Framing Feedback

Feedback is a vital mechanism for change when in a learning situation. Consider the following four focus areas when providing feedback to a student following a therapy session in the mental health setting.

Area of focus	Definition	Examples to discuss in supervision
Process skills	What counsellors *do* in their sessions, i.e. expressly all observable counselling behaviours	requesting information, reflecting, role playing, confronting, and supporting
Conceptualisation skills	The *thinking* component of the Mental Health student	identifying client concerns, discerning predominant client themes, designing therapeutic interventions, and planning for future sessions
Personalisation skills	The *interplay* between the Mental Health students' personal attributes and their work with clients, as well as their forming an identity as a mental health counsellor	separating one's own reactions from client's reactions, being non-defensive with clients and the supervisor, handling a variety of emotions from clients and within oneself, and allowing one's sense of humour to emerge in interactions
Professional skills	*Defining* and *maintaining* professional standards of practice	Knowledge of and adherence to ethical standards, being on time for appointments, maintaining confidentiality, and establishing appropriate relationships with clients, completing paperwork in a timely manner, dressing appropriately, and related behaviours
Adapted from Bernard (1994, cited in Pearson, 2004, p. 366)		

Reflection: Consider a supervision session with your student following their first attempt at client contact. Write down an example phrase you would use to address each of the four focus areas. What are some clinical examples that might match each of these areas?

References

Pearson, Q. (2004). Getting the Most Out of Clinical Supervision: Strategies for Mental Health. *Journal of Mental Health Counselling, 26*(4)*,* 361-373.