The purpose of this study was to explore clinical supervisors’ approaches to strains in the supervisory relationship, or supervision alliance ruptures, specifically in the context of supervisees providing substance use disorder treatment. A survey research design was used with chi-square and backward stepwise regression analyses to investigate the relationship between supervisors’ attachment styles, supervisory styles, and emotional responses to supervision alliance rupture vignettes within a sample of 73 clinical supervisors. Respondents completed measures of attachment and supervisory styles before reading and responding to supervisee vignettes that illustrated two types of supervisee-initiated alliance ruptures. Vignette responses were coded by a coding team in terms of verbal interventions, rupture repair efforts, and emotional responses.

Results of the current study suggest a close attachment style was associated with supervisors’ use of rupture repair efforts in response to an active rupture. Supervisory styles and attachment styles accounted for significant variability in emotional responses to an active rupture. Supervisors demonstrated low rupture repair efforts in response to...
passive ruptures. Recommendations for supervision, counselor education, and future research are provided.