conceptualizing Supervision from Intake to Discharge

Shane T. Spiker, PhD, BCBA, IBA, LBA

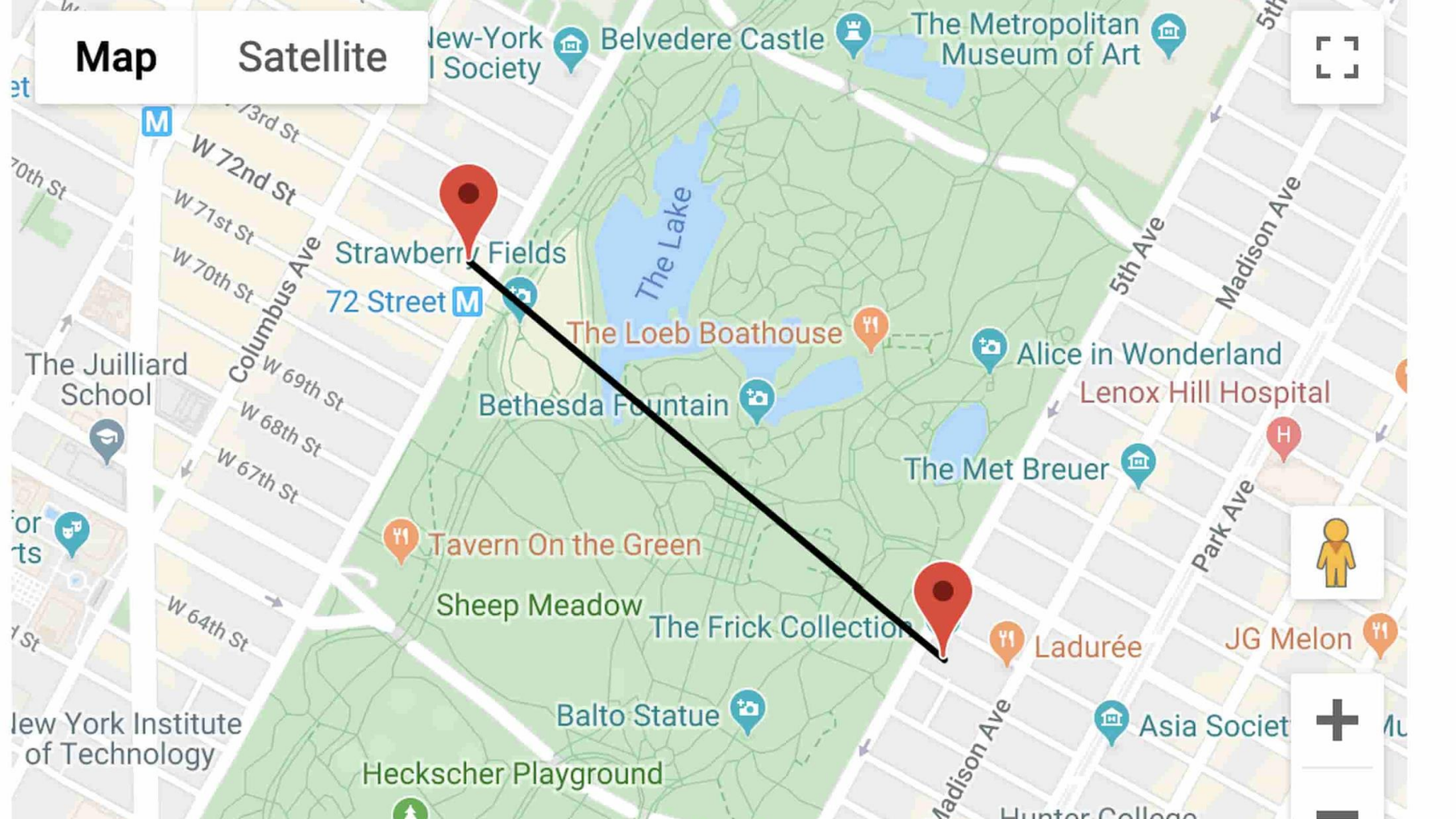*(He/Him/His)*

pbs

Positive Behavior
Supports Corp.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

- A special shoutout to Dr. Karly Cordova for being the kind of supervisor I hope to be when I grow up. You deserve more thanks than you could possibly know.
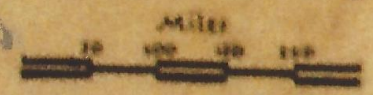
SUPERVISION AS A PROCESS

- Remember, supervision is a PROCESS, not a destination

- There are uneven trails and pathways

  - And sometimes, we don't end up where we intend

- Our role as SUPERVISORS is to guide others to THEIR path

  - Not OUR path

- Too often, we EXPECT things to move smoothly and without too many "bumps" in the road

WHERE ARE WE GOING?

- The Expectation:
  - Help someone gain certification in behavior analysis

- The Reality
  - Teach useful practical skills
  - Provide opportunities for experience
  - Support trainees when things are "going wrong" (i.e., therapist)
  - Accountability "buddy"
  - Model of ethical behavior
  - Audit master

Our goal is NOT to produce clones of ourselves

Instead, we should strive to create better analysts than we ever were…so how do we do that?

Eth...
Beha...

The Ethics Code for Behavior...
Compliance Code for Behavior A...
and certificants are required to adher...

...Foundation for the BCBA examination.

...ndations, which includes basic skills and underlying
...ludes more practice-oriented skills.

...d.)

, and Interpretation

...or Analysts)

This docum...
Behavior Analy...   t CO: Author.

DESPITE THE "CURRICULUM"

Table 3. Most Frequent Ethical Violations: 2016-2017

Violation Category	Relevant Code Elements	# of Total Actionable* Violations (all systems)	# of Substantiated Violations (DR)
Improper or inadequate supervision or delegation	5.0 Behavior Analysts as Supervisors 10.05 Compliance with BACB Supervision and Coursework Standards	67	25
Failure to report or respond to the BACB as required	10.02 Timely Responding, Reporting, and Updating of Information Provided to the BACB	67	29
Professionalism and integrity	1.04 Integrity 1.05 Professional and Scientific Relationships 7.01 Promoting an Ethical Culture 7.02 Ethical Violations by Others and Risk of Harm	65	34

DESPITE THE "CURRICULUM"

Table 2. Most Common Substantiated Violations of Ethics Standards by BCaBA and BCBA Certificants and Applicants: 2019–2021

Violation Category	Relevant PECC Standards*	# of Substantiated Violations**
Professionalism and integrity	1.04 Integrity 7.02 Ethical Violations by Others and Risk of Harm 1.05 Professional and Scientific Relationships 7.01 Promoting an Ethical Culture 1.02 Boundaries of Competence	66
Failure to report or respond to the BACB as required	10.02 Timely Responding, Reporting, and Updating of Information Provided to the BACB • Violation of national or state rules and regulations • Inability to practice due to safety concerns	39
Improper or inadequate supervision or delegation	5.04 Designing Effective Supervision and Training 10.05 Compliance with BACB Supervision and Coursework Standards 5.02 Supervisory Volume 5.03 Supervisory Delegation 5.05 Communication of Supervision Conditions	22
Failure to maintain adequate or accurate records	2.10 Accuracy in Billing Reports 2.11 Records and Data	21
Responsibility to clients	2.05 Rights and Prerogatives of Clients 2.06 Maintaining Confidentiality	14
Nonsexual multiple or exploitive relationship	1.06 Multiple Relationships and Conflicts of Interest	7
Inaccurate and dishonest information in obtaining or maintaining a BACB certification or status	10.01 Truthful and Accurate Information Provided to the BACB	7
Improperly discontinuing or transitioning services or service interruptions	2.15 Interrupting or Discontinuing Services	5
All other reasons		50

*The standards in this column are ordered from most to least frequent

10 Recommendations For Providing Flexible And Comprehensive Supervision

RECOMMENDATION 1: DEVELOPING A SYSTEM/USING A CURRICULUM

- The best thing you can do is do the work ahead of time to set yourself up for success

- Get an ACTUAL curriculum, not the BACB's checklists

- Create tools that are easy to use and SUSTAINABLE
  - There's nothing worse than a beautiful, unused template

THE ABA SUPERVISION HANDBOOK

2nd edition

A GUIDE TO QUALITY FIELDWORK EXPERIENCE

HANA JURGENS   KARLY CORDOVA   YULEMA CRUZ

DEVELOPING A SYSTEM AND CURRICULUM

The Minimum

- Use the task list

- Use BACB documents

Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.02: Supervisory Competence
- 4.03: Supervisory Volume
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.05: Maintaining Supervision Documentation
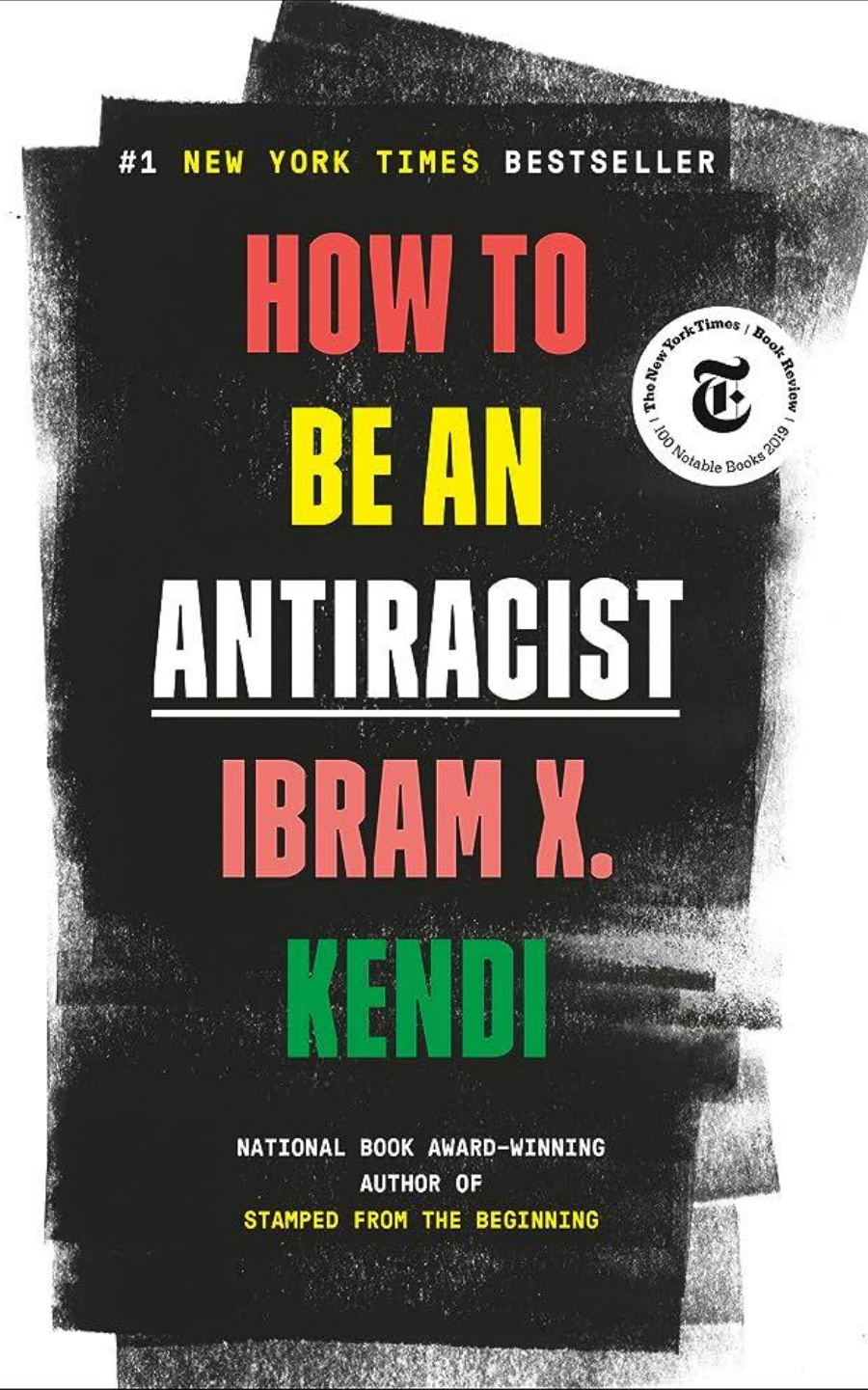
Best Practices

- Create flexible templates and tools for use in supervision
  - Evaluation/feedback documents
  - Graphical displays

- Establish policies and procedures for deadlines, documentation, etc.

- Use a guide or curriculum based on:
  - Fieldwork site
  - Goals of the trainee
  - Requirements of supervision

RECOMMENDATION 2: INTENTIONAL DEI

- What does this mean?

- As you develop your system and materials, try use varied authors and writing that includes DEI content

- Create a "reading list" that you can share with your trainee
  - And include non-behavior analytic reading

- Recommended readings:
  - Leland & Stockwell (2019)
  - Morris & Hollins (2021)
  - Li et al. (2023)

INTENTIONAL DEI

The Minimum

- Share an article from one BIPOC author

Best Practices

- Engage in regular discussions about implicit bias and how that impacts practice

- Establish diverse reading list

- Practice responding with "I don't know"

- Identify additional trainings to attend WITH trainee

- Create materials with representative authors, images, names, etc.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INTAKE AND STARTING SUPERVISION

- Take intake seriously!

- This is where you ESTABLISH the entire experience
  - And establish your rapport as a supervisor

- You can also determine whether to continue forward or not with supervision
  - Why wait to get into the contract if you've got red flags?

INTAKE AND STARTING SUPERVISION

The Minimum

- Sign the contract and start

Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.02: Supervisory Competence
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.05: Maintaining Supervision Documentation

Best Practices

- Create competency-based intake process
  - Test for understanding of requirements and expectations

- Establish space to ask questions regarding supervision experience

- Set up system (i.e., documentation system, provide tools and templates)

- Take time to get to know your trainee

- Determine supervision fitness and readiness

RECOMMENDATION 4: INITIAL ASSESSMENT

- Start this AFTER you've agreed to do supervision

- Again, use a curriculum if possible
  - And a battery of assessments
    - Which might include tools you've developed as part of your system

- ALWAYS include a preference assessment
  - And consider using a demand assessment

- You need baseline to see if your training is even working!

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

The Minimum

- Ask them to self-assess

- Using task list as only data source

Best Practices

- Inform trainee of assessment requirements PRIOR to assessing

- Either based on skills necessary for clients OR general skills in practice

- Gather information from multiple data sources to synthesize
  - Self-evaluation, observation, basic competency benchmarks

RECOMMENDATION 5:
SETTING FLEXIBLE AND INDIVIDUAL GOALS

This comes AFTER you've assessed your trainee	• And is NOT just "the task list is your goal"
What if their goals go beyond what is on the task list?	• I.e., specific skills for some specialization?
Where are those "Soft Skills" supervisor's need on that task list?	• Or the ethics code, for that matter?

SETTING FLEXIBLE AND INDIVIDUAL GOALS

The Minimum

- Starting everyone at defining positive reinforcement

- Checking off task list items based on knowledge

Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.06: Providing Supervision and Training

Best Practices

- Using your baseline data to identify a variety of goals

- Schedule regular goal check-ins

- MEASURE GOALS
  - And graph them!

- Prepare to drop goals if they don't make sense for the context

RECOMMENDATION 6: PROVIDING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

- It's not enough to just wait for opportunities

  - We have to create and delegate (more on that later)

- Where the error occurs:

  - We get busy and can't create new ones

  - There aren't many "new" opportunities for trainees

  - We run out of ideas

ABAI

Check for updates

School's Out for COVID-19: 50 Ways BCBA Trainees in Special Education Settings Can Accrue Independent Fieldwork Experience Hours During the Pandemic

Brighid H. Fronapfel[1] · MaryAnn Demchak[2]

Abstract

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and nationwide executive orders closing schools, many trainees completing their supervised independent fieldwork in educational settings lost the ability to accrue hours linked to restricted activities of a therapeutic and instructional nature with students (i.e., clients). Given the impact on trainees of the pandemic restrictions, we present 50 suggestions for trainees in school settings to continue to accrue hours for both restricted and unrestricted activities throughout the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Keywords Behavior analysis · COVID-19 · Pandemic · supervision

As of April 6, 2020, officials in all 50 states issued orders for school closures through the month of April in response to COVID-19. Such closures are an effort to decrease the spread of COVID-19 through antecedent/preventative measures such as social distancing. At present, many states have school closures through the month of May. However, some states have closed schools for the remainder of the academic year, whereas other states such as North Dakota and New Jersey have closed until further notice. Officials in U.S. territories, such as Puerto Rico, have also issued closures until the middle of April (Peele & Riser-Kositsky, 2020).

As a result of the nationwide closures, Board Certified Behavior Analyst (BCBA) trainees completing their supervised independent fieldwork in public and private school settings abruptly lost the ability to accrue hours at rates available prior to the pandemic. Because supervision in function and nature is to support trainees in relation to ethical practice, quality of services, professional growth and competence, and work productivity (Kazemi, Rice, & Adzhyan, 2019), supervisors should continue to perform ethical supervision even under the present conditions and provide opportunities for their trainees to continue to accrue hours for both restricted and unrestricted activities.

Given the limited number of contact hours trainees currently have with their students, those contacts may not even provide the opportunity to engage in behavior-analytic activity. As a result, it is crucial to provide a means of accrual for this specific group of trainees to continue to engage in a comprehensive supervised experience during this unprecedented time. The purpose of this article is to present 50 ways trainees can accrue experience hours that are linked to the Behavior Analyst Certification Board (BACB) 4th and 5th Edition Task Lists (BACB, 2012, 2017).

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Overview of Potential Unrestricted Activities

Given the constraint on student (i.e., client) contact, which eliminates the ability to accrue restricted hours, we emphasize

PROVIDING AND CREATING OPPORTUNITIES

The Minimum

- Wait for opportunities to come up

- Have the trainee put together materials for therapy
  - Does this even count?

- Listen to podcasts
  - And nothing else
    - BTW, this shouldn't count

Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.02: Supervisory Competence
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.06: Providing Supervision and Training
- 4.07: Incorporating and Addressing Diversity

Best Practices

- Activities can include skills that are new AND maintained

- Conduct a planning meeting with trainee to brainstorm activity ideas

- Consult with colleagues about their opportunities
  - Remember; you don't have to do it alone

- Consider whether the training site is enough for the trainee

RECOMMENDATION 7: REGULAR EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

- This is your PRIMARY intervention for changing behavior in supervision

- This ALSO helps protect you in the event things go horribly wrong
  - Document all the feedback you provide AND what you did to change it

- Consider radically candid feedback:
  - I'm telling you because I care about you enough to tell you
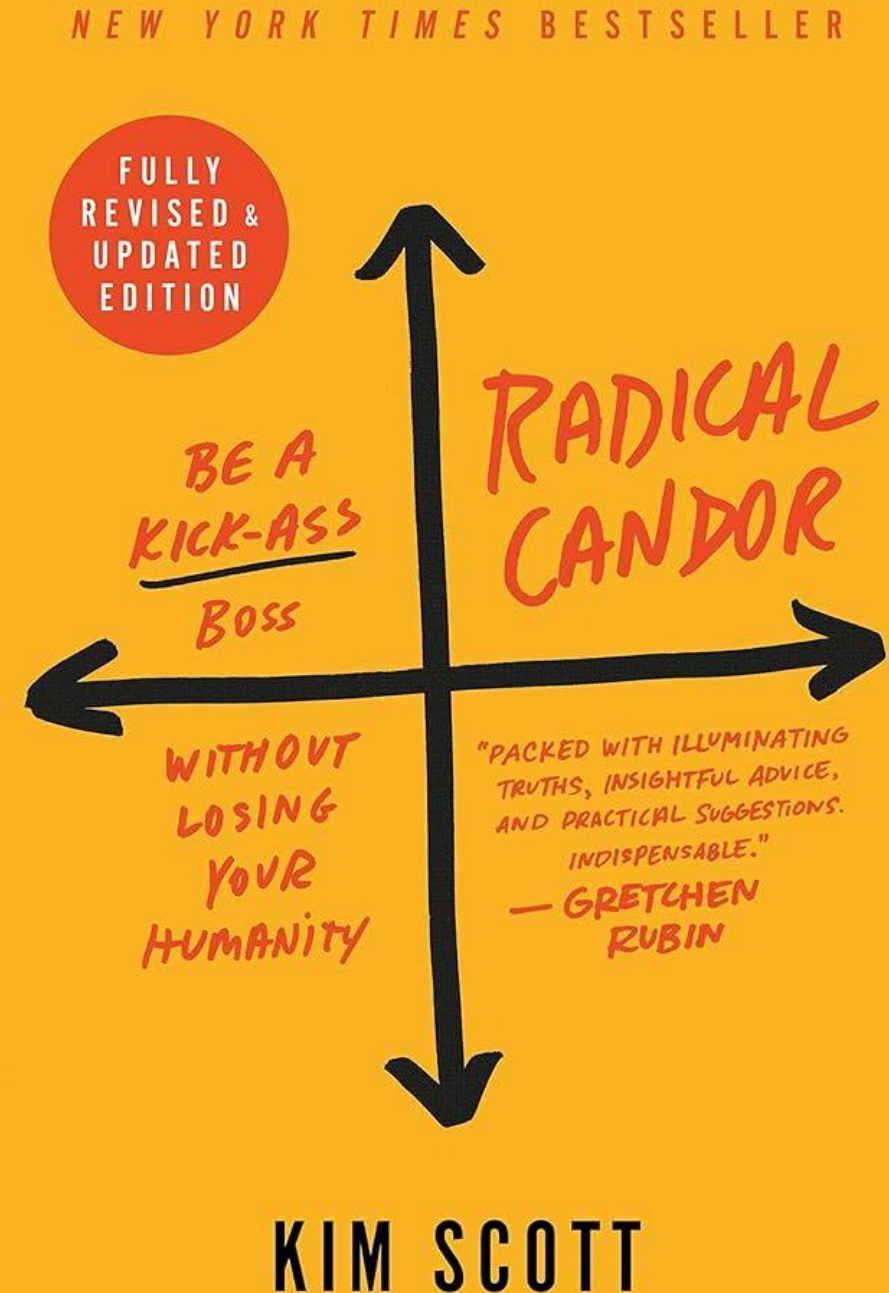
REGULAR EVALUATION AND FEEDBACK

The Minimum

- Saying good job

- Providing graphs

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Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.02: Supervisory Competence
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.05: Maintaining Supervision Documentation
- 4.06: Providing Supervision and Training
- 4.08: Performance Monitoring and Feedback
- 4.10: Evaluating Effects of Supervision and Training

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Best Practices

- Schedule formal evaluation times and base them on specific skills
  - Not overall performance. Do that later

- Intersperse evaluations to include:
  - Skills for maintenance
  - Skills for development
  - New skills

- Create a system for reciprocal feedback
  - And hold trainees accountable to provide feedback

RECOMMENDATION 8: DELEGATING TASKS

- It's ok. You don't have to do it all yourself
  - I promise

- When delegating:
  - Consider what your trainee's skillset is
    - You can't do that without assessment and evaluation
  - Their current ability to take on additional tasks

- For us to develop:
  - A skillset to TOLERATE giving up control

DELEGATING TASKS

The Minimum

- Giving the trainee a task and waiting for it to be completed

- Giving tasks out that you don't want to do

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Related Codes:
- 4.01: Compliance with Supervision Requirements
- 4.02: Supervisory Competence
- 4.04: Accountability in Supervision
- 4.05: Maintaining Supervision Documentation
- 4.08: Performance Monitoring and Feedback
- 4.09: Delegation of Tasks
- 4.10: Evaluating Effects of Supervision and Training

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Best Practices

- Determine whether the skills is NEW or MAINTAINED

- When the skill is NEW:
  - Provide training and use BST
  - Provide multiple opportunities until fluency

- When the skill is MAINTAINED:
  - Schedule assessments
  - Evaluate using evaluation systems
  - Provide training on variations of the skill

RECOMMENDATION 9: TRANSFERRING OR TERMINATING SUPERVISION

- Supervision ends for a variety of reasons:
    - Meets requirements
    - Transitions to new region/company
    - Does not meet supervision expectations
    - Trainee terminates

- We have an obligation to TRANSITION the trainee out of our supervision experience

TRANSFERRING/TERMINATING SUPERVISION

The Minimum

- Saying goodbye

- Terminating supervision because you can

Best Practices

- Establish ongoing PD goals for supervision and beyond

- Contact next supervisor to collaborate and share successes
  - And data!

- Document reasons for terminating supervision, regardless of reason

- Audit prior to officially terminating
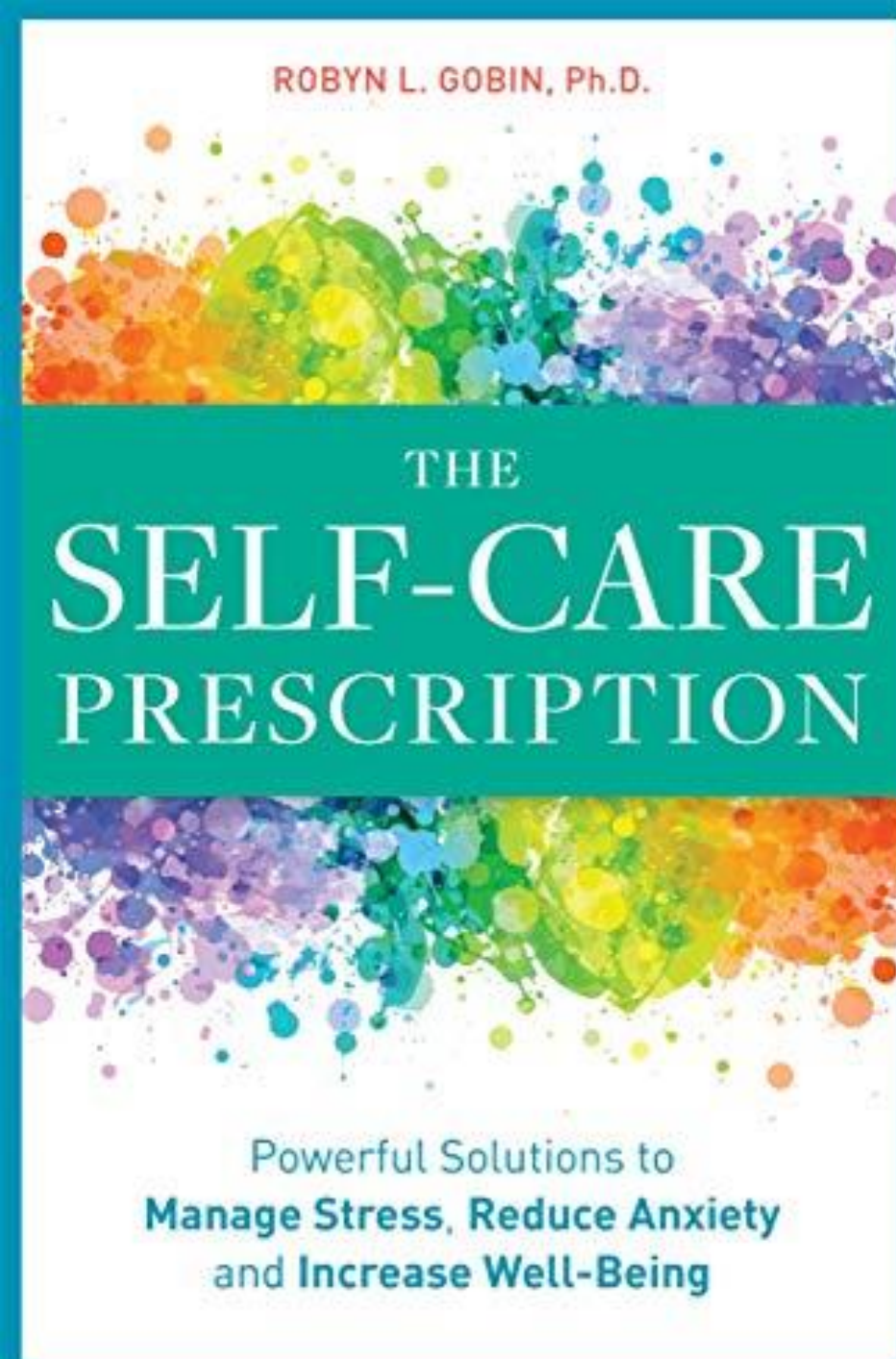 - And provide report

- Establish MENTORSHIP

RECOMMENDATION 10:
TAKE INVENTORY OF YOURSELF

- Throughout ALL of this, you have to be ok
  - But how?
- As a supervisor, you:
  - Are the primary interventionist
  - Establish the context for supervision

ROBYN L. GOBIN, Ph.D.

THE
SELF-CARE
PRESCRIPTION

Powerful Solutions to
Manage Stress, Reduce Anxiety
and Increase Well-Being

TAKE INVENTORY OF YOURSELF

The Minimum

- Ignore all of your feelings until you can't take it anymore and things start to fail and you are unsure of how to fix it so instead of taking a break and trying to figure out how to resolve any of the ethical dilemmas you yourself have created you decide to push forward until eventually something cracks and you look back knowing that ultimately it was your fault

Best Practices

- Plan and protect your self-care time

- Create flexible expectations for yourself

- Schedule a "check-in" with your self…
  - Daily, for how your day is going to go
  - Weekly, to see if you are meeting your goals
  - Monthly, to re-establish your supervision practices

Related Codes:
- All of it

Now, I Give You Permission…

You are not obligated to complete someone's entire supervisory experience.

So, draw some lines where you can. And be ok with letting go when you need to.

You are allowed to make mistakes

So long as you correct them

You can specialize in your supervisory practice

Which allows you to develop a trainee's skills in part

You are allowed to learn new things from your trainee

I PROMISE you will be wrong about things

You are a human that needs self-care

Remember; you're also a model for self-care. You don't want to pass on bad habits.

TAKE HOME POINTS

- My entire point is that supervision and the context in which we provide it is more than a task list or ethics code
  - It's full of interpersonal engagement, skill development, detours, shifting motivations, etc.
- Supervision is SUPPOSED to be a challenge
  - It's advanced and is fostering a group of analysts better than we were (if we do it right)
- It can be made LESS of a challenge if we prepare for it and establish some ground rules
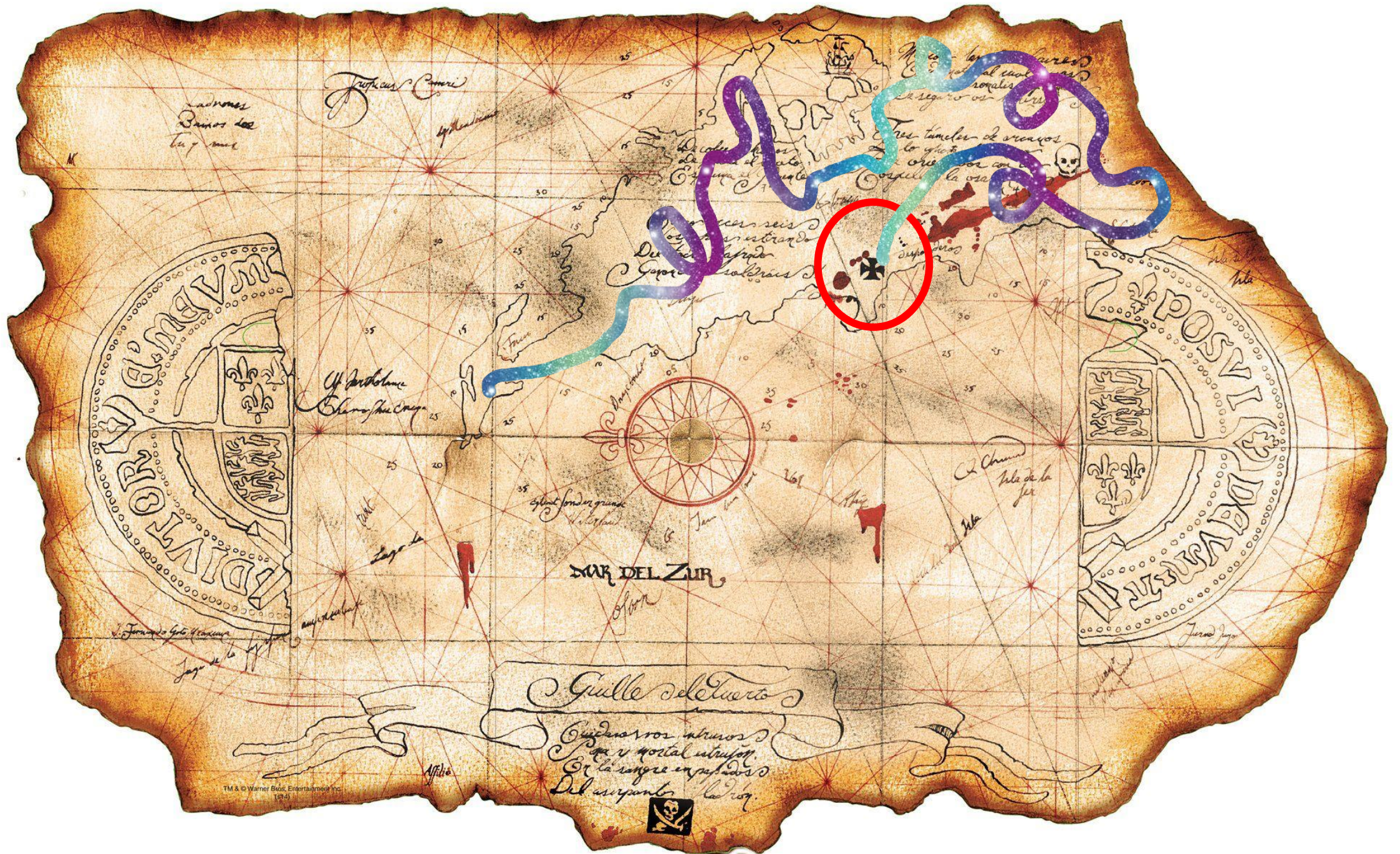
THANK YOU!

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