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**Development of A  
Counselling and Psychotherapy  
Supervision Training Program  
Within an Australian Educational Context**

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A Project submitted to Middlesex University in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Professional Studies

National Centre for Work Based Learning Partnerships  
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## ABSTRACT

Although supervision has been a significant component of counselling and psychotherapy practice since the days of Freud, it appears that only since the professionalisation of this industry has supervision become a requirement for ongoing practice. Indeed, it can be argued that supervision is becoming a profession in its own right as it is increasingly recognised that not only does the supervisee benefit in a multitude of ways, but ultimately it is the welfare of the client that is of prime concern. In Australia, the registration process only began in 1999 and as such, is still defining its role amongst the 'helping' professions and government bodies. Although there are clear statements regarding the amount of supervision hours required for both training and ongoing professional practice for counsellors and psychotherapists, there is still work to be achieved in both defining supervisor qualifications and designing an ethical code of practice.

At the macro level, a motivation behind this project was my desire for greater personal lucidity about the nature of supervision and the characteristics that determine a good supervisor within the strictures of an educational establishment. One of the possible outcomes was to contribute to the registration definitions. More specifically, the intent was to design a training program for supervisors that was congruent with the needs of supervisees and was cross-theoretical in orientation to allow potential supervisors to develop their own personal model of working.

This project documents the phenomenological research I undertook with recently graduated Master of Counselling participants. One of the principle intentions was to explore each individual's underlying meaning and intent towards supervision. Equally, the aim was to develop increased clarity about the nature of supervision itself.

The results of this research in combination with other materials were used to develop a supervision training program that was run over 12 weeks in March 2003 and then evaluated for future developments. In the course of this research, a framework of supervision emerged which I have defined as the 'Wheel of Supervision', which has the potential for further evolution in terms of future training and further publications. This 'Wheel of Supervision' is a new and different way of viewing supervision from both the supervisor and supervisee perspective.

# Chapter 1

## Queries and Questions

### Introduction

I will begin as I intend to continue, by writing as much as possible in the first person and to allow my critical faculties to come to the fore. My aim is to write this project as an enjoyable narrative, and to allow the reader to understand my journey whose destination ultimately arrived at the development and teaching of a training for supervisors in the counselling and therapeutic arena in Australia. Significant to this narration is to describe the context and intent behind the project as well as writing about the specific details and particular pathways I chose in my travels.

This chapter aims to delineate the foundations of my interest in supervision and to highlight my personal philosophical practice, which in turn, informs my personal values, and professional practice as an existential therapist and educator. These tenets underpinned my attitude towards my chosen methodology and research process, which ultimately prompted the design and implementation of the supervision training program.

On a personal note, I trained in England as an Existential therapist and in Australia I have a private practice as well as working at a private college, the Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP) as the Director Academic Programs. Both these aspects are significant in the development of my ideas and the implementation of the program.

The project that I chose has been a journey in many senses of the word. Personally and professionally, the process of conducting and completing the doctoral project has been both enriching and draining. Enriching in the sense, that I have learnt more than I ever imagined about research, phenomenology, supervision, collegial support, friendship, self awareness and my own sheer personal determination. Draining because of the time and personal effort to keep on track within the context of

everyday life and work commitments that remained, regardless of my personal preferences.

The journey began in 1998 when I participated in the development of a joint Professional Doctorate in Psychotherapy with the University of Western Sydney (UWS) and the college where I work, ACAP (Australian College of Applied Psychology). As the papers were drawn up to proceed through the University accreditation, I was made aware that I would not be able to participate further in the proposed program since I did not have a doctorate myself. Although this joint Professional Doctorate never came to fruition due to internal university politics with the psychology department, I realised that the missing link in my professional development needed to be filled.

My first encounter with Professor Derek Portwood from Middlesex University was both encouraging and stimulating and although the Metanoia also offered me a place on their DPsych programme, I decided to proceed with Middlesex since it would have been difficult and expensive for me to travel to London several times a year to attend the specialist seminars required by Metanoia. In discussions with Middlesex, I decided to apply for the maximum academic credits but in order to proceed, I needed to decide on my overall topic.

My curiosity in the topic of supervision began in 1996 when I was asked to act as a clinical supervisor on the Masters of Counselling qualification, which ACAP (Australian College of Applied Psychology) was running jointly with UWS (University of Western Sydney). Perversely, my interest germinated from a lack of any depth of understanding about what it meant to be a supervisor. I had been a supervisee and had experienced several different types of supervision, but I had never contemplated the complexities of the role.

Nevertheless I took on the task of supervising and soon after took on private supervisees, still working in the void of unknowing. It was not until ACAP decided to introduce supervision as a core component of their counselling qualifications, and I became involved in developing these, that I came to the conscious realisation that I was stumbling in the dark and needed to further my own training. I enrolled in a

supervision training course in Sydney where the main benefit was that I began to read and to put a voice to the complexity of issues that the topic of supervision raised.

When I was accepted by Middlesex on the DProf, I was initially captivated by the concept of collaboration and the excitement of working with a colleague. From my past experience, I found it stimulating to work in a team where ideas generate ideas and where there is a sense of partnership in the rewards and struggles of an endeavour. Although I approached some colleagues, I ultimately decided that it would be to my advantage to embark on a solo journey and work on a topic that would sustain my interest and curiosity. Since it had been my task at the College to develop guiding principles around supervision and equally I felt there were still enormous gaps and continuing questions around my role as a supervisor, it felt congruent to explore these questions for my project.

#### **A. The Emergence of the Research Question**

Supervision initially appeared to be a topic that was containable. However, even as I began searching for a universal definition of supervision, I noticed that most definitions write about the functions of a supervisor in relation to the supervisee, ignoring the purpose and nature of supervision. So for instance, Bernard and Goodyear (1998) emphasise the evaluative/managerial aspects, while Holloway (1984) focuses more on the supportive and educational functions. Finally under the BACP (British Association of Counselling and Psychotherapy) Code of Ethics (Feltham & Dryden 1994), under the heading, 'The Nature of Supervision', I found:

- 1.1 The primary purpose of supervision is to ensure that the counsellor is addressing the needs of the clients. (p130)

However since March 2002 this code has been replaced with a unifying Ethical Framework for Good Practice in Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP 2002), which gives considerable space to the value of the client-practitioner relationship. Although my research and ultimate training program is bound to focus on all of the above, I believe it is imperative to continually return to the primary purpose as stated by the BACP.

In the last 10 to 15 years, the subject of supervision with regard to counselling and psychotherapy has grown into a profession on its own, and as such has a growing wealth of literature and a proliferation of training programs that appears to be growing exponentially especially in Britain and the USA. Hence, it was important to be more specific and to define my personal interest in order to keep my initial excitement continuing over the duration.

On reflection, I appeared to have an interest in two intersecting components. Firstly, I wanted to understand what happened in the process of supervision. This was very much a personal motivation in that I wanted to know more about myself as a supervisor in terms of what worked or did not work in the relationship with supervisees. I wanted to evolve my personal definition of supervision.

The second aspect concerned supervision from a professional and educational context. I had begun to realise that to be a supervisor encompassed a multifaceted package of diverse roles that sometimes appeared to be conflictual. For instance, it is important to have a strong, trusting working alliance between supervisor and supervisee to allow for an open and self-revelatory process. This aspect is similar to the counsellor-client non-judgemental relationship. Yet in supervision, the supervisor also holds the mantle of the professional standards whether that be within an educational or agency context or as a private consultant. This can place the supervisor within a position of making various kinds of judgements around the supervisee's practice, which is often construed, as starkly contrasting to the trusting, working relationship. Although supervision appears to have evolved as a developmental process for the supervisee, ultimately, supervision concerns the safety of the client

Generally speaking, the counselling profession in Australia appears to be approximately 5 to 10 years behind Europe and America. For instance, registration did not appear on the agenda in Australia until 1999, whereas the BACP (British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists) has been in existence since 1977 and the UKCP (UK Council for Psychotherapy) emerged in 1993.

As a new registration body, PACFA (Psychotherapists & Counsellors Federation of Australia) obviously concentrated on what it meant to be a practitioner in the field,

defining a code of ethics and the minimum standards of training. The question of what constitutes supervision or a definition of a supervisor is limited to a couple of paragraphs in the Standards document and there is certainly no requirement for a supervisor to have any training in the field. I felt this was a conundrum since the Training Standards explicitly state that all students are required to complete 50 hours of supervision to gain membership status and a further 750 supervised client hours in order to attain a place on the Professional Register, yet the definition of supervision felt incomplete.

The logical implication is that in the near future PACFA will be required to tighten up the definitions of supervision and to construct a code of ethics specifically for supervisors as has been done in the United Kingdom. Again, if Australia follows this progression, it implies that potential supervisors will be seeking further training in the discipline.

ACAP (Australian College of Applied Psychology), where I am employed, is the largest private provider of generalist counselling training in Australia and in many respects has been a leader in the field. As mentioned previously a couple of other supervisor training programs existed in Sydney, however, they both emanated from a specific theoretical model. It therefore felt timely to put forward the idea of researching and developing a program to train supervisors that would stay in keeping with the integrative/ humanistic philosophy of the College. Lionel Davis, the founder of ACAP was keen to explore the potential of this both from a professional advancement as well as from a potential financial vantage.

By pondering on these two components, my research question emerged to allow for both the personal and the professional/educational reflections to combine as follows:

“What are the elements of supervision that are successful and growth-enhancing for both the supervisor and supervisee within an educational context; and how can these be translated into an effective supervisor training in Australia that is not dependent upon theoretical orientation?”

I feel that this research question encompasses my many interests in the development and process of supervision both within Australia and within an educational context. It allowed my personal curiosity to further understand the key components necessary to make the transition from a counsellor/psychotherapist to that of a supervisor, and further link this awareness to the broader context of the registration body of PACFA (Psychotherapists & Counsellors Federation of Australia), and the future direction of training and standards within this country. Embedded within the question is my phenomenological curiosity as to the personal elements that I bring as a supervisor which in turn are couched in my existential practice as a psychotherapist. The outcome also takes account of the future directions for ACAP since a module in Supervision Training could benefit the College both professionally and financially.

On a more concrete project level, I hoped that this research question and resultant outcomes would inform the development and design of the Supervision Training. The intention was to create the program largely from the perspective of the supervisee recognising that ultimately it is the supervisee who is at the interface with the client. As a by-product, I hoped to develop both an existential and personal model of supervision that I could take into my practice as a supervisor.

## **B. Philosophical Context of the Research**

As noted previously, I work as an Existential therapist and am also heavily influenced by phenomenological philosophy as taught by Professor Ernesto Spinelli at Regents College in London. I mention this since these two philosophies underlie much of my work and since research is a core component of a doctoral project, I think it important from the outset to outline my underlying research philosophy and its influence on my chosen methodology. In addition, this philosophy has an impact on the way I train in the classroom and in the intent behind the development of training modules, including this Supervision Training project.

When looking for definitions of existential and phenomenological philosophy, the first sentences that one encounters is that there is no common doctrine that all theorists subscribe to. However, Moran describes phenomenology as a

“radical, anti-traditional style of philosophising, which emphasises the attempt to get to the truth of matters, to describe phenomena, in the broadest sense as whatever appears in the manner in which it appears, that is as it manifests itself to consciousness, to the experiencer.” (2000 p4).

Edmund Husserl is the person most associated with the development of the phenomenological method, which has since been adapted and used as a research methodology in the social sciences.

The link to existentialism is usually ascribed to Martin Heidegger, who as a student of Husserl expanded and diverged from many of the Husserlian themes, extending the phenomenological method in its analysis of existence. Macquarrie says of existentialism that as a style it:

“begins from man rather than from nature. It is a philosophy of the subject rather than of the object ... the subject is the existent of the whole range of existing. He is not only a thinking subject but an initiator of action and a centre of feeling.” (1972 p14).

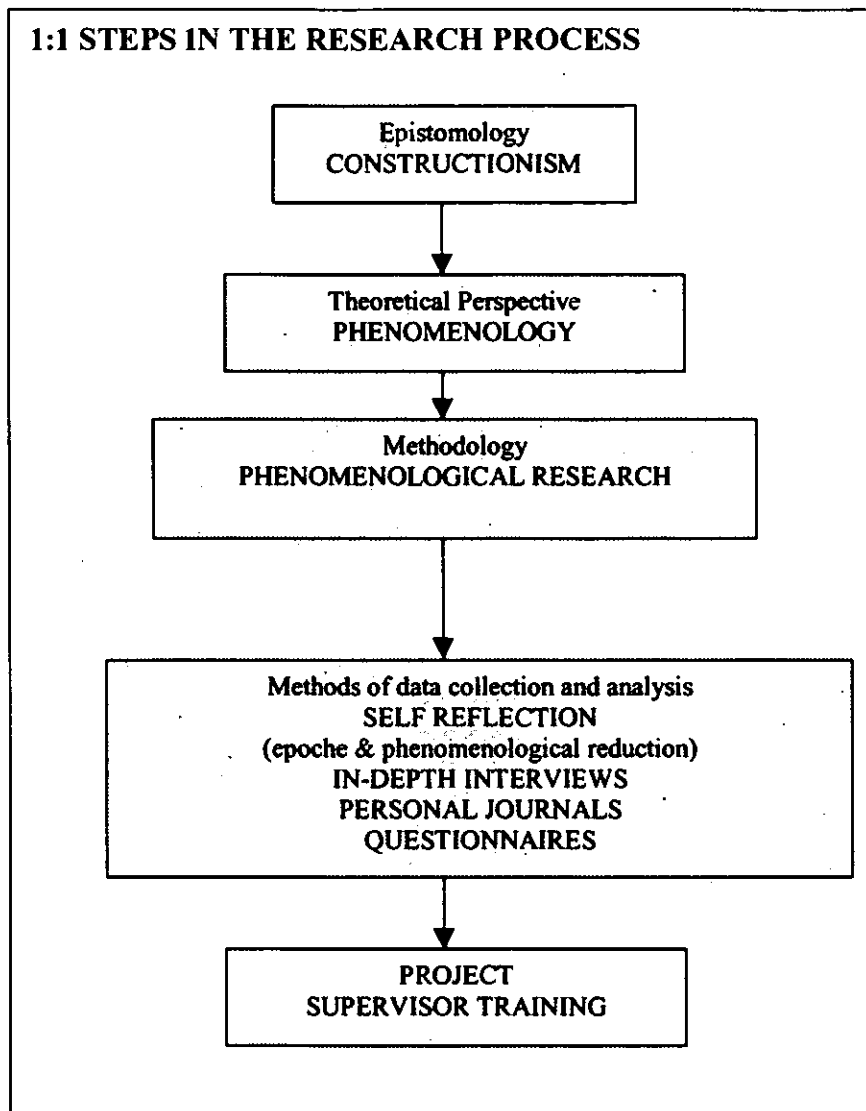
Existentialism is both a philosophy and a method (Warnock, 1970) and it is the method of Husserl’s phenomenology that is the connection to my practice as a therapist and to my chosen method of research. This will be expanded upon in Chapter 3 but at this point in my writing, this thinking forms the underlying focus of my intended project.

As quoted in my Learning Agreement of December 2000:

“Justification of our choice and particular use of methodology and methods is something that reaches into the assumptions about reality that we bring to our work. To ask about these assumptions is to ask about our theoretical perspective.” (Crotty1998, p10)

Following Crotty’s prescription, I emerged with a structure that highlighted my research approach.





Although this structure was devised as integral to my Learning Agreement, it indeed proved its usefulness as the research process unfolded. The intention was to focus the research on a group of Master of Counselling graduates using in-depth interviews to reflect on their experience of supervision. This data would both inform my personal style of supervision and contribute to the development of the supervisor training. The structure allowed me to keep track of the phenomenological research process. Indeed I will return to the original aims and objectives of the Learning Agreement in Chapter 7.

Two significant phenomenological tenets, which have implications for research, underlay my personal approach. Firstly, that people are not viewed as objects to be studied in isolation. "People are seen as existing in relationship with themselves, with others and with the world. Each individual and his or her world are said to co-constitute one another" (Valle & Halling, 1989) Meaning too, cannot be isolated without taking into account the whole context.

Secondly that the focus of phenomenological research is on the level of description, in other words it tries to understand, rather than to explain. Inherent in this mode is that the final product is only a particular version of meaning that is co-constructed between the researcher and participants (or co-researchers). This implies that as the project unfolds, the meaning unravels and reveals itself and yet continually allows for further investigation.

Phenomenology as a discipline has followed its own precept and evolved and changed dependent upon both the individual philosopher (practitioner) and the particular phenomena under study. I will explore and expand on my own choices in Chapter 3. However, although phenomenology and existential theory informed both the research process and the outcomes, the intention was to build a training program for supervisors that was cross-theoretical and therefore interesting and useful to any potential supervisors, regardless of their theoretical stance.

### **C. Objectives and Outcomes of the project**

In my Learning Agreement I proposed the following objectives around supervision and the development of a training program for supervisors:

- To research and understand the key elements of supervision from the perspectives of supervisor and supervisee within an educational setting.
- To develop a phenomenological research approach that allows for didactic and honest feedback amongst the co-researchers.
- To sit comfortably with 'not knowing' the form and content of the end product.
- To establish a supervision training program that is congruent with the research findings.

- To continue my partnership with ACAP so that the project is of benefit to all parties.
- To write articles and present papers on the research findings.

The overall outcomes were:

- Achievement of Professional Doctorate (DProf).
- Structured Training program for Supervisors within the Counselling and Psychotherapy community.
- Journal articles, conference papers.

However, these were broken into more specific aims:

#### 1. Personal Outcomes

- the opportunity to delve deeply into the process of research and to feel the satisfaction of putting a project into action from this standpoint.
- to personally understand my developed style of supervising and put it into the context of a training program.
- to expand the field of phenomenological/existential theory to include that of supervision.
- To open up career opportunities

#### 2. Professional Outcomes

- to open up the dialogue of supervision in Australia.
- To influence future guidelines for supervisor qualifications within PACFA.

#### 3. Social meanings

- to ensure that supervisees are working within a professional and ethical frame.
- To develop a supervisor training program which incorporates many levels of mastery including that of self-awareness, legal knowledge, and ethical practice.

I will add at this point, that it was important for me to not just design a training that would produce ethical supervisors, but to ensure that the research process itself was within ethical bounds. Optimistically speaking, phenomenological research seeks to involve any participant as a co-contributor, therefore, ethically speaking, issues of confidentiality or power should not arise. However as noted by McLeod (1994) "It is impossible to design ethically neutral research" because all research involves value decisions which may conflict with all or some of the participants.

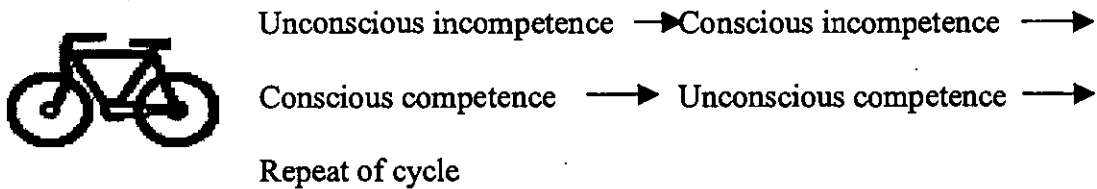
### **Summary**

This chapter aimed to introduce the reader to my personal and professional interest in pursuing supervision both as a topic for research and a project to further the development of supervisor training within Sydney. The remaining chapters will elaborate on the context; amplify and critique my methodology; enunciate the research process and analyse the data; to ultimately place my findings into the classroom context. Finally I will describe the evaluation process and some of the intended outcomes that emerged from both the research and the training. During this journey, I will attempt to highlight the dilemmas I faced, the choices I made and my personal reflections that contributed to the venture.

## Chapter Two The Personal and Situational Milieu of Supervision

### Introduction

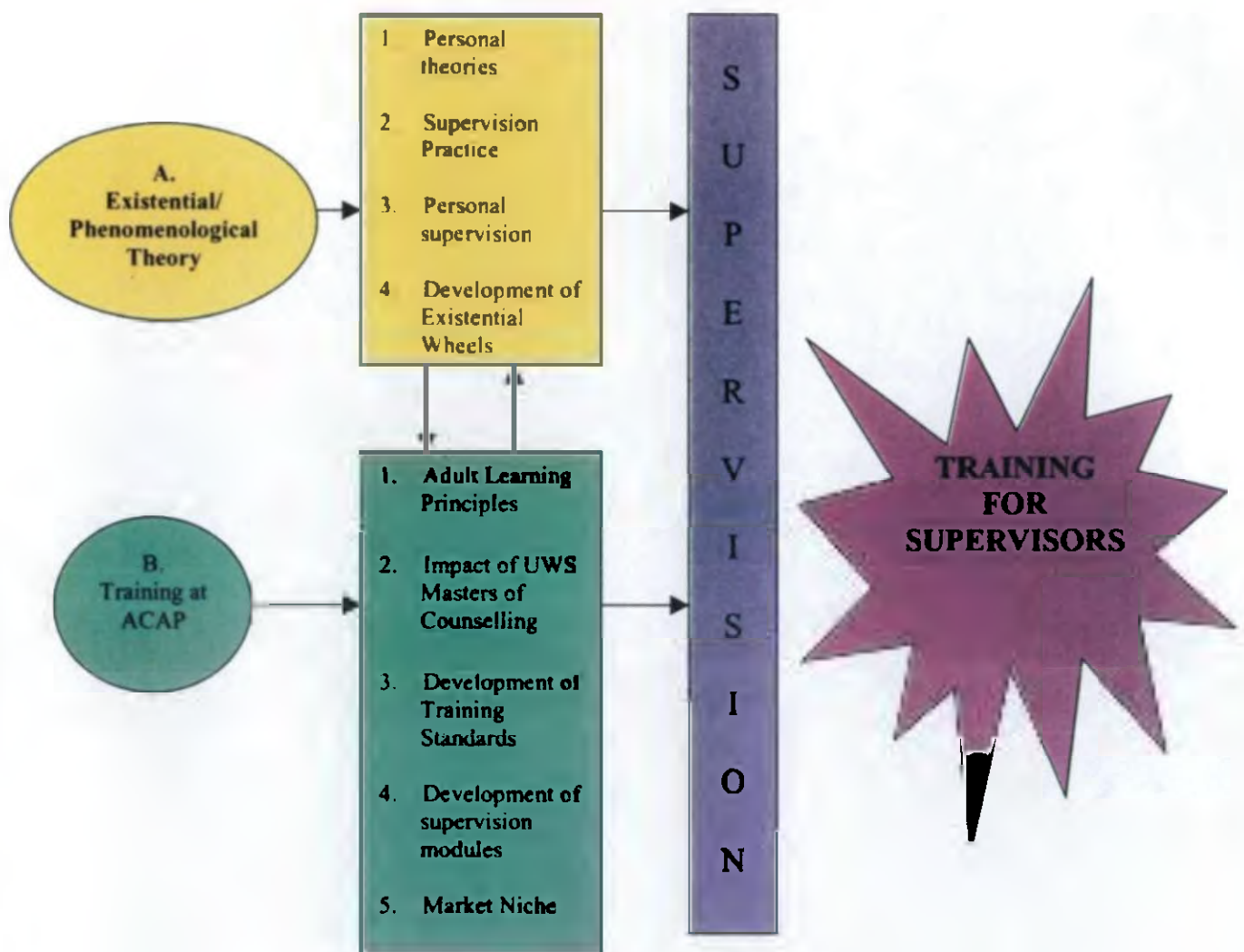
I am writing this chapter three months after completing the Supervision Training project and not to trivialise my sense of achievement, at this point my task is to write and to dissect the labyrinth of discourses that informed my journey. I can liken this to the well-known Learning Cycle (Robinson 1974) where discovering how to ride a bicycle is used as the metaphor for learning.



Even though the project topic is concerned with supervision the Learning Cycle aptly demonstrates that the moment one achieves unconscious competency, one moves to the beginning of the cycle where new horizons or aspects of learning emerge. I could even venture the possibility, that at the commencement of each chapter, I begin at the beginning. However, the purpose of using this metaphor is to demonstrate that this chapter is about revisiting the earlier parts of the learning cycle and to give context and underlying meaning to the arrival of the project topic itself. Paradoxically I need to make conscious or explicit all those aspects that could easily be taken for granted.

As shown in the following diagram, I have divided this chapter into two sections, which are in essence the two main forces that informed and drove me towards an understanding of supervision, and therefore what would eventually drive both the research and the project itself, the training program.

## 2:1 PERSONAL CONTEXT AND DEVELOPMENT OF SUPERVISION



The first section concerns the elements of existential/phenomenological theory that underlined my development as a supervisor. Included in this is my personal experience of learning how to supervise, how my experience of being supervised informed my learning and also how the development of the Existential Wheels (Strasser & Strasser 1997) led me to develop a model of supervision practice.

In the second section, under Training at ACAP (Australian College of Applied Psychology), attempts to demonstrate how working at the College influenced my style of training. This led to the development of the supervision training, which was focussed on empowering the participants to formulate their personal style of

supervision, rather than imposing a specific theoretical model. I have included aspects of Adult Learning, which I feel influenced my development as a trainer, as well as my personal development as a supervisor in the Masters of Counselling program, which allowed me to ask questions about the context of supervision. There are two subsections devoted to the necessity and evolution of supervision modules in ACAP due to the inauguration and influence of the registration body, PACFA (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia) in terms of developing training standards with the requirement of supervision as a core component. As a final element, I felt it important to include an exploration into the potential market niche for a new program for training supervisors.

#### **A. Existential/Phenomenological Theory**

As an existential therapist one of my focal points was to try and marry my theoretical approach to that of supervision. There appears to be very little written about supervision from an existential perspective apart from 3 articles in the Journal of the Society for Existential Analysis, all of which are descriptions of personal journeys through the maze of defining existential theory in relation to perceived notions of supervision. Therefore the aim of this section is to begin the process of defining how existential/phenomenological theory as well as my personal experience and practice influenced my understanding of becoming a supervisor and wishing to take this experience into the realms of a supervision training for others.

As has been described by many authors on supervision (Carroll 1996, Proctor 2000, Shipton 1997), historically, the concept of supervision emerged out of psychoanalysis somewhere in the 1920's as integral to the training of psychoanalysts. The role of a supervisor was viewed as a developmental process whereby an analyst who was deemed to have enough experience, moved into the supervisor role and continued the tradition of training new protégés.

This model has moreorless been superseded in the last decade with the realisation that a good counsellor or psychotherapist does not necessarily mean a good supervisor and training to become a supervisor is becoming more widespread.

## 1. Personal Theories

Unfortunately (or possibly, fortunately) when I took the step from therapist to supervisor, I fell into the vacuum of the traditional perception that as an experienced therapist, I should be able to supervise: In fact, I had no idea of where to start or how to proceed with my first supervisees who were allocated to me as part of the Masters of Counselling program that ACAP became involved with in 1996. I just happened to be one of the most suitable candidates since I had a Masters and I was supposedly an experienced practitioner.

What a supervisor was supposed to do was obviously part of the confusion but in addition how was I to marry my existential approach to my new role as a supervisor? In hindsight, I was either so naïve or too arrogant to realise that books and articles existed which might have helped me. Instead I attempted to answer the first part of the question by reflecting on my own experience of supervision both during my therapist training and afterwards and examining what I thought had worked or not. I had had a range of supervisors from various theoretical backgrounds such as psychodynamic, humanistic and transpersonal so this still did not answer my question around the existential model. “Make sure that your questions and reflections are around the supervisee’s self-awareness” was the advice from my therapist father. “In the end, it all goes back to the supervisee regardless of the model they use”. This was the only external clue that I was given.

Some of these reflections I wrote in a chapter on co-supervision in “Emotions” (Strasser F 1999) and captures my personal feelings about the process of supervision and the importance of the therapist’s self awareness. It is a very personally revealing chapter, which I believe mirrors my own development. The slant on the importance of emotions in the therapeutic setting was written in consultation and debate with my father who forced me to think further about my own beliefs about emotions in general and their link to existential theory.

Other clues emerged when a videotape was produced using Ernesto Spinelli and Emmy van Deurzen (1996) describing their approach to Existential supervision, using a live supervision scenario to demonstrate their points. Spinelli’s approach looked at the phenomenological relationship that is set up between the client and therapist, the



supervisor and therapist as well as the relationship 'in-between'. Essentially he talks about the 3 relationship realms that he first wrote in detail in *Demystifying Therapy* (1994). This focus had personal resonance and expanded on my father's earlier suggestion. I was beginning to form the basis of my own model of supervision.

Spinelli's supervision style in the tape largely focused on the way the supervisee and client's relationship had been set up and how this was reflected on all three realms. The emphasis by Spinelli was on challenging the supervisee to reflect on his own values and beliefs (indeed judgements) in order to recognise how these had influenced the relationship. This was also paralleled in the client's relationships with other people and with his therapist. Spinelli spent the majority of the session trying to elicit this awareness from the supervisee.

In contrast, van Deurzen's approach in the tape had an emphasis on Binswanger's notion of the three worlds which are the physical, social, and private, with a fourth spiritual world added by van Deurzen (2002). In the group supervision session that followed, she asked her supervisees to imagine the client's world from these perspectives. The session had more of a theory-driven flavour.

Essentially, my style of supervising was beginning to make sense in that I realised I was combining both Spinelli's phenomenological focus on the relationship including personal values and beliefs and van Deurzen's emphasis on theory. This was obviously easier for me to develop when working with supervisees who were working from an existential orientation.

## **2. Supervision Practice – Private Supervisees**

In 1997, a year after I began supervising on the Masters, I began working with two individual supervisees in my private practice. It was here that I began to further define and over the years, refine my supervisory role and style.

I started with a lot of questions, for instance, I began to query my personal style, which for some supervisees appeared too challenging, while for others, this was what made supervision different and exciting from their previous experiences.

Additionally I reflected on the role of the supervisor and the process of supervision:

- What is my role regarding ethical issues?
- What is my role regarding mandatory reporting?
- How do I bring the group dynamics into the foreground?
- What is the balance between being supportive and challenging?
- When is the correct time to focus on self awareness?
- When do I refer the supervisee on to therapy?

Some of these questions were answered when I enrolled in a Supervision Course with Relationships Australia in January 1999. The course was largely theoretical with a strong focus on Milan Family Therapy. However, this was where I was introduced to a whole range of supervision models such as the developmental models of Stolenberg and Delworth's (1987) and Page and Woskett (1994). In terms of my own practice, I was more intrigued by the Task and Function or Social Role models of supervision emanating from social work (Kadushin, 1985) and elaborated on by practitioners such as Hawkins and Shohet (1989), and Carroll (1996).

However, I had two major criticisms of the course. The first was that it was too didactic with little emphasis on the practice of supervision or for even allowing the reflections of personal style to occur. Secondly, since two Family Therapists ran the course from a particular orientation, there was not enough space to develop my personal style. For instance, their model of supervision did not allow for any self-awareness on the part of either the supervisee or supervisor.

On a positive note, when I reflected on the design of the project, I decided that in contrast to the above I would allow for as much experiential learning as feasible as well as allowing for participants to develop their own model or style of supervision, irrespective of the Trainer's theoretical or professional approach.

### **3. Personal supervision**

As indicated in the previous section, my style of supervising and my approach to supervision was also influenced by the supervision I had received. I will highlight my first encounter with group supervision and my current ongoing individual experience.

As part of my training at Regents College I received weekly group supervision from a supervisor who integrated both a humanistic/transpersonal approach with her basic philosophy of psychodynamic. However, beyond her theoretical orientation, I gained insight in how to work with a group of students who had an enormous range of differing experience. As a novice to the profession, I enjoyed being in the group and learning from all the other group members. In hindsight, three major occurrences stand out and remained with me, resurfacing when I started supervising.

The first was when an experienced counsellor revealed that it was not until she had understood and come to terms with her own anger did she become aware of her client's anger. This allowed me to truly realise the significance of personal awareness in the therapeutic relationship and the necessity for my personal therapy. The second was when the supervisor challenged another experienced supervisee on her boundaries, which engendered a disagreement between the two. On reflection, this event seemed to trigger the supervisor around issues of defective training since this supervisee had initially trained many years before. This interchange reflected on how a supervisor's judgements and preconceptions have the potential to damage and greatly affect a supervisor's self-esteem. On the other hand, there is the issue of maintaining standards and boundaries within the profession, so the question was about how a supervisor can manage this process effectively. In other words there needs to be a balance between support and challenging that appears to be so significant in the supervision relationship.

Lastly, it was my experience of being handheld by my supervisor and other group members through my first tentative steps of becoming a therapist. I felt greatly supported and the many lessons I learnt stay with me today. We used in-depth case notes for our supervision sessions, which I felt allowed for personal reflections and realisations to emerge in the writing but of equal importance, improved my memory of the client sessions. In supervision, we used role-plays to enhance our learning as a therapist but to also become aware of the client's position. Overall, my first experience of supervision was growth enhancing and positive and when I supervise trainees, I try to draw on this supportive memory.

My current supervision continually influences my process as a more experienced therapist and supervisor. The experience is vastly different to that described above. Education is about perusing ideas and approaches where my supervisor and I are colleagues in exploration, rather than a student seeking learning from their teacher. Support is still paramount especially in terms of my need for affirmation in my work, but challenging my interventions or reflections is also important to me.

There is one event that stands out as being influential in changing my approach to supervision both with my private supervisees and with the Masters' students. This is when I was challenged by my current supervisor to examine the power relationship I held with my supervisees. It started with the reflection that my supervisor sometimes felt intimidated by me and she explored her own feelings in relation to me in order to allow me to reflect on both how some of my supervisees might feel and also to look at my own assumptions around power. On the one hand, the process was confronting, uncomfortable and my first reaction was to run and to blame my supervisor but over the weeks I was able to explore my relationship to power and in some senses, begin to own the power that I held. I emerged with the concept that there is a difference between 'power over' and 'power with' which has influenced many aspects of my life, including supervision and teaching.

Intertwined with this reflective learning, I was also able to understand the importance of trust in the supervisory relationship. Experiencing mistrust and suspicion with my supervisor gave rise to more empathy with my supervisees. My personal experience of supervision elicited important clues to clarifying what is required by a supervisee from a supervisor in terms of the integration of support, challenging, self-awareness and different levels of learning. These all informed the development of my questions during the interview stage of the research.

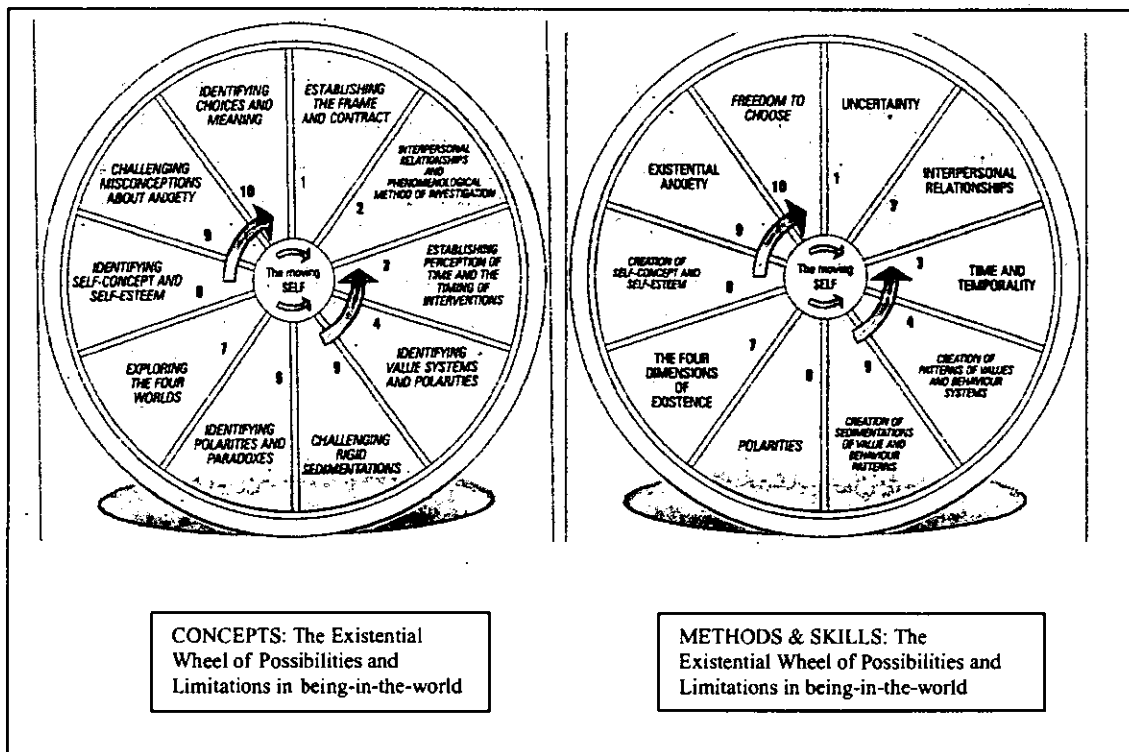
#### **4. Development of Existential Wheels**

For 3 years from 1994 to 1997, I worked and wrote "Time-Limited Existential Therapy: The Wheels of Existence" (Strasser & Strasser 1997) in conjunction with my father. The book uses a modular approach to working with clients within an Existential framework.

Two innovative ideas emerged. Firstly, that the concept of time itself can be used to understand how each person responds to their unique existential 'givens', which include death, anxiety, isolation and meaninglessness. By restricting the number of sessions (we tended to work with 12 sessions), we found that client's existential issues came to the fore, regardless of their presenting problem. This is another departure from existing brief therapy approaches, which tend to believe that it is necessary to have a goal or focus for the therapy to proceed.

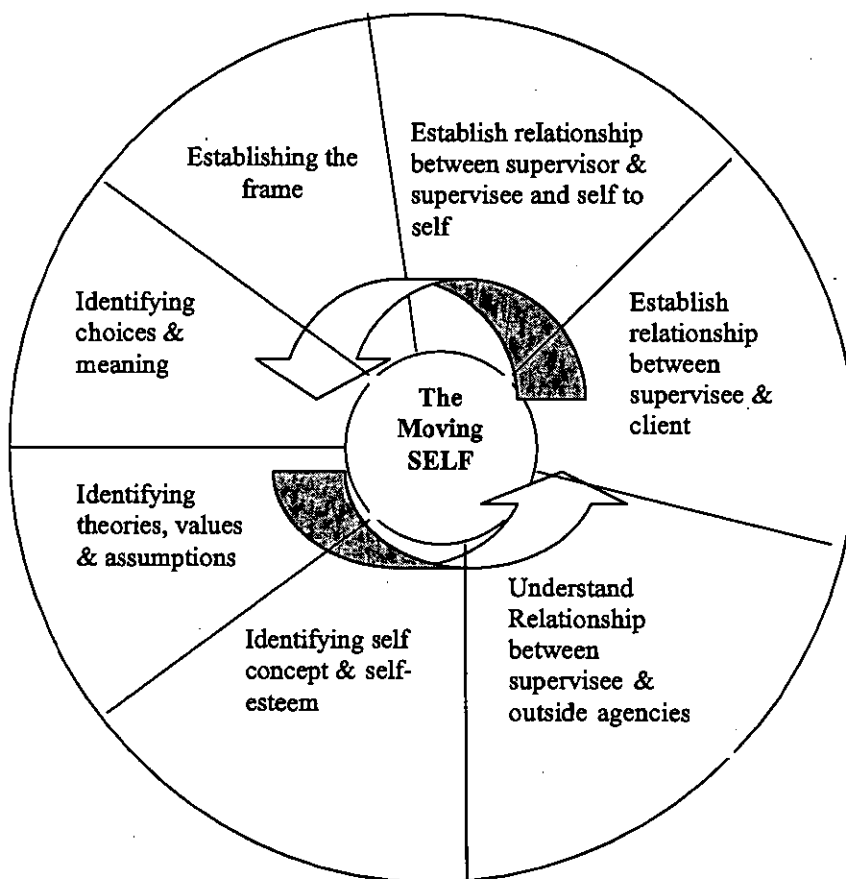
Secondly and probably more significant in relation to this project, the idea of the Existential Wheels emerged where the sections of the wheel represent the essential existential concepts (sometimes known as universals or 'givens') that stem from existential philosophy and form the basis of existential therapy. There are two wheels, one representing the theoretical concepts and the second representing the methods and skills used in a therapeutic encounter. The segments of the wheel are not seen in isolation, but exist in a continual non-linear inter-relationship and form the basis of listening to and understanding clients in therapy. These wheels have also been of additional benefit in terms of teaching existential therapy.

## 2:2 The Existential Wheel of Possibilities and Limitations



The idea of using the concept of the wheels in supervision emerged during the research process when I realised that there are also certain universals or 'givens' in supervision too.

## 2: 3 THE WHEEL OF SUPERVISION



The 'givens' of supervision are the elements that are intrinsic and fundamental to the process regardless of theoretical model, developmental stage, situational context or type of supervision. In keeping with the original wheel, the 'moving self' at the centre acknowledges the interaction with either the 'self' of the supervisor or 'self' of the supervisee with the process of supervision. Each of the segments of the wheel is similarly interconnected, as in the original concept, allowing for fluidity and change. A change in one segment will have a knock-on effect on the other segments, giving the wheel a systemic flavour. Supervisees, clients, supervisors, registration bodies, educational institutions, agency personnel etc are the individuals that are potentially involved in the supervisory process. My desire to create a cross-theoretical model for

the training was beginning to emerge. These ideas will be further expanded when I discuss the emergence of the Supervision Training in Chapter 5.

### **B. Training At The Australian College Of Applied Psychology (ACAP)**

The ultimate aim of this project was the development of a module for training supervisors that matched the philosophy and style espoused by the Australian College of Applied Psychology (ACAP). Although the content was obviously intrinsic to the training, I felt that it is equally significant to teach within a style of training that is congruent to ACAP and myself. Overall the College encompasses a humanistic tradition with the emphasis on student-centred learning, which is captured by the term Adult Learning that I discuss in the first sub-section.

The second sub-section explores the impact of working within another educational system (University of Western Sydney – UWS) and the questions and new parameters that my colleagues and I needed to answer in order to find clarity around both supervisor and counsellor competence within an educational setting. Indeed some of the answers required making curriculum and assessment changes in the ACAP courses and finally led to the third and fourth sub-section that describes the change in training requirements and development of supervision as a core component of all the counselling qualifications. Some of these conundrums drove me to further research for my own clarification and learning but also re-emerged as topics within the supervision training project.

#### **1. Adult Learning Principles**

When I was employed as a contract trainer at the Australian College of Applied Psychology in 1995, there were two catchphrases for teaching, namely Adult Learning principles and experiential learning. The College saw this manner of facilitating learning as dynamic and in complete contrast to the university didactic style of lecturing.

Many books and papers have been written on the topic of Adult Learning, so in keeping with this chapter, I will only outline the principles that I feel I took into my classroom over a period of time and then used to develop the teaching style in the Supervision training.

This particular view of learning is in essence a paradigm shift from the positivist view of knowledge that says there is an objective reality whereby teaching is concerned with dictating knowledge; to that of the interpretive paradigm. Knowledge in this latter paradigm is viewed as subjective and active, allowing for everyone to build on their own particular understanding of the world in their unique way. In the classroom, the teacher is a facilitator focussing on creating different experiences to help the learner develop their personal meaning and understanding. This way of thinking is wonderfully akin to the move from the traditional behavioural psychology to the humanistic movement in the counselling world.

One of the key concepts of Adult Learning that embraces all the above philosophies is that of experiential learning and although the concept embraces all teaching disciplines it appears ideally suited to counselling training since its basic premise is that the experience of the learner is the key to teaching. In this mode, learners are asked to participate in particular activities and then analyse their experience by “reflecting, evaluating and reconstructing that experience (sometimes individually, sometimes collectively, sometimes both) in order to draw meaning from it in the light of previous experience” (Anderson et al, 1995 p1).

In practice this active learning approach can include case scenarios, role-plays, video based activities, group discussions, autobiographical writing, problem-based learning, group work, reflective journals, creative drawing and a whole host of other activities that help the learner make personal meaning of the information. As an inductive teaching process I find that if I abandon the theory in favour of an activity then the theory necessarily evolves through this self reflective process.

Over a period of time, I realised that a good facilitator allows for all learning styles using a combination of teaching methods such as the more traditional lecture style (for the auditory learners) but with overheads for the visual learners, moving around the room when talking (for the kinaesthetic learners), using personal stories to enhance the auditory digital learners. I've learnt to use my imagination as the class unfolds in order to actively involve all students and all learning styles.



Another related concept emerged in the 1990's, which is that of the reflective practitioner, and is equated with a "meta-level of practice which is based on a cycle of initial hypothesising, consideration of alternative modes of intervention, and a process of evaluation and review" (Jennings & Kennedy 1996, p17). Jennings (1996) in the same chapter links the need for a reflective practitioner to move away from skills and techniques and to integrate their professional role within themselves. Supervision provides the optimum conditions for this ongoing learning to occur, often referred to as the 'internal supervisor'.

This combination of understanding Adult Learning principles, reflective practice and learning styles with the use of experiential learning was at the heart of my focus when developing the program for the Supervision Training. In addition and in keeping with the above principles, I realised that my aim was not to dictate a particular model of working as a supervisor but to allow each individual participant to develop their own supervisory style that was congruent to their professional values and practice.

## **2. Impact of UWS Masters of Counselling**

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, my introduction to the world of supervising began when ACAP (Australian College of Applied Psychology) entered into an articulation arrangement in 1996 with the University of Western Sydney (UWS). This allowed for the ACAP students to gain advanced standing into the second year of the Masters of Counselling once they had gained 2 years of counselling experience.

In the degree course there were two subjects that involved weekly two-hour supervision groups and this is what I was asked to facilitate. My hesitancy about being a supervisor and learning about supervising is previously described in the section about Private Supervisees, however there are other aspects of the supervision process that arose with the Masters students that lead to further questions and reflection. The three dilemmas below are a good example of the personal reflections I underwent, some of which led to changes in my supervision practice and certainly came to the fore during the interview stage of the research and ultimately resurfaced in the supervision training.

a) One of my continuing struggles concerns my expectations of what constitutes a Masters student in terms of their degree of competence as a counsellor. This dilemma emerges when assessing student's competencies and working out procedural systems of not allowing students to pass until their level of competency has improved. I am therefore perceived as having the authority to pass or fail a student, which has enormous ramifications in terms of the inherent dual relationship of the supervisor in an educational setting. On the one hand I am the supervisor who is supportive, aiding the student's progress and development, and on the other, the person who has the jurisdiction to fail.

Although as an existentialist, I am not sure that I truly endorse the concept of the developmental approach in supervision, I do believe that students develop in their own unique way. For instance, at the beginning some may require more support with their skills while others may need more theory. Indeed this thinking concurs with the principles of Adult Learning. However, this again raises the question of level of competence required for different qualifications. A Masters student should be a 'better' counsellor than a Graduate Diploma student but how can all this be defined?

b) Supervising the Masters' students was also the first time that I had worked with a small group. Although I had read about group dynamics, the experience of them in action was extremely provoking and brought me to the abrupt realisation of the necessity of including groupwork in any supervision training. The other dilemma that I faced in the group was finding the balance between working with the supervisee's casework, their self awareness and the group dynamics. This was further compounded by the requirements from UWS to complete a mandatory set of tasks during the supervision, which is common for supervision within an educational setting but not in private practice.

c) Since Masters students were allocated randomly to supervisors, there was also sometimes a sense of working with an involuntary supervisee especially when that person felt that they had wanted to be with another supervisor or

that they did not like the approach taken by myself. This scenario is also customary when working as a counsellor in an agency setting. Connected to this, is the question of whether it is more conducive for a supervisee to be working with a supervisor from their same theoretical model or a different one? These are all conundrums that are debated in the literature, however it allowed me to reflect on the importance of a supervisor knowing more than one counselling model and to understand the significance of integration.

Indeed working with this group of students was a gift in the sense that my learning and critical reflection increased exponentially. They gave me clues as to what a good supervisor should take into account and allowed me to reflect on how the varied contexts of supervision had different expectations. Since they were the group that provided me with the greatest challenge, they also provided me with the resource to further this inquiry into the doctorate project. One group became the focus of the in-depth interviews, which I will describe in Chapter 4.

### **3. Development of Training Standards**

Since arriving in Australia ten years ago, the change in recognition and status of counsellors and psychotherapists has changed radically. However, one of the biggest impacts on reviewing curriculum and defining counsellor competencies was the inauguration of the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

PACFA came into being in 1999 as an umbrella organisation that set the standards necessary for psychotherapy and counsellor training. Apart from defining the quality and quantity of training, PACFA set down clearly the necessity for all programs to include 50 hours of supervision.

In practice this meant that training organisations like ACAP had to redefine their learning outcomes and basic aims of their qualifications in order to distinguish between the attainment of counselling skills and that of a professional counsellor. Prior to 1999, supervision was not part of any of the ACAP counselling qualifications and was only referred to as a necessary requirement for those who went on to practice as counsellors. Often, student's first encounter with educational supervision was if and when they continued into the Masters of Counselling.

Although the requirement for supervision is stated in the PACFA documentation, and in the last year a fuller description of supervision has been added, there is nothing written about the qualifications of a supervisor (apart from having a minimum of 3 years professional experience), or indeed a Code of Ethics for supervisors. As I began developing the programs at the College and began reflecting on the whole subject of supervision and supervisors, I realised that these omissions were gaps that needed to be filled. I felt that it was possible that my research into the process of supervision might bring about some clarification to these contemplations. One of my aims was to put supervision back onto the PACFA agenda to allow for further discussion around training for supervisors and the need for a Code of Ethics. Indeed subsequently, I gave a paper at a conference and chaired a debate at the PACFA conference around these issues.

#### **4. Development of Supervision Modules at ACAP**

To remain in the counselling training environment in 1999, ACAP had to redesign their courses and add supervision as a core component. Since fieldwork was already a mandatory component of the courses we decided to develop a supervision module to run alongside students' practice with the aim of teaching students how to be a skilled supervisees including topics such as contracting, different ways of presenting clients, how to work with the relationship etc. One of the aims was to empower the supervisee to know what they needed from supervision. It was only when I began conducting my literature search for the doctorate that I realised that the wheel need not have been reinvented since Inskipp had already written a manual and Proctor (1993) which had the same precept in mind.

Alongside the development of the supervision modules, ACAP also decided to conduct a mini-training for the current Trainers who wished to work as supervisors on these modules. Congruent with the impression that most supervisors become so by default, the potential supervisor list included people with experience in supervision but had not received any training. Therefore it was important in the workshop to tread a delicate balance between recognising their experience but also allowing for new learning to take place. The resulting one day workshop comprised a series of topics for discussion and an extensive readings package. I felt that this approach respected

their professional status but still opened up new possibilities around the topic of supervision. This approach and respect for a professional's experience was re-enacted in the project's supervision training.

Developing these modules and the mini training for the supervisors was laying the foundations to my further thinking of how supervision could form an intrinsic component of counselling training in an environment that was in a process of change. A variety of questions emerged which I hoped could to some extent, either be answered or at least further clarified by the research process. I also realised that any supervision training needed to account for different and varied levels of experienced practitioners.

## **5. Market Niche**

As part of the decision to proceed with the doctoral project in collaboration with ACAP, it was necessary to determine whether the counselling market could support a training program for supervisors. It is all very well to have an academic interest in supervision, but a private college needs to assess whether there is a customer need.

The first necessary question to ask was whether there was a demand for any supervision training, specifically in Sydney. Was it possible to change the existing dynamic that training was unnecessary and entice both existing and potential supervisors into learning more about their role? The answer is probably both yes and no in that there will always be counsellors and supervisors who believe that they do not need any additional training. However, I felt that with the change in the professionalisation of the industry through the accreditation process of PACFA, there was also a shift in perception about the function of supervision and correspondingly, the role of a supervisor.

Indeed, speaking to students who had completed the supervision module which had taught them supervisee skills and what to expect from supervision; there was a marked dissatisfaction in the supervision they had received from some of their fieldwork placements. These students would also be potential candidates for supervision training (once more experience had been gained) as well as those graduates that had been working as counsellors for several years.

In 2000, when I enrolled in the DProf, the existing supervisor training courses in Sydney were the 36 hour program that I had attended at Relationships Australia, which was focused on working systemically and a one year Graduate Certificate in Supervision conferred by the University of Western Sydney. This latter course was located in the western suburbs and tends to draw on a different student population to ACAP who is located in central Sydney.

In order to run a module, ACAP works on the financial basis of a minimum of 10 students to a class. I felt that with a minimum of marketing effort, we could run a pilot module to assess both the market niche as well as the content of the course. My thoughts and findings were discussed with the Executive Team at ACAP and the decision made to proceed with the project and to market the program accordingly.

### **Summary**

In writing this chapter, I hope to have demonstrated the complexity of the numerous pieces of the jigsaw and how they all have influenced my thinking behind the development of the doctoral project. I feel that the three sections have interwoven the personal and professional themes that arose in relation to theory, training, supervision and supervising. In addition, each section threw up questions that determined the flow of the research and the ultimate style and content of the training program. My desire was to move more assuredly into the conscious competence stage and develop a project that was more truly authentic to my way of being.

# CHAPTER 3

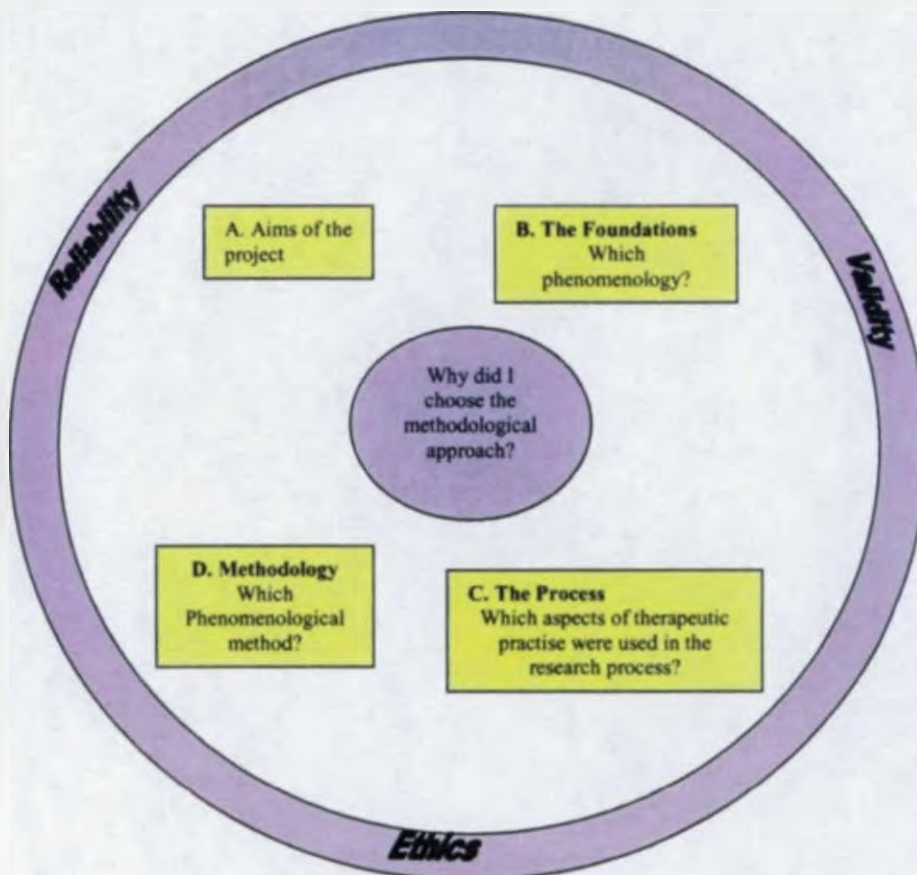
## Tackling the Research Theory

### Introduction

The intention in this chapter is to understand why I chose the particular theoretical and methodological research approach used in the project. In essence I will explore the choices behind my theoretical perspective and will further elucidate on how this theory translated into the practicalities of my research methodology in Chapter 4.

The chapter is divided into five sections with the purpose of showing the interconnections between the various theoretical elements.

### 3:1 Diagrammatic representation of Chapter 3



The intention of the first section is to place the fundamental aims of the project into perspective in order to ground and interlink the remainder of the chapter into the

research methodology. An exploration of the philosophical premises of phenomenology that informed my choice in research approach is the basis of the second section while the third section links the theory to the practical research process. Essentially this third section explains how my personal framework as a therapist translated into my personal approach to the research. The fourth section examines the various phenomenological methodologies and critically reflects on the reasons behind my ultimate approach to the research. Lastly I will write about reliability, validity and ethical practice as an underlying necessity for all qualitative research.

As an existential therapist, my natural inclination was to use the research methodology of phenomenology, however I felt it important to explore this assumption further and to critically reflect on whether this was the correct supposition.

Overall, phenomenological research sits under the umbrella of qualitative research which broadly speaking is a school of thought which aims “to develop an understanding of how the world is constructed” (McLeod 2001 p2), acknowledging that this approach to human enquiry aspires to realise the underlying complexities of being human. Qualitative research aims to provide new ways of understanding the world whether it is from knowledge of the other, phenomena or the production of reflexive knowing (ibid p3).

Personally, I have always been suspicious of the categorical nature of research findings in the scientific world. Therefore part of the attraction of qualitative research is that the research process and the end result is not conclusive but a process of further understanding in terms of meaning, not facts. It takes into account that any interpretation of data is always subjective, never conclusive but open for continual analysis and debate.

“Facts are conceived of as objective and independent of consciousness, while meaning is considered subjective and idiosyncratic... (It) rejects the idea that there exist observable facts, independent of a subject of subjective consciousness.” (Karlsson 1993, p16)



Qualitative research embraces many diverse methodological approaches such as ethnography, feminist research, action research, discourse analysis as well as the varieties of phenomenological research. Each of these approaches is based within a philosophical tradition so for instance discourse analysis has emerged from the work of post-structuralists. As described in Chapter 1, I believe that it is important to acknowledge my personal beliefs and professional practice and to interweave these into my research approach. Although theoretically I endorsed phenomenology, the question still remained as to what (if any) phenomenological approach would be the most appropriate for me to adopt, taking into account not only my personal bias but the project to be undertaken.

#### **A. Aim of the Project**

In order to place into context this exploration, broadly speaking, the aim of the project was to understand individual meanings behind supervisee's perception of supervision in order to create a training program for supervisors that were congruent with these emerging meanings. Personally I wished to understand more fully the dichotomies I was experiencing as a supervisor in the educational arena. Hence, I was already highlighting the notion of 'meaning' and personal awareness and development. In consideration of both these aspects, it appeared that Masters of Counselling students would provide a challenging but ideal research group.

In March 2001, after the approval of my *Learning Agreement* in the previous December, I was to begin supervising a new group of Masters of Counselling students. Even though I had not completely elucidated my research approach I decided to seek permission from all 6 participants to be included in the research process. I explained the purpose of the research and how I knew at this stage that I would be asking them to participate in at least one in-depth interview, possibly two. I also asked them to write a journal of their experiences, which might help them reflect on the phenomena of supervision in preparation for the interview process. I too would write a journal on my experiences of supervising them as a group within the educational setting which I could draw upon at a later date.

As their supervisor and evaluator during the year, I made it clear that the interviews that I intended to conduct would only take place after the completion of the qualification and after all marks had been submitted. Ethically, this was to ensure my neutrality in terms of marking their assessments and how I perceived their role in the group as supervisees. If I had conducted the research during that year, it might well have biased my marking and my personal attitudes.

As described previously, the principle behind phenomenological research is to discover and reveal meanings. However, since phenomenology consists of more than one school of thought, it was now necessary to explore and examine the various philosophical premises to make an authentic choice concerning my methodology.

### **B. The Foundations – Which phenomenology?**

Originally, I thought that phenomenology was simply a doctrine emanating from Husserl with the aim of describing, rather than explaining phenomena. An attempt to “get back to the things themselves” or in other words an attempt to describe the material in the way one experiences them. However, on further reading, there appears to be some confusion about exactly what is the definition of phenomenology.

There are not only various differences within the phenomenological philosophical paradigms but also a multitude of ways that these philosophies have been translated into research. There are many overlaps, but also many intrinsic philosophical differences. This became more apparent on reading the work of Michael Crotty (1996, 1998a, 1998) where he denotes the difference between the mainstream phenomenology and existential phenomenology of Husserl, Merleau-Ponty, Marcel and Heidegger with that of the ‘new’ phenomenology which he says has emerged in line with the humanistic tradition in North America. Essentially the American interpretation focuses on subjectivity and ultimately ignores the Husserlian complexity of the interrelationship between subjectivity and objectivity. It is this latter stream of phenomenology that I intended to pursue.

As the founding father of contemporary phenomenology and specifically transcendental phenomenology, one of Husserl’s main contributions was to turn the prevailing theories upside down and put the focus of understanding back on to the

individual rather than an outside source of knowledge or theory. He was a philosopher attempting to find a means to discover ultimate truth in terms of describing the essence of everyday experience. He wished to understand human consciousness by focussing on how people both described phenomena and how they attached meanings to them.

In terms of my research questions, I needed to find a platform to understand and explore how supervisees experience supervision and what is important and thus meaningful to them about the supervisory encounter. Using Husserl's philosophy, rather than only describing how supervisees think and feel about supervision, it was important to understand how they made sense of supervision for themselves. In addition it was important to acknowledge that what I perceived as supervision and how each of the participants perceived and reacted to supervision would be different and needed to be acknowledged in the devising of the Supervision Training program.

In order to unravel these meanings, Husserl devised a series of steps, which aim to go beyond the essential structures (or natural attitude) by bracketing off (or epoche) our own personal assumptions, to open up our minds and to arrive at new possibilities and meanings. This is known as the transcendental attitude. Husserl described this progression as the 'reduction' derived from the Latin word *reducere*, to lead back or the art of going 'back to the things themselves'.

"Phenomenology is much more than a suspension of assumptions. The phenomenological reduction is a change of attitude that throws suspicion on everyday experiences." (Armstrong 1976, p252)

In the process new meanings may emerge or an old meaning takes on new aspects. Whatever the outcome, the aim is to emerge with something that is authentic and not inherited from others. This was the starting point of my research where I needed to explore and examine my thoughts, knowledge and judgements about supervision in order to begin the voyage of allowing a more authentic starting point to my research questions.

The aim of this process is to achieve some kind of objectivity within the subjective realms of experience.

“... the triumph of objectivity over subjectivity, or better as the establishment of objectivity in the very heart of subjectivity” (Spiegelberg, 1975 p76)

Indeed, for phenomenologists, the significant point is inter-relational whereby the objective-subjective division becomes obsolete.

In terms of my research there was both the experienced reality of each of the interviewees in relationship to themselves, each other and supervision both generally and specifically to the Master's group. In addition there was my perception of supervision in general and within the context of the educational setting as well as my sense of relationship to the individuals and the group as a whole. My hope was to be able to take a descriptive sense of all of these levels and allow for a critical attitude of interpretative meanings to emerge.

Husserl's phenomenology remained largely at the level of description while what was appealing about Heidegger's version of phenomenology was his integration of hermeneutics allowing both for a level of interpretation into phenomena to surface as well as the recognising integration of others. One of the major criticisms of Husserl's phenomenology is that it does not account for how other people understand and interpret events since his intention was to remain self-reflexive. As a researcher working with research participants, it was important for me to move beyond inward reflections to allow the relationship itself to be part of the process of understanding. Indeed part of my research question was to understand the supervisory relationship from multiple perspectives including my own, the supervisees, and the contextual setting.

Heidegger, as an assistant of Husserl, also questioned the idea of relationship and emerged with a different philosophy around Dasein or 'being' that is sometimes known as Interpretative Phenomenology (Lawler 1998) or Existential (Spinelli 1989). Others such as McLeod (2001) describe Heidegger as bringing together phenomenology and the practice of hermeneutics.

Hence, Heidegger argued that the aim of the phenomenological reduction process was not to arrive at pure consciousness or transcendental ego as expounded by Husserl, but an attempt to understand how human existence is immersed in the world. 'Being-there' or 'being-in-the-world' as well as the idea of being-with-others bring forth the interconnectedness of being human. Heidegger was able to embrace phenomenology as an approach for working with others, in addition to the self-reflection that Husserl put forward.

I was looking for a philosophy that allowed for the significance of relationships in supervision and the relationship to the educational context as well as allowing for a level of descriptive interpretation to take the inter-relational experience of the research participants into another dimension. In relation to the research, I wanted to not only pay attention to the experience per se but also to understand how each person made sense, or interpreted their experience in relation to the supervision context.

Additionally, I wanted to allow myself as the researcher to interpret the content of the data within the relational paradigm of the participants and the contextual nature of supervision. In practice, interpretive phenomenology uses narrative accounts to allow for both interpretations made by the participants as well as by the researcher and allows for the contextual sense of being-in-the-world. Heidegger's interpretive phenomenology and Husserl's steps towards phenomenological reduction appeared to provide me with the underlying phenomenological foundations for the research process.

### **C. The Process – Which aspects of therapeutic practice were used in the research process?**

I realised that my role as researcher for this project was interconnected with my practice as an existential-phenomenological therapist. The basis of this section is the recognition that I was already using the skills derived from the above theories and that these could be translated for the research process.

On further reflection, I recognised that I could interpret my modus operandi as a therapist into two stages of enquiry. The first, the phenomenological reduction is the aspect of phenomenology that I had been taught and consciously used. The second

stage of enquiry emerged when fresh phenomenological terms emerged on my reading of the research process. I was then able to put a new language into my practice.

My understanding of the key phenomenological terms and how I have translated them into my practice as a therapist and consequently how they flow into the research itself are denoted in the following table. The ‘use as a therapist’ column provided me with insight into how I could use the same principles as a researcher.

### C.1 The First Stage of enquiry

TERM	USE AS A THERAPIST	USE AS A RESEARCHER
Bracketing To suspend or put on hold my judgements, values, theories and assumptions.	In practice, this allows me to realise a) this is my issue; b) may be use later or c) emerge with a question that is less burdened by my assumptions	To suspend or put on hold my judgements, values, theories and assumptions. In practice this allows me to a) list all my assumptions about supervision and emerge with questions for myself and others; b) emerge myself in the data with an understanding of my own biases
Description “Describe, don’t explain.”	Descriptive Interpretation as opposed to Analytic Interpretation. Allows the therapist to enter into the manifest meaning of the client’s world.	a) To further clarify my curiosity in the interview; b) to write the First Descriptions and c) to search for underlying themes in the transcripts for inclusion in the Supervision Training.
Horizontalisation To equalise all phenomena, to give equal weighting to all information.	To view and to bear all aspects of a client’s story without assuming one aspect is more important than another.	To allow me to bear all aspects of the interviews and to not give a hierarchical significance to any one facet. The same applies to the analysis of data.

**3:2 Table: The first stage of enquiry –The Phenomenological Method of Reduction**

As described in the previous section, the various stages of the method of reduction were Husserl’s attempt to ‘get back to the things themselves’. Although these are always written as stages, it must be noted that in practice they often occur at the same time, so I prefer to understand the ‘stages’ as overlapping and integrating. This process of reduction is seen as key in the setting up of a therapeutic relationship but is also described by phenomenological researchers regardless of their philosophical routes.

One of the specific steps of phenomenological looking is that of Epoche or bracketing which is a Greek word meaning to refrain from judgement, to put aside or suspend our

natural attitude, our everyday thoughts in order to find a new way of looking at things. This is a self-reflexive process and the challenge is to be transparent and honest with ourselves.

In relation to the research process, bracketing first of all allowed me to reflect and open my mind to the entire field of supervision, rather than concentrating on the aspects that interested me at that moment in time. Bracketing also came to the fore in the data analysis when I needed to remain with the subjective nature of the material. As Ihde says “ the whole of experience may be thus surveyed in its infinite field, as Husserl contended, and the first steps are steps that begin to realize the complexity and immensity of that field” (1967, p33). The process, in relation to my research, will be further elaborated upon in Chapter 4.

“Describe, don’t explain’ (Spinelli 1989, p17) is also about keeping our experience as open as possible to the phenomena at hand and is the key to the concept of ‘Descriptive Interpretation’. In order to do this it is necessary to acknowledge and bracket any theories, ideas, concepts etc., that might explain the phenomena as well as to eliminate any explanation (or interpretation) in order to stay with the pure experience.

For some researchers (eg Moustakas, 1994) this notion of describing has been taken literally, however, if one translates the descriptive edict into the realm of descriptive interpretation as proposed by Heidegger and explained by Spinelli in *Demystifying Therapy* (1994), I find there is more clarity. So a descriptive interpretation:

“... retains its focus on the manifest material and seeks to extract the meaning of that material to the client by engaging the client in a descriptively focused process of clarification wherein the manifest material may be ‘opened up’ to mutual investigation” (Spinelli 1994, p199)

In other words, interpretation is acknowledged, but not the interpretation used in classical psychoanalysis or other forms of therapy where the theory informs and drives the interpretation. As the researcher, descriptive interpretation gave me the freedom to expand on my enquiry in the interview process, and to enter into the world

of the supervisee (research participant) when trying to understand their world of supervision.

Phenomenology adds to this concept of interpretation through the idea of intentionality which is described by Spinelli as referring “to the fundamental relational act whereby ‘consciousness’ reaches out, or extends to the ‘stimuli’ of the world in order to ‘bring them back to itself’ – or interpret them – as ‘meaningful things’” (1994 p288). In other words, we as human beings who are constantly in search of meaning, always interpret. What is more, we interpret according to what we already know or understand and then make the decision as to whether to change our perception or not.

The phenomenological concept of intentionality also highlights that because we all have our own interpretation of any experience, there can never be an ultimate ‘real world’, but only our individual interpretation or perception of it. This dimension puts into perspective that as a researcher I needed to acknowledge that my understanding and interpretation of the research data and results, was only one particular version. It also highlighted the concept of reliability where it was important to find other means of checking my understanding of the interviewee’s underlying meanings.

Another part of the process of reduction is to horizontalise or to equalise all immediate phenomena. In other words, the aim is to avoid putting any significance on the phenomena, but to initially give everything equal weighting, again allowing for the examination of prejudices and assumptions.

In keeping with the aim of the phenomenological reduction, horizontalisation allows for the continuing process of opening up to the experience. “Horizons are unlimited. We can never exhaust completely our experience of things no matter how many times we reconsider them or view them. A new horizon arises each time that one recedes” (Moustakas 1994, p 95)

As the researcher either listening to the interviewees or reading through the transcripts, horizontalisation allowed for the retention of an open mind, listening without prejudice or judgement. The aim was to not attach labels or to make



assumptions without a basis in the reality of the other's world. Horizontalisation as a concept helped prevent making too many early hypotheses about what defines supervision. Over the years, I had already accumulated plenty of beliefs and assumptions about supervision, so I decided to stop reading books and articles on supervision training. I wanted as much as was conceivably feasible to allow the research to define the supervision training, rather than the other way round.

Generally speaking, the three components of the Phenomenological Reduction so far described, in terms of research are aimed at entering into the interviewee's subjective world. In Time-Limited Therapy (Strasser & Strasser 1997) we described this as Associative Thinking, which "facilitates clients to narrate their story in an almost free associative mode so that a contemplative, almost hypnotic state emerges" (p79). As a researcher my aim was to 'tune' into the interviewee's world to deeply understand the world of being a supervisee.

### C.2 Second Stage of Inquiry

Spinelli (1989, 1994) describes the first set of phenomenological procedures and translates the philosophy into a therapeutic process as depicted above. However, the second set of procedures, as far as I am aware, has not been explicitly translated into a therapeutic process. Nevertheless, phenomenological researchers (Moustakas 1994, Colaizzi 1978) use these steps in their research method of enquiry and Ihde (1986) describes the link from philosophy to practice.

3:3 Table: The Second Stage of Phenomenological Inquiry

TERM	USE AS A THERAPIST	USE AS A RESEARCHER
<b>Imaginative Variation.</b> Connecting the essences of phenomena and probing through cognitive and imaginative variations.	Understanding patterns and making links that may be outside the client's awareness. Using challenges or active interventions to allow the client to 'open up' to new perceptions.	Finding the essential themes (the linking of significant statements) and then probing (variational method), challenging and 'dreaming' into the research material to allow for a range of themes to emerge.
<b>Synthesis.</b> Integration of themes into a unified statement	Making statements of understanding and checking these out with the client.	Incorporating the themes into various statements and returning to the interviewees to ensure validity.

Imaginative variation concerns moving the phenomenological process towards understanding the depth of experience, which Husserl describes as delving into the essential features of phenomena. Ihde (1986) has described these features as the

structural themes, essences or invariants, which are used by contemporary phenomenological researchers (Moustakas 1994, Colaizzi 1978) as a critical step in the process of research.

These structural themes or essences can be understood as those aspects of phenomena that are common to the whole. As a researcher this pertains to seeking repeated patterns or linking seemingly unconnected features of the interviews. In order to do this, probing becomes part of the investigation and is named as 'variational method' when used in research or challenging when used in therapy.

The act of probing, challenging or variational method can take many forms, however Husserl's preferred tool was what he called 'fantasy' variations. In order to gain greater depth of understanding all type of variations are used including both imaginative and cognitive questions, Socratic dialogue and debates.

“Abstaining from acceptance of its being, we change the fact of this perception into a pure possibility, one among other quite ‘optional’ pure possibilities – but possibilities that are possible perceptions. We so to speak, shift the actual perception into the realm of non-actualities, the realm of the as-if” (Husserl 1967, p34)

Hence the aim of imaginative variation is to move away from facts towards meaning and essences allowing for new and different possibilities to emerge.

In the research, imaginative variation firstly elicited the themes that were common to the research participants, but secondly evoked those ideas or themes that were divergent. It also allowed for the reflection of those less explicit or latent meanings inherent in the material to emerge.

The final step is to integrate or synthesise the various themes and to attempt to make some statements about the phenomena. “It involves a an intuitive ‘grasping of the essential psychological elements ... and requires an eidetic seeing of the whole’ (Polkinghorne 1989, p56). In terms of research, this was about synthesising the various themes from the interviews, checking these with the interviewees and then

emerging with underlying motifs that would inform the supervision training. Chapter 5 describes how this occurred in practice.

#### **D. Methodology – Which phenomenological method?**

So far this chapter has explored the various philosophical understandings of phenomenology and how those aspects that I use as a therapist were translated into the realm of research. This fourth section is concerned with examining my choice as to which, if any, particular phenomenological research method to follow. McLeod (2001) describing the work of Walsh (1995) says, “a qualitative researcher does not merely apply a method, but works from within an approach. The researcher’s approach comprises an appreciation of the conceptual and historical meanings implicit in the research act” (p54). So although all phenomenological research methods serve the purpose of exploring and eliciting underlying meanings, I needed to decide on an approach that served not only my philosophical requirements (of integrating the subjective world into an objective reality and which allowed for descriptive interpretation) but also the practical aspects of working as a solo researcher within the educational context of ACAP.

Broadly, there appear to be not only various different schools of researchers that describe themselves as phenomenologists but also other modalities such as cooperative enquiry, action research, grounded analysis, hermeneutic enquiry and heuristic research. All have aspects in common namely “four discernable (although not necessarily sequential) moments: formulation of the research question, intuitive contact with the phenomenon, reflective analysis of qualitative data, and psychological description” (Churchill & Wertz 2001, p251).

Action research evolved from Kurt Lewin in the 1940’s and as the name implies, uses the idea of studying phenomena through changing them and seeing the effect in situ. Cooperative enquiry regards the participants as co-researchers and uses collaboration amongst team members to apply the research cycle of experience, propositional knowing, hypothesising, immersion, critical reflection and so on until new strategies are formed. Both action research and cooperative enquiry evolved out of awareness of the power imbalance between the researcher(s) and participants, which I feel I want to be cognisant of in my research. Cooperative enquiry as a mode of working in a

team sounds appealing, however, as both models require a team of people, I had to rule them out from the beginning.

Grounded theory according to McLeod (2001) is the current 'market leader', namely because it has an explicit set of guidelines to follow. The model arose out of the work of Barney Glaser and Anselm Strauss in the 1960's (ibid) with the key task of discovering new ways of making meaning of the social world by generating a theory through understanding of the phenomena under investigation. The term grounded is because the theory should be 'grounded' in the data rather than being imposed on it, which is truly phenomenological in approach. Congruent with this notion is that the researcher should not be influenced by outside factors such as reading on the topic before embarking on the research which is compatible with bracketing. However, the approach is generally used for the analysis of data and employs specific ways of coding the data, which I interpreted as too linear or prescriptive for my purposes. My aim was to analyse the data in a more reflexive, hermeneutic fashion to allow for other possibilities to emerge.

Although the above methodological formulations are grounded in phenomenology, I still felt drawn to the more traditional approaches probably because my work as a therapist is itself grounded in the philosophy of Husserl and Heidegger. I therefore needed to differentiate and decide upon the array of more 'pure' phenomenological approaches. According to McLeod (2001), the main protagonists are: the Duquesne school of empirical phenomenology (Giorgi, Colaizzi, Moustakas, Valle and Halling); the post-Lewinian method of conceptual encounter (de Riviera) and R D Laing.

The connection between all of the above is the adherence to the phenomenological method as described by Husserl. Each also appears to have devised a series of steps, which allow for flexibility in that there may not be one single optimal way of conducting the research. In other words, the research process is open to interpretation too.

However there are also philosophical differences, so for instance, Moustakas (1994) propounds a heuristic-phenomenological approach. Heuristic phenomenology is concerned with the experience of the researcher and focuses on the understanding of

human experience. The theory believes that interpretation (even at the level of description) is not necessary for “The depiction is complete in itself” (Moustakas 1994). As described previously it was personally important to include interpretation even at the level of descriptive interpretation. In accordance with this thinking Moustakas does not take into account the social and cultural background of the phenomena being studied in that “only the co-researchers’ experiences with the phenomena are considered, not how history, art, politics, or other human enterprises account for and explain the meanings of the experience” (ibid). In my opinion, it seems important to acknowledge these components since they are naturally integrated into all our experiences.

Husserl spoke to me through his phenomenological method of reduction and intentionality, but failed to answer my questions around interpretation and his need to bracket the world. As Cohn states “... it was Heidegger who turned Husserl’s method into an existential phenomenology where interpretation is hermeneutic, that is, continuous and never final, and where the phenomena are understood not explained.” (2002 p73)

Hermeneutics acknowledges that understanding always comes from a perspective and always includes interpretation. As a researcher we can never be truly free of our own personal biases that include our culture and language. Interpretations too must take into account the social context of the research, the researcher and the co-researchers. The hermeneutic process involves a circle through which our prejudgements are reframed in view of incoming information which leads to new prejudgements and so on. It allows for participants in the research to be co-researchers in the hermeneutic circle.

I would also argue that since my world is co-constituted or I am a being-in-the-world, I am also a being-in-relation-to-others and therefore my subjective experience will also include my experience of others. Therefore as part of my research I also needed to explore the world of others but to realise that it is still my experience of their experience.

This way of viewing phenomenological research is backed up by Polkinghorne (1989) who notes that there is a difference between phenomenological philosophy and phenomenological psychology in its move towards others as a source of naïve descriptions of experience. He states “Strasser (1969) has proposed that phenomenological research needs to include the experiences of others if solipsism is to be overcome. Emphasising that the meaning and contents of experience are not within but between persons, he has proposed a dialogic phenomenology that would search for what we, rather than I experience” (p47)

I emerged from all these philosophical debates and decided to essentially follow the methodological process as described in detail by Colaizzi (1978). His interpretation of phenomenology and his written language made personal sense. The following two chapters will describe in detail the specific stages I used in the collection and analysis of data.

### **E. Reliability, Validity and Ethical Research**

Although important to espouse great theories and to write about how phenomenology informs and informed my intended research process, it is also important for any research to be cognisant of the concepts of reliability, validity and ethical practice. Following the positivist, scientific tradition, there are strict guidelines governing these principles in qualitative research that involve human beings. Essentially because qualitative research is predominantly dependent on people, whether as the researcher, the interviewee, the case study, diaries, journals etc, there are too many extraneous variables to account for within the strictly scientific worldview. However, guidelines now exist and this section explores

As qualitative research has emerged as the forerunner in the social sciences, the rules regarding reliability and validity are in continual flux. Essentially, the words ‘trustfulness’ and ‘critical reflexivity’ appear to have emerged as the dominant paradigms in recent times (McCleod 2001, Salner 1999, Brew 1996, Reason 1988). As Stiles observes “Reliability refers to the trustworthiness of observations of data; validity refers to the trustworthiness of interpretations or conclusions” (1993 p601). This also concerns looking for examples or evidence that contradicts any conclusions.

Since the type of research that I conducted is heavily reliant on myself as the researcher, it is imperative that I acknowledge my role in the research. This involves the capacity to be self-reflexive which is “the capacity to analyse the self’s intentions, thoughts, actions and reactions as if they were objects, that is, as though they emanated from an other” (Salner 1999, p1). Paramount to this intention is the willingness to record one’s personal motives and pre-judgements and biases. I believe that this is intrinsic in the phenomenological method that I have described.

Linked to this, researchers (Salner 1999, Brew 1996) also note that self-deception is rife in this type of research. In other words, researchers inherently have a resistance, a blindness or in existential terminology, sedimentations, to the incoming data. Salner (1999) suggests that having a research mentor becomes a central aspect of the research, as someone who might be able to co-reflect or become part of the imaginative variation process that is essential in phenomenological research. Ricour (1973/1981) argues that hermeneutics or rather suspicious hermeneutics becomes significant once the research has been conducted and transcribed and the researcher enters the world of words, language and meaning.

“In the activity of reconstructing participation, the work of critical hermeneutics begins. What is required is a suspiciousness that seeks out and explores the discrepancies, conflicts and absences that the data/text reveal. In short, our own subjective meaning-making as researchers is deconstructed after the fact as an antidote to self-deceptive interpretation” Salner (1999, p8).

In qualitative research, another aspect of validity is that of truth. However, it is also acknowledged that truth is linked to the particular context and experience under study. Truth is relative and in phenomenology is a process of becoming rather than fixed, as in traditional, scientific research. It is inevitable that any or indeed all of my findings could be open to further interpretation, especially when read by others from different traditions. In essence, it is about the quality of the material and the defining of the material from within a particular perspective that I will aim to achieve. It is also suggested that a theory is great not because it is true but because it is interesting, relevant and speaks to others.

Tindall C (1994) writes that the traditional notion of reliability is not appropriate in qualitative research because the issue is not about replicating any findings but about reinterpretation or exploring the same issues from within different contexts. This thinking falls in line with the notions of trustworthiness and critical reflection. Validity again is redefined so that it “becomes largely a quality of the knower, in relation to his/her data and enhanced by different vantage points and forms of knowing – it is then personal, relational and contextual” (Marshall 1986, p 197). In accordance with these notions, after the initial in-depth interviews and my initial descriptions of the content, I returned to each of the participants for further reflections and questions.

Triangulation is a process used in qualitative research to allow for the use of these different vantage points and can take various forms. Data triangulation involves collecting accounts from different sources, which allows for further depiction of both descriptions and assumptions. Investigator triangulation is when more than one researcher is used, preferably from different backgrounds or disciplines, so that more than one viewpoint is reflected both in the process and the analysis of the data. Using different methods to collect information is known as method triangulation and adopting more than one theory (theoretical triangulation) both allow for the limitations of a one-model approach and are seen as opening up the investigation.

In terms of my research, although I began with the intention of only using one source, namely the in-depth interviews of the Masters’ students, I finished by using additional sources of data, namely questions and questionnaires from supervisees within my private practice and anonymous supervisees working with other supervisors. I also included myself as a supervisee and therefore also contributed to the data collection and analysis. I tried as much as possible to reflect with colleagues (mentors) as well as with the interviewees on my findings, which allowed for some investigator triangulation. In relation to method triangulation, I used a mixture of in-depth, unstructured interviews and more formalised questionnaires.



## **Ethics**

In Australia, any academic research has to be put before an Ethical Committee before proceeding. Although this research project comes under the auspices of the United Kingdom, I still think it is important to outline the ethical nature of the project.

Underlying good practice are the ethical principles of beneficence (engaging in what is good for clients), non-malevolence (not doing harm to people), autonomy (the principle that people are free to act as they judge fit, provided that this is not harmful to others), justice (being fair in the way I deal with people), fidelity (about keeping promises, being faithful, loyal). From these principles, codes of ethics are developed to accommodate the needs of any particular profession. Counselling and Psychotherapy are governed by the PACFA code of Ethics in Australia and in essence can be used for these research purposes.

Ethical research practice is to be aware of and to put into place procedures to protect any participants from harm, which can include psychological well-being, health, as well as personal dignity. In line with this, informed consent from all participants is paramount and this begins with the researcher being as open and honest as possible. Informed consent can only occur when the participants are fully informed of the purpose of the research; what is involved, how it will be conducted and what will happen to the material once it has been collected.

Research, especially during in-depth interviews can provoke a high degree of self-disclosure from the participants. Cognisant of this I spoke to the participants about their responsibility for their own degree of disclosure and that they did not have to answer all the questions or to continue to talk beyond their comfort zone. In addition, the participants could at any time withdraw from the research. It also felt important that the participant could keep the transcribed interview and delete anything that they might not want to have included.

Linked to protection are the concepts of confidentiality and anonymity. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology (1985) defines confidentiality as 'having the characteristics of being kept secret, an intimacy of knowledge, shared by a few who do not divulge it

to others' while anonymity is "any condition in which one's identity is unknown to others." Using letters or pseudonyms as a substitute for participant's names and withholding any information that might be recognisable by others have ensured anonymity. Confidentiality and its limits were defined at the outset to the research participants.

Finally, Marshall comprehensively describes accountability as serving three audiences:

"research is *for them* in that it contributes to understanding with the research community; it is *for me* as I use it to explore topics of personal interest and develop any competence as a knower; and it is *for us*, as taking part in research impacts participants lives" (1986 p208)

In relation to my research project, the 'for them' is about informing the relevant professional bodies and organisations about the results; the 'for me' concerns my own knowledge regarding myself as a practitioner and the 'for us' is that supervision and supervision training received a higher profile within the counselling community in Sydney.

In summary, I will end this section by quoting McLeod who writes:

"Doing qualitative research is not a matter of following a set of procedures. To accomplish worthwhile findings requires engaging as fully as possible in the topic, and then employing specific methods and techniques, in the spirit of the bricoleur, to bring the project to fruition. There are no hard and fast methodological rules that guarantee validity; the truth value of findings depends on achieving a successful balance between a number of factors" (2001 p208)

### **Summary**

In summary, I believe that my final choice in research methodology matched my original aims for the project and married my phenomenological theory and practice as a therapist into that of a researcher. The methodological steps outlined by Colaizzi

(1978) were not only congruent with my phenomenological philosophy but were suitably aligned with the principles of reliability and validity as described above.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **Practising the philosophy – Data Collection**

#### **Introduction**

As I gained a greater understanding of phenomenological theory, I began to have some clarity around the process of research that I wished to undertake especially in relation to current phenomenological researchers that were speaking to me in terms of the research methods and processes they employed.

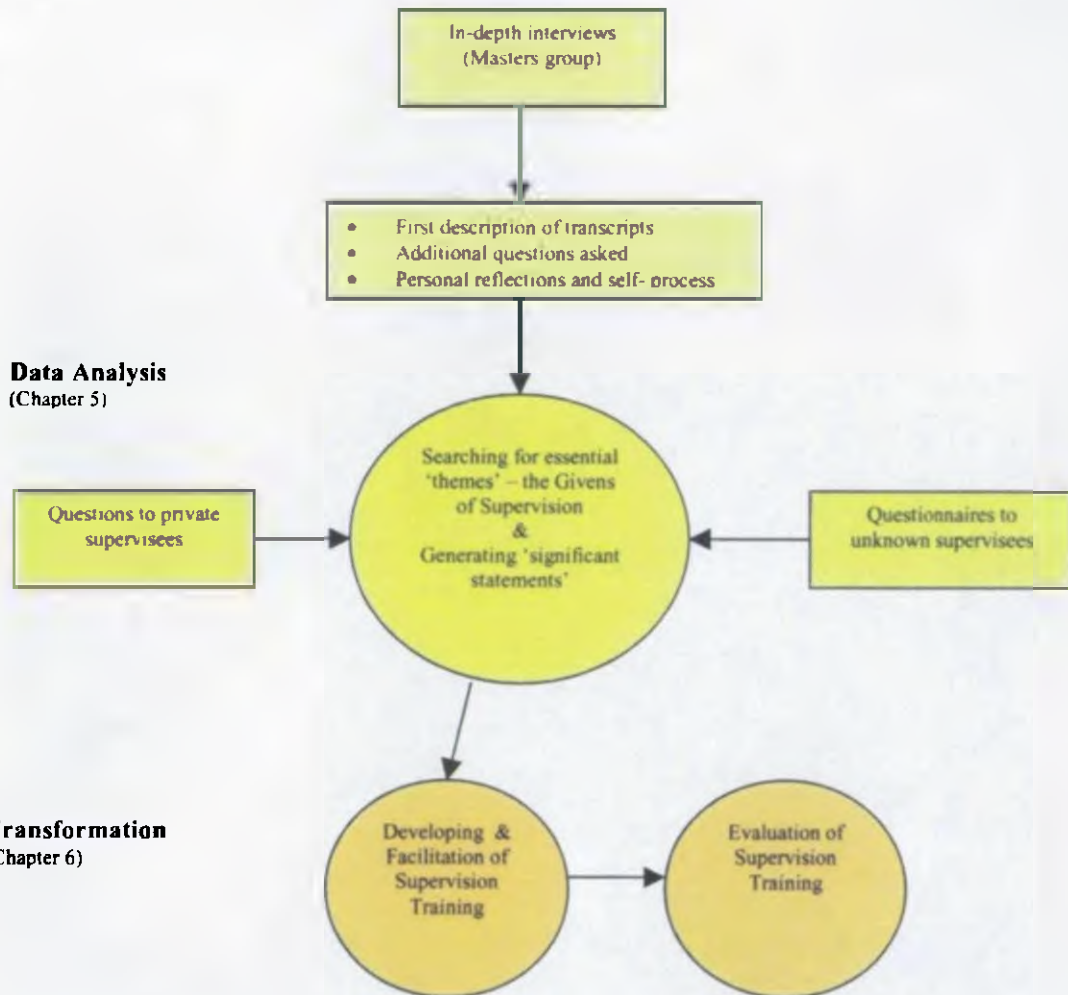
It was also important to make the theory relevant to the project itself. Hopefully the theoretical underpinnings would remain within me to inform the research process, as and when necessary. At this point it felt necessary to revisit my original aims as discussed in my Learning Contract in December 2000. Focussing on the specific outcomes related to the research process itself, these consisted of:

- To research and understand the key elements of supervision from the perspectives of supervisor and supervisee within an educational setting.
- To develop a phenomenological research approach that allows for didactic and honest feedback amongst the co-researchers.
- To sit comfortably with 'not knowing' the form and content of the end product.
- To establish a supervision training program that is congruent with the research findings.

In this chapter I will endeavour to highlight how phenomenology, broadly speaking, informed the actual research process. I will detail the research process that I took, the changes that I made along the way in terms of my later desire to widen the enquiry beyond the in-depth interviews. The flow of the research process is detailed in the following diagram and encompasses the data gathering as outlined in this chapter, the data analysis is described in Chapter Five while the transformation into the Supervision Training is covered in Chapter Six.

## 4:1 RESEARCH PROCESS: DATA GATHERING AND ANALYSIS

### Data Gathering

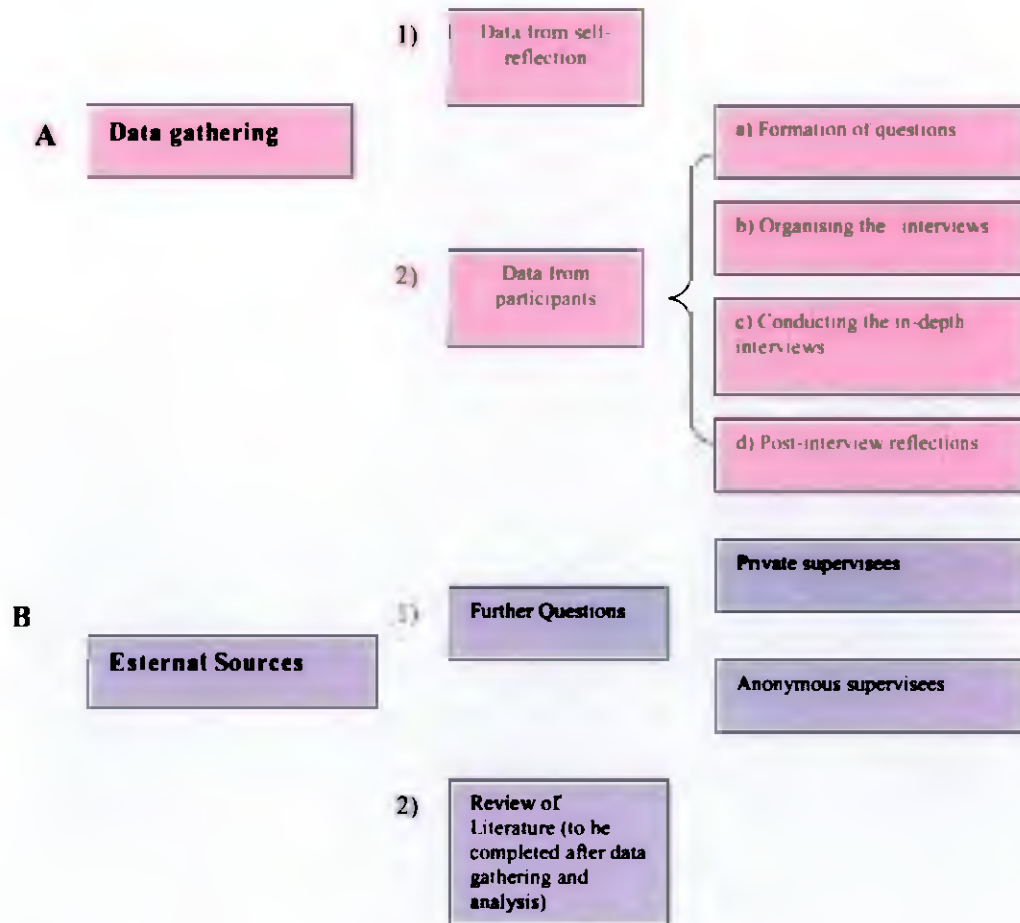


In the previous chapters I have described my journey towards arriving at my project and how phenomenology, specifically the process described by Colaizzi (1978), is the driving force behind my research methodology. I derived my research question by thinking about my own personal unresolved questions, the potential market for the training and awareness that I had a group of potential participants in the Masters of Counselling group that were about to commence in March 2000.

The decision to initially focus my research on the 6 Masters' supervisees is interweaved with the notion that within an educational setting, there are evaluative parameters that are inbuilt into the course. Even though evaluation itself is evident in all forms of supervision whether at an overt or covert level, it is explicitly recognised within training organisations. Registration of counsellors and psychotherapists has meant that all supervisors are to a greater or lesser extent, evaluators of their supervisees. At the time of the research proposal, the inauguration of PACFA and registration was in its infancy and it seemed timely to understand more fully the process of supervision and therefore what is deemed a 'good' supervisor.

The following diagram denotes the two aspects of the data gathering process that I undertook. Essentially, section A explores my phenomenological self-reflection and how this interconnected to the gathering of data from the Masters' students, Section B explains my desire to reap more information from other supervisees to validate and expand the original data. The review of literature is also considered important external data in phenomenological research, however, as previously mentioned, I wished to use this data as integral to the validity and reliability component of the research, rather than adding to my personally existing assumptions.

#### 4:2 STEPS IN THE DATA GATHERING PROCEDURE



#### A. Data Gathering

According to the literature (Moustakas 1994, Polkinghorne 1989) the purpose of data gathering is to collect descriptions of the experience under research.

Phenomenologists use three essential sources for this data gathering, namely, the researcher's self-reflection, other participants who can contribute to the experience and lastly, descriptions from outside the research context which in my case would include specific literature on supervision, other research material, as well as conversations with colleagues. Since my aim was to allow the material gathered from the research participants to essentially shape my analysis, I felt it more beneficial to leave this external source of data until after the analysis when it could additionally provide an additional source of validity and reliability. Although my intent was to not be overly shaped by other author's previous explanations and descriptions on

supervision, I was fully aware that I needed to attempt to name these influences as part of the first process of phenomenological research – the self-reflection.

Alongside the data gathering, is the process of phenomenology as described in detail in Chapter 3, namely, phenomenological reduction, imaginative variation and synthesis. I see the action of phenomenology as intrinsic and inseparable from the process of gathering data.

### **1. Data from Self-reflection**

In phenomenological research, the researcher's own experience is considered of equal importance to the data from other sources. This is recognising that the researcher is part of the experience under study and has a particular perspective that will inevitably influence both positively and negatively the observations, interventions and conclusions. Therefore, throughout the research process, I continually examined and reflected on my personal perspective regarding supervision in general as well as the specific individual relationships between the group and myself during the Masters program and the research journey.

Hence, the first step in the phenomenological process was to understand myself in relation to the phenomena of supervision and my role as a supervisor. I needed to define what it was that influenced my own sense of being a supervisor and included my own personal supervision, my own personality, my development as a supervisor, what I have read about supervision, what others have defined as supervision and how my supervisees over the years have affected me. This is in keeping with the phenomenological reduction which support the notion that I as the researcher bring my past experience of supervision into the study as described in Chapter 2.

There were several purposes to this task of self-reflection. Firstly, it allowed me to focus my attention on supervision and to clarify what I personally understood by the term without referring to any literature. This was closely tied to the second purpose, which was to bring my personal biases and judgements to the fore so that I could 'bracket' and be more open to the interviews themselves. Thirdly, it helped me clarify my own questions as well as questions that I wanted to ask the interviewees both in a descriptive sense and without hierarchy.



I started this process at the end of 2000 and spent several weeks jotting down thoughts in a random order as and when they came to me. These included:

*a) Self-reflective questions.*

Such as what do I want from my supervisees, in what way do I influence the process, what are my overall thoughts about supervision? How does supervision fit into the educational process?

*b) Listing all my assumptions and judgements about supervision in general.*

Here I looked both at my own process as a supervisor and as a supervisee that included what I wanted, my expectations, my values, the blockages that I have towards my supervisees. In addition I included the expectations of the industry in Australia, the university course I was working on, the textbooks and the models in existence and my thoughts and attitudes about all of these.

On reviewing this list, I realised that I could categorise my thoughts and feelings into:

- my personal demands on supervisees
- my expectations as a supervisee
- relationships in terms of my influence and power dynamics
- significance of self awareness and personal development
- the characteristics of group and individual supervision,
- my desire for a cross-theoretical approach
- the influence of education and learning.

These reflections were a very personal and critical analysis of myself as a supervisor and the various processes of supervision in different contexts. The original reflections are located in Appendix 4:1.

Apart from serving as self-reflective grounding to the phenomenological research process, when reviewing these reflections with a colleague (one of my mentors), she suggested that they could form the basis of my interview questions. At the back of

my mind, I had originally thought that I would conduct each of the interviews using one broad open question that would allow for the unfolding of the subjective experience of supervision in the Masters program. However, I now realised that to achieve my goal of a supervision training, I needed to be more specific in my questions, yet concurrently, allow for the unfolding and unexpected directions that each interview might take. Nevertheless, I was still hesitant in taking this approach because of the potential of being too directive as well as the possibility of putting the cart before the horse and clustering the themes rather than allowing the themes to emerge from the interview process.

## 2. Data from Participants

“Subjects are chosen who are able to function as informants by providing rich descriptions of the experience being investigated” (Polkinghorne 1989, p47). Since my research question was looking at supervision within an educational context and I also wanted to gather material for incorporation into a Supervision Training program, I felt it was necessary to have participants who had been supervised in a variety of settings and were experienced enough to analyse and to put into context the educational aspect of supervision. My personal challenge in choosing students from the Master of Counselling was that I had been their supervisor. If I had used another Masters’ group that had experienced another supervisor, I felt I would have missed out on the rich experience of my personal relationship with each of the participants.

**4:3 Table to show background of Interview Participants**

	Experience as a counsellor	Previous experience in supervision	Theoretical model of working
Beatte – female	In private practice – 2 years experience	Minimal. Took on a supervisor during the Masters	Cognitive-behavioural
Laura – female	Extensive – in private practice as well as a variety of agency settings. Previous training as a grief & loss counsellor.	A variety of different kinds of supervision both individual and group	Humanistic/Existential
Conrad – male	3 years as a voluntary counsellor with in-house training. Beginning private practice	Intensive, weekly group supervision	Psychodynamic
David – male	2 years as a voluntary counsellor in 2 agencies	2 different supervisors working from contrasting perspectives	Humanistic
Ian – male	4 years in private practice	One supervisor	Cognitive-behavioural with a spiritual influence

(names of participants have been changed)

The original group consisted of 6 students, 2 female and 4 male counsellors with a range of experience. Beatte was in private practice with little experience of previous supervision. Laura had worked in a variety of settings both within agencies and in private practice and had many years of working as a counsellor using a broadly humanistic approach to her work. Two of the males were friends and both worked in different agency settings. Conrad was psychodynamic in orientation while David was humanistic. The third male, Ian, was in private practice using a spiritual framework for his counselling while the fourth member of the Master's group was employed by the government and worked as a counsellor in a social work setting. Unfortunately, he declined to take part in the research process due to his anger at a procedural mistake by the university that meant that he did not attend graduation. However, I felt that as research participants, I was fortunate to have the potential for a rich and diverse range of descriptions and analysis of their experience of supervision.

#### *a) Formation of Questions*

Using the list from my self-reflections in conjunction with the process of Imaginative Variation (the sense of being able to dream into the material and ask further questions) to emerge with my questions. I decided to divide the interviews into sections with one broad question for each part to allow for each element to be as open-ended as possible and to provide space for the dialogic, or what is created uniquely between the interviewee and myself to emerge. I needed to be aware of when a statement in the list was my personal agenda to pursue in another forum and when it was worth opening up for further examination. At this point I tried to link the themes from my personal reflection list and to stand back to allow for a broad question to emerge. My aim in the interviews was to go beyond myself and my personal strictures and give countenance to all possibilities.

For instance, at various points in my list, I noticed the dominant theme of the supervisory relationship in relation to trust. This arose when I thought about supervisees wanting my approval, wanting to be understood by their supervisor and their colleagues, as well as the honesty element in what supervisees bring to supervision. In relation to myself as a supervisor, the theme of relationships and trust was pervasive in terms of thinking about each supervisee's developmental needs, the

when and how to be challenging without being critical, my own anxieties about group supervision and not allowing my existential bias to dominate, as well as the system of evaluation. I was also wondering about the differences between supervision that was academically evaluated and personal supervision as part of professional and personal development. The overall, embracing question that emerged from this was: What are you looking for in supervision? In addition I added some sub-questions such as: what do you look for in your choice of supervisor? The intention behind these additional questions was to allow me to stay focussed within the interview. However, on reflection, they were more a manifestation of my anxiety than an aid to the interview.

In summary the broad questions were:

1. *What are you looking for in supervision?*

In addition to the above, this question also allowed for a broad reflection on supervision in general, rather than a specific focus on the supervision in the Masters.

2. *Is there one event or events in the Masters that stands out as significant to you?*

This brought the focus of the interview back to the Masters and hopefully allowed for specific issues to emerge.

3. *How did you perceive my role?*

I added this question in an attempt to understand more about myself as a supervisor with the future aim of personal learning as well as reflecting on what might be of benefit to teaching other supervisors.

4. *Do you have any thoughts about working with a supervisor from the same or different theoretical orientation to your own?*

Since my aim was to develop a supervision training program that was cross theoretical, I wanted to understand more about individual needs at various points in their development as a counsellor.

These questions and sub-questions are in Appendix 4:2.

### *b) Organising the Interviews*

It was now over 6 months since my prospective interviewees had completed the Master of Counselling and they had all officially graduated in May 2001. Ethically I

felt that there was an appropriate time lapse between finishing the program and commencing the interviews. However, there was an obvious danger that the participants would have processed the experience of supervision in unpredictable ways, remembering certain aspects rather than others. I was hoping that they had written the journal I had asked them to do.

In June 2001, I contacted my first interviewee and arranged a date and time, sending a confirmation letter and participant release form ahead of the date (appendix 4:3 and 4:4) outlining the purpose of the research and the nature of the interviews. I decided to space the interviews so that I had plenty of time to reflect on each one. Out of the 6 original students in the Masters, 5 were easily contactable and more than willing to be part of the process. The sixth, as described previously declined to partake.

The interviews themselves were conducted in a counselling room at the College and I both videotaped and audiotaped the sessions using personal microphones. As a predominantly visual person, I knew that it would be easier for me to reflect and listen to videotapes, however for transcription purposes audiotapes were necessary and agreed upon by all participants.

In the following sections and for the purposes of this writing, I have used extracts from Laura's (pseudonym used) transcribed interviews as well as my personal reflections in relation to Laura. By doing this, my intention was to demonstrate the nuances of the data gathering process.

### *c) Pre-interview phenomenological reduction*

Since I had known each of the potential interviewees as students and had therefore built up my own personal picture of who they were in relation to their practice as counsellors, their relationships with their fellow students and myself; I felt that in order to adhere to the phenomenological method it was important to add another step. This I have called the pre-interview phenomenological reduction which involved reading through my journal and writing down my assumptions about each of the interviewees in terms of my likes and dislikes about them as well as my experience of them in the supervision group. An example of this process was my reflection on Laura:

“From my previous experience of Laura, I felt that she would be a great asset to the Masters group. She had lots of experience and had seemed to learn a lot from the Existential module. However she came in with a lot of resistance – some of which was ironed out in the first few weeks and came down to her own resistance about counselling – somehow this work felt as if it was going backwards for her. All the same it was still there in various forms throughout the 2 semesters and to be honest, I felt disappointed over my initial expectations of her potential. I felt there was a lot of antagonism from certain members of the supervision group especially two of the male members who I felt thought she was corrupting the process. However, she did form an alliance with the other female member who was less experienced than her and Laura seemed to be in a mentor-type role.”

The aim of this phenomenological reduction was to become aware of what was present in my mind which might influence the way that I asked questions, attended to the interview itself or how I might inadvertently move the interview away into my focus of concern. In accordance with the notion of validity, I wanted each interview to be about the interviewee’s experience and descriptions of their understanding and personal perceptions of supervision and not to serve my personal needs. Later, on analysing the tapes, I was pleasantly surprised at how this process enabled me to remain with each of the interviewees without personal prejudices.

#### *d) Conducting the In-depth Interviews*

As described by phenomenological researchers, the interview itself is seen as one of the principle means of collecting data on the topic and question. I wanted to create a safe atmosphere to evoke a reflective state whereby each of the interviewees could reveal their intimate thoughts about their experience of supervision. At the onset of each interview, I reiterated our confidentiality agreement acknowledging the taping procedure and that we had one and a half hours for the process.

Each of the interviews tended to start with a more informal conversation about what had happened since finishing the Masters which was important in terms of rapport and alleviating any anxieties for both the interviewees and myself. I then explained that I had four broad topics to cover but was aware that the interview would take its own direction and I was there to hear about their experiences.

I did use the four broad questions that I had initially developed and as expected, each of the interviews was extremely varied in their focus. Although I always started with the first question, I did not necessarily follow my original order since sometimes we naturally arrived at reflections, which related to another of the questions. I felt this allowed the interviewee to follow their agenda and to make meaning of their experience. I was using the essential concepts of phenomenology to both form and explore the multiple dynamics of the supervision relationship as well as exploring their personal thoughts and expectations. At this stage it was not about interpreting or challenging their perspectives but to understand and clarify their descriptions.

It was interesting that my pre-interview phenomenological reductions were often reflected at various points during the interviews. For instance with Laura, her response to the question, “what was your experience of the group supervision?”

:

“One event that comes to mind is early on and funny David’s name is coming up – but we were having – I don’t know whether you remember, we were having a discussion and I was sort of trying to decide whether I’d stay or not and um and he got really angry with me and said that I was um, I forget his words, - something like “I was going to make it not a good experience for him or something like that. I’m not sure we ever dealt with that well – in fact I’m am sure we didn’t deal with it well and I think it got in the way ... I think that was a very defining moment for me ... looking back I think that well – I’m not sure that I can be terribly honest in this group and I’m not sure that I’d be received well.”

There were also some surprises such as:

“It did challenge me to think about things like boundaries and you know where I was coming from in those areas. I mean the incredible pressure that I felt, forced me to address it and redefine what my own personal style and where I was coming from... I hated it but it was very beneficial in that sort of way and probably strengthened my own personal style and that I do challenge the boundaries and it is okay with each individual client to think about what is appropriate.”

(I have used Laura as an example, throughout the writing to give continuity to the process.)

From my viewpoint, each of the interviews were stimulating and exciting. I was extremely moved by the honesty of each of the participants in their revelations, especially in relation to their personal thoughts about the Master’s supervision. I

came away from each of them brimming with ideas and wondering how I would be able to use them effectively in the analysis of the research and the project.

At the conclusion of each of the interviews, I ensured that it was agreeable for them for me to contact them after I had reviewed the transcripts in order to ask them for further clarification or questions.

*e) Post-interview reflections*

In order to capture some of my enthusiasm and to consolidate my thoughts, after each interview I wrote down my immediate thoughts and personal impact of the process.

For instance after my interview with Laura I wrote:

- Felt very motivated after this interview. Lots of good questions for me to think over such as the contradiction between the task and the group process.
- Quite challenging but also very honest in her thoughts about the process of the Masters supervision – especially in terms of how she felt in relation to the group.
- Had to be careful not to give too many of my own thoughts (why?) because we could meander off into areas beyond the scope of what I needed for this interview.
- I agreed with a lot of what she said and felt that she had given it a lot of thought which I would not have given her credit for before.
- Also that she had changed, she had got something out of the Masters which I felt very pleased about.
- Interested in her statement about “expecting too much from supervisors”. Would like to consider this further in relation to supervision and context.
- Brought up my push-pull relationship with her. At one level, I really admire her work and her ideas but there is an undercurrent, which pushes me away from her. Will have to be careful of this when analysing the transcripts.

These post interview reflections became important when looking at the transcripts but also allowed me to consolidate some of my ideas when analysing the data. One of the difficulties I experienced during the interviews was to stay with the process of personal reflection on the interviewee’s experience of supervision and not to leap ahead with my ideas of what could be included in the supervision training. To remain in keeping with phenomenological research, I needed to allow the data to speak for



itself and bring my own perceptions and interpretations to the foreground later in the analysis.

## **B. External Sources**

In addition to the in-depth interviews, which were the major focus of the phenomenological data collection, I decided mainly for reasons of validity and reliability to extend my focus outwards to other supervisees involved in supervision.

### *a) Further Questions*

Although it would probably have been easier to have stayed within the limits of a neat, linear approach to research, after these initial interviews I began to realise that there might well be limitations. Firstly, I wondered whether the relationship between myself and the interviewees was too close. This had the advantage of creating a unique type of interview in that I felt that all the participants were as honest as they could be in their responses. In addition, they were supplying me with information on my style of supervising at the Masters level. However, I also wanted to know what kind of responses I would get from supervisees who had experienced me as a supervisor in a private setting which also indicated they had chosen my style of supervision. In contrast I was intrigued to get information from supervisees who had no preconceptions of who I was and what I might want to know.

In response to my own curiosity, I asked all 10 of my private supervisees to respond to two broad questions, which were:

1. What do I want from supervision?
2. What would be important for me in a supervision training?

I received 6 responses, each writing on average one page in response to these questions. These were then integrated into the data analysis to be referred to in Chapter 5.

My second response was to devise a questionnaire and a letter to potential participants, which I gave to five known supervisors to hand to their (unknown to me) supervisees of which I received 10 completed forms. The questionnaire remained anonymous since I could see no reason for knowing the names of participants. It was

divided into three broad themes of which the first asked for personal details about their counselling and supervision experience (see appendix 4:5). In the second section I asked questions around their personal thoughts on supervision as follows:

1. What were the factors that influenced your choice of a supervisor?
2. Describe the way your supervision is conducted. Include in this description, aspects such as the method of presenting clients, the general focus of the supervision etc.
3. What are the most important elements of your supervision?
4. What are the limitations of your supervision?
5. How would you describe the relationship you have with your supervisor?
6. How does your relationship with your supervisor impact on your work with clients?
7. How does your relationship with your supervisor affect the supervision process?

In the last section I asked them to list their ideas of what they would like to see in a training program for supervisors, coming from their perspective as a supervisee.

By adding these dimensions to the research focus, I felt I was also using the means of data triangulation as described in the previous chapter which would allow for a more convergent sense of validity and reliability in the final analysis.

#### *b) Review of Literature*

In terms of data gathering, it is usual to also acknowledge and to research what can be termed phenomenologically as 'previously developed descriptions' of the experience under investigation. In traditional research, this would appear to be equivalent to the literature review. As well as the conventional source of research material, this could include a variety of more creative sources including poetry, literature, art etc.

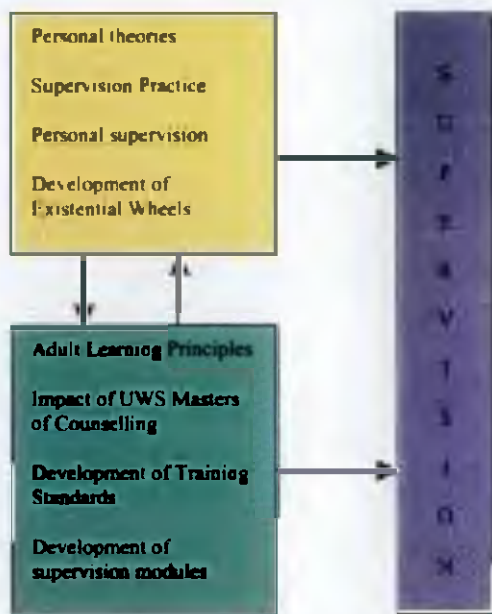
In relation to my research on supervision, as I said at the beginning of the chapter, I felt it important to leave the more formal literature review until after the data gathering and analysis. This decision was to allow the data from the interviews and the questionnaires to speak for themselves. In addition, I realised that when it came to

developing the supervision training, I would need to be very inclusive of the current trends and debates in supervision. Hence the literature is reviewed in Chapter 6 before making final decisions on the outline of the supervision training.

However, it was evident that I was not approaching this project with no knowledge of the theory of supervision or of my experience of supervision both as a supervisor in various contexts and as a supervisee. Chapter 2 which described the context behind the project, also depicted the multitude of external sources that contributed to my research as reviewed in the following diagram.

**4:4 Diagram to illustrate External Sources as a contribution towards research**

External Sources



**Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to show how I translated the phenomenological theory described in chapter 3 into the data gathering component of the research. It is interesting that as I was writing, I realised that I could not fathom where the data gathering stopped and the analysis started. In hindsight, this was true to the concept of the hermeneutic circle, which exemplifies that any inquiry is about the building of interpretation through “moving back and forth between the part and the whole” (McLeod 2001, p27). It was only after completing the in-depth interviews and the questions they raised, did I decide to broaden my enquiry into other experiences of being a supervisee. Again, it was when I began looking at the transcripts from the

interviews, did I realise that I had further questions of the interviewees, which I shall describe in the next chapter where the data is analysed.

In short, I had began my analysis, or gaining a sense of meaning from the moment I thought about this project. At every juncture, I was making more meaning and asking more questions and I could have continued the process of inquiry ad infinitum. For instance, I could have approached supervisors and asked for their thoughts and opinions in relation to all the questions that I was raising. At some point I had to stop gathering the data and realise that the process would evolve in the 'spaces between' and it was about my need to trust the unknown and the unknowing of the research process.

## **Chapter 5**

### **Creating Meanings: Data Analysis**

#### **Introduction**

The aim of phenomenological enquiry is to reveal the underlying structures, essences, interrelationships and meanings that are interwoven into the phenomenon. In my case, the intention was to unravel the meaning that supervision has for supervisees and how this meaning can be translated into a marketable product, namely, the supervision training.

This chapter is my attempt to analyse the complexity of the research findings and find meaning out of the chaotic array of material. I will describe the pathway I chose to follow and how I synthesised the data into significant meaning components.

#### **The process of Data Analysis**

As stated in the previous chapter, it was impossible to know when the collection of data stopped and the analysis began. Indeed, this is the nature of qualitative research, which recognises that since the researcher is integral to the process of inquiry, I was continually processing and making personal sense of the material as it flowed in.

The following diagram highlights the methodological procedure that I undertook, emanating from Colaizzi (1978), again noting the phenomenological process that continually underlay the method.

**5:1 Diagram illustrating steps in the data analysis**



As Polkinghorne writes, data analysis “.. is to derive from the collection of protocols, with their naïve descriptions to specific examples of the experience under consideration, a description of the essential features of that experience” (1989 p51). Louise O’Brien’s (1996) thesis likens the process to supervision where one begins talking about a client through the dialogue with the supervisor and themes gradually emerge. As the themes emerge, so do particular aspects of the dialogue and slowly one begins to recognise patterns and underlying dynamics. The transcripts themselves were the symbolic comparison to the supervision conversations and therefore it felt important to remain patient and trust that the reading and re-reading of the transcripts would allow the themes and patterns to materialize.

After completing the in-depth interviews, my first step was to immerse myself in the transcripts in order to begin the process of finding those descriptions.

## **A. The Descriptions**

### **1. The Transcriptions & Initial Themes**

Ideally to start this immersion it might have been more appropriate to transcribe the audiotapes myself, however, due to time restrictions, I decided to ask a colleague at work to do this. An unexpected benefit of having the tapes transcribed, were the comments made by my colleague. For instance, she affirmed my style of interviewing, commenting how much each of the participants revealed, apart from 'Ian' who appeared to give stock replies to each of the questions. This indeed reflected my experience of the interview with 'Ian' and my difficulties working with him during supervision. My first investigator triangulation!

Armed with the transcripts, I watched each of the interviews twice. The first showing allowed me to reabsorb and reidentify with the interview process and during the second showing, I began to note down my personal reflections and unspoken themes. As noted by Barritt (1985) "meaning is alive in everything we do, even when we do not speak. Gestures, looks, touches, even silence are all significant and cannot be disregarded" (p26). This was not only with regard to the interviewee but also to myself, as the interviewer.

The process reminded me of Kagan's (1980) Interpersonal Process Recall (IPR), which has been adapted and used for different purposes but essentially is a method of reviewing a taped counselling session to achieve personal awareness. For my purposes, I wanted to be aware of my own reactions and unspoken thoughts (bracketing) so that I could be more honest and truthful when analysing the data. In addition, I realised that some of these thoughts might be useful at a later stage. Some of my reflections included underlying themes and interesting practical issues, which required further reflection and debate.

For instance, when watching the tape of Laura, I wrote about my reflections on the particular event that was mentioned, my personal feelings of inadequacy as the group

supervisor, and also how the specific tasks imposed by the Masters program did not allow time for group process and reflected on whether there were alternative ways of addressing this.

In keeping with the phenomenological research process discussed in chapter 3, using both the transcripts and the audiotapes, I began the search for some broad themes. Initially, I used different highlighter pens, noting what I called 'process', content and questions. I decided to use these initial themes in order to reflect my original learning aims and to attempt to get some structure from the onset of the analysis.

Broadly, the 'process' themes were looking for issues relating to relationships between the group or particular members of the group (including myself), the university, or their sense of self. I also included in this category any underlying or unspoken themes that I thought might be of significance. For instance when Laura was discussing the Master's supervision group:

Laura: I suppose during the year I would have liked to have brought some of that struggle to the group and worked through a bit of that. I found I had to do it alone and that was part of my frustration I think.

Alison: What do you think stopped you from bringing that struggle?

Laura: Just the norms that were in the group I think. I didn't think that it would be misunderstood and I couldn't bear for it to be misunderstood cause I was sometimes I was going through such a struggle with it all ... Just my hunch was that it would be misunderstood and then I'd, then I'd be more angry and more pressured and um more isolated on the edge of the group.

In essence, this component was where I was identifying aspects of the conversation that reflected the meaning of the experience of supervision.

In contrast, the 'content' theme was to highlight anything of significance relating to the supervision itself whether that be in the Masters programme or their experience of supervision in general which could specifically be used for the content of the supervision training. In answer to my broad question around what Laura wanted from supervision, she replied:

Laura: Its probably important for me not to work with someone with just one orientation – that is willing to move around a bit within the orientations ... cos



even the supervisor I've got, I think she is that, but she's somewhat married to her emotionally focussed style and she gets me to do lots of pictures and stuff like that, whereas I'm not particularly a drawing sort of person. I'm more words. But it's okay, it's been really helpful – and I've gone with it.

Lastly, highlighting the theme of 'questions' was a note to myself and included issues that I might want to probe further. For instance, Laura raised the issue of the high cost of paying for individual supervision, which meant that she veered towards the cheaper option of group supervision. In all my contemplations, I had never considered the financial implications but now felt it was worth exploring further.

At this stage I needed to totally absorb myself in the interviews so that the immersion itself could give me the freedom to internally reflect and find relationships to the meanings. In other words, I wished to have connection with my creative edge or phenomenologically, the imaginative variation component.

## **2. First Descriptions and further questions**

My immersion in the transcripts was such an enriching experience that I felt it necessary to return to each of the interviewees to ensure that I had captured their individual meaning and sense of the interview. I therefore wrote what I have termed 'first descriptions' of each of the interviews that were in essence, synopses which attempted to 'be-in-the-world' of each interviewee. In other words, I used phenomenological reduction to unite the various elements of the interview into a whole. For instance one of the paragraphs that I wrote about Laura's interview said:

"This sense of being on the 'outer' was repeated at several points during the interview. In further discussion of this feeling, Laura revealed that this emerged partly because she felt that other members in the supervision group were more rigid in relation to their counselling practice and in their definition of ethical boundaries. During the interview, we discussed other possibilities including the idea that Laura had many years of experience as a counsellor in various fields of practice. Compared with the other group members, and their relative inexperience, it was possible that Laura had developmentally different requirements from the others and was more aware of how clients have divergent needs in terms of boundaries."

The complete set of 'first descriptions' can be found in Appendix 5: I which allows the reader to also immerse and understand each of the interviews which may be of benefit as this analysis proceeds.

At this stage, my purpose was to immerse and to understand the interviewee's perspective and to attempt to eliminate any of my judgements or interpretations. McLeod (2001) sees this an important preliminary step in order to "anchor the process of moving back and forth by writing a tentative preliminary statement which seeks to capture the initial sense of all the material that has been collected" (p142).

I sent the descriptions, the unannotated transcript and a set of individual further questions to each of the interviewees for their comments.

I asked all of the interviewees the one overall question about what they thought would be important to include in supervision training, but the questions relating to the interview were individual to each person.

All of the interviewees responded to their individual questions and to their thoughts about what to include in a supervision training. These were then incorporated into the analysis process. None of the interviewees wanted any changes to the 'first descriptions'. Indeed, most commented on the accuracy of the text to the point where interviewee 'David' highlighted in red with the comment 'yes' at various points to indicate his support.

### **3. Personal reflections about the interviews**

Although I had written down some immediate personal thoughts after the interviews, I realised that by immersing myself in the transcripts and asking for further reflections from the interviewees, I had neglected to put forward my perspective. In answer to this I wrote about my response, my feelings, and my thoughts, which I hoped, would allow for additional underlying and emerging themes to surface.

"I realise how much my views and expectations of Laura were in the foreground during the supervision year and were still apparent in the interview. Previous to my experience of her in the Masters, I had found her broadminded and personable. All my feelings rushed back to me during the interview – how I had been shocked by her resistance to the whole process and how she had kept herself removed from the other members. It appeared as if she didn't trust anyone at the beginning and certainly was unable to sustain any form of questioning from any group member that might resemble

criticism. Her need to trust also emerged when discussing her ideal supervisor whom she wanted to have as an equal.

All five of my reflections and responses are found in appendix 5:2

The writing of these brought the various contextual components back into the foreground. For example, since the Masters was largely about academic learning in relation to the student's counselling practice, my contract at the beginning of the year was quite clear. I noted that the focus of supervision was on how they applied their theory in practice and since there were structured assessment tasks, there would be little time to focus on group dynamics. Secondly, I noted that it was a requirement for them to have personal supervision, which meant that during the Master's supervision, we could remain focussed on our tasks. On reflection, in future, I will need to be much clearer in the contracting stage when supervising the Masters.

This reflective writing additionally highlighted that all participants had their own personal issues, which to some extent were not addressed, in this type of supervision. However, by not addressing these, they lay dormant as undercurrents and resentments. These might also have contributed to the high anxiety regarding my role as assessor. 'Beatte' was the only student to realise that learning is about taking risks regardless of the anxiety it might provoke.

### **B. The search for Essential Themes**

A significant step in phenomenological research and indeed in all qualitative research is to go both beyond and beneath the overall meaning of the research data. In other words 'beyond' in the sense of being able to open out and expand upon the initial meanings and 'behind' to recognise any meanings not initially explicit in the text. This process involves moving between small segments of the text and the whole text. Generally speaking, phenomenologists extrapolate and explore small segments of text and narrative researchers focus on the meaning of the whole story or text. I feel that it is important to do both since working with small segments can be prone to loss of the whole contextual meaning. However, working with the small segments allows for in-depth reflection and individual subjective meaning to emerge.

The aim in this part of the research analysis is to move from the collection of naïve descriptions taken from the transcripts to what is known as a general or structural description. This is sometimes known as the reducing of specific descriptions to their fundamental structures.

### **1. Classification of data into categories and thematic descriptions**

The movement from the naïve to the specific involves a series of steps that vary according to the particular researcher or the context of the research. However, there seems to be consensus among researchers that the first step is to break the data down into manageable segments. At this first stage, I stayed with the original words of the interviews to try and retain the integrity and the resonance of each of them.

#### *(i) Creating Categories*

The design of the interviews had explicitly divided the descriptions into two broad categories. The first category related to each of the participant's experience of supervision in general and the second was their experience of supervision in the Master of Counselling. However, within these two categories, the transcripts revealed other themes, which I posed as questions to myself (which were different to those developed for the interview) to help create the 'manageable' segments. These broke down as follows:

1<sup>st</sup> Category: What do I want to experience from supervision?

- What is supervision?
- What are the characteristics of a supervisor?
- Is personal awareness part of supervision?
- What are the benefits and limitations of group supervision?
- Is approval part of supervision?
- Is there an educational component to supervision?

2<sup>nd</sup> Category: What was my experience of supervision in the Master of Counselling?

- How I experienced the supervision?
- What personal changes occurred for me?
- How I perceived the supervisor's role?

- How and in what way did the assessment procedure affect the process?
- What could be changed?

In keeping with the phenomenological self-reflective aspect of the research, I realised that it was important to write my perspective of these two broad categories before going any further with the analysis since this itself could influence my responses. Under the 1<sup>st</sup> category I described my own definition of supervision and what I want and wanted from the relationship both from the perspective of a supervisee and supervisor. This is located in Appendix 5:3 while Appendix 5:4 is my view of the Master's year which is a synopsis of the log that I kept. Both of these documents served the purpose of bringing myself back into the research process and allowed for my standpoint to be included in the analysis.

#### (ii) *Creating Thematic Descriptions*

Returning to the original transcript data, I further refined the descriptions. Van Kaam (1969) describes the need to write lists, which contain "every basically different statement made by the subjects". Moustakas (1994) describes this process in Husserlian terms as that of horizontalisation. In other words, the lists should have no prior judgement regarding significance or importance.

Using the categories named above, I took the transcripts and the replies to my original questions and began to make lists of verbatim descriptions. The following extract from the tables that I created demonstrates this procedure. Again, I have used Laura as an illustration:

## 5:2 Tables depicting the emergence of thematic descriptions

1<sup>st</sup> Category: What do I want to experience from supervision? (Laura's responses)

CATEGORY	THEMATIC DESCRIPTION
What is supervision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probably in the early years I would have seen myself very much as the student and now I see the supervisor as a peer in a sense - equal</li> <li>• It's a human encounter - I don't know how you can remove relationship</li> <li>• I'm wanting to actually get perspective with specific clients. Its not just shallow and I'm not going because I'm supposed to have supervision</li> <li>• Its hard to bear alone - As I talk it through that I find a way forward too and feel somewhat relieved that I don't have to keep it all to myself</li> <li>• Of who you are ... as a counsellor ... is more fundamental than any other thing</li> </ul>
What are the characteristics of a supervisor?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somebody who'll be attuned to my particular style - not perhaps their own agenda. - Who's going to be flexible enough to move around</li> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Honest</li> <li>• Courageous enough to confront when I need it</li> </ul>

2<sup>nd</sup> Category: What was my experience of supervision in the Master of Counselling? (Alison's responses)

CATEGORY	THEMATIC DESCRIPTION
How I experienced the supervision?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't want to open Pandora's box here and become attacked ... for my particular style. I protected against that in the group by remaining removed and a bit safer</li> <li>• Particularly the men if we as a group addressed the personal stuff it was quite defensive</li> <li>• I was sort of trying to decide whether I'd stay or not and he got really angry with me and said that ... I was going to make it not a good experience for him. I'm not sure we ever dealt with that well - in fact I am sure we didn't deal with it well and I think it got in the way. I think that was a very defining moment for me</li> <li>• So yea there was a frustration ... because I felt I couldn't talk about my particular issues because 'well this is the right way'. So I tended to be silent about a lot of my stuff. And then I'd be more angry and more pressurised. And more isolated on the edge of the group</li> <li>• I felt like in the group too that everybody was trying to be so politically correct and so tolerant of everything that nobody stood for anything. So there's not the freedom to have stimulating discussion and debate without toes ... being stepped on</li> </ul>

The full list of these initial thematic descriptions are in Appendix 5:5

At this stage the statements that emerged still contained the flavour of the original interview. My fear was that I was eliminating other significant aspects, which is easy

to do when faced with reams of transcriptions. Using the concept of reliability, I returned to my 'first descriptions' to ensure that this was not the case. I also wondered whether the categories themselves were biased towards my agenda but trusted that the research process would highlight this at a later stage.

## **2. Transforming thematic descriptions into significant statements**

The next stage was to make the shift from the interviewee's original language to my own. This pertained to transforming the original statements or protocols into meaning or significant statements that still retain the essential flavour of the original description. The essential component is to evolve with statements that reflect the underlying meaning. As Colaizzi (1978) writes:

“This is a precarious leap because, while moving beyond the protocol statements, the meanings he (the researcher) arrives at and formulates should never sever all connections with the original protocols; his formulations must discover and illuminate those meanings hidden in the various contexts and horizons ... in the various protocols” (p59)

Instead of writing lists that Colaizzi suggests, I found it more beneficial to write in sentences because this allowed for the retention of the original flavour of the interview and the intent behind the words. Again, I was both surprised and pleased that the First Descriptions could provide an additional perspective to the verbatim description tables compiled in the previous section. Indeed, the more I understood the research process, the more I began to realise the significance and integration of all the aspects. For instance, at this point I read through my reflections at every stage in order to get some perspective on each of the participants and their aims and expectations. So for instance my reading of Laura's answer to 'what is supervision?' emerged as: “Supervision is a human encounter where equals meet to gain perspective. Its also a place to offload, share and learn about oneself in relation to the clients.” The 'list' of significant statements is located in appendix 5:6

Although I still retained the original categories, I was beginning to realise the overlaps between them and that certain categories were more in line with my agenda than with the participants. For instance, it seemed unnecessary to make the distinction between

Category A (What do I want to experience from supervision?) and Category B (What was my experience of supervision in the Masters of Counselling?). I could see that the themes emerging from the process were irrespective of these categorisations.

In relation to my own agenda, the questions around 'need for approval' were my words and were never actually used in the interviews. However, the theme that was emerging was about the need for trust and honesty in the supervisory relationship.

### **3. The emergence of theme clusters**

At this point in the research process, I began to struggle with making the leap from the statements into themes where "there is an attempt here to allow for the emergence of themes which are common to all of the subjects' protocols (Colaizzi 1978 p59).

Simultaneously, the idea was to transform so that "the already known becomes seen in a new light, allowing hidden meanings of the familiar to emerge" (ibid p65).

I was rescued by a small annotation, which I had made many months before in the text next to the description of 'theme clusters'. The word was 'givens'. In other words I had interpreted the concept of 'themes' as equivalent to the existential dimension of the ontological 'givens' of existence. Essentially this idea describes how certain aspects of living are universally true or inescapable. For example, in supervision there is no escape from the fact that there is a relationship; however, we do have choice in how we each respond. This specific individual creation (or choice) is known as the ontic aspect of being and can be viewed either as a possibility or a limitation.

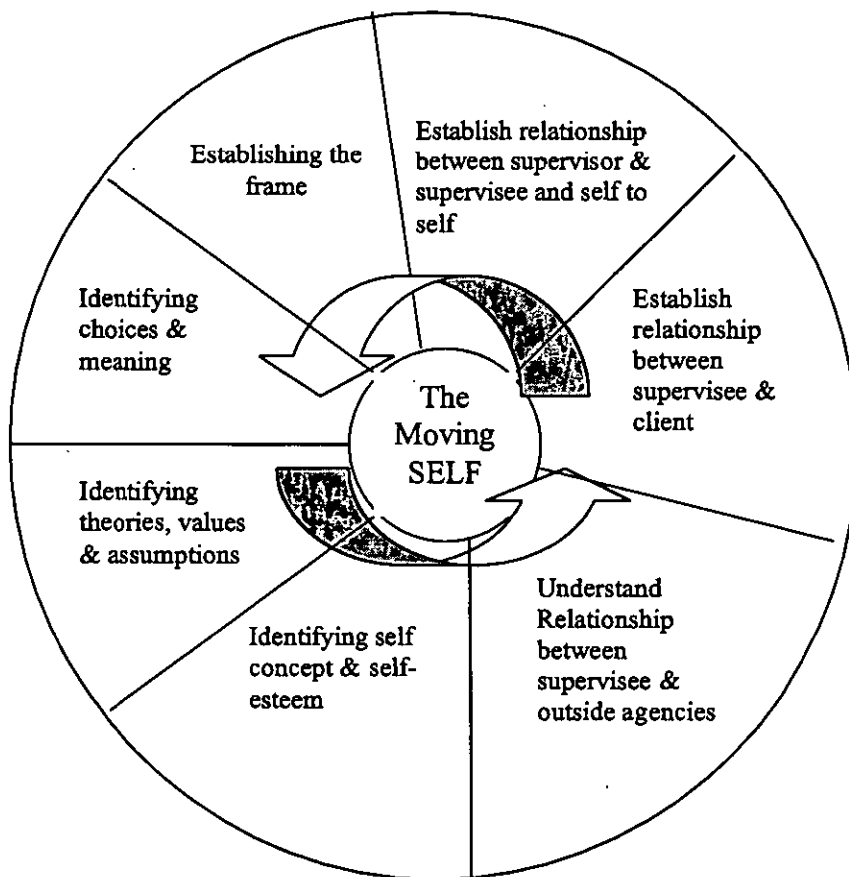
As I began looking in more detail at the significant statements of supervision as well as my own reflections about supervision, I realised that I could use the concept of the 'givens' and the 'wheel' and transpose them into the 'Givens of Supervision'. This also allowed for the explicit concrete themes concerning supervision to live alongside the individual meaning of each of the supervisees.

Extrapolating on this idea, the ontological or essential characteristics of supervision would be the elements that are intrinsic and fundamental to the process regardless of theoretical model, developmental stage, situational context or type of supervision. I



returned to the wheel described in Time Limited Therapy (Strasser and Strasser, 1997) and began to write down the givens or themes that were always apparent to some degree in supervision. As these began to emerge, it was important that I kept a personal dialogue in motion, which continually questioned and double-checked that I was moving in the right direction. When I converted these 'givens' into the 'The Wheel of Supervision', several colleagues (or mentors) confirmed that these 'givens' seemed intrinsic to supervision.

### 5:3 THE WHEEL OF SUPERVISION



Each of the segments of the wheel is similarly interconnected, as in the original 'time-limited' wheel, allowing for fluidity and change. A change in one segment will have a knock-on effect on the other segments, giving the wheel a systemic flavour.

In keeping with the original wheel, I retained 'The Self' at the centre. This acknowledges the significance of either the 'self' of the supervisor or that of the supervisee in their interactions with all the segments. Although I could have placed

'relationships' in the centre of the wheel, I felt that from an existential perspective, the self as ever-changing interacts with the world of supervision in all its dimensions. The self is seen "as a process that continually reinterprets and reshapes its identity from the multiplicity of derived experiences" (Strasser & Strasser 1997 p65) within the supervision context.

The following is a synopsis of the themes or givens that emerged from both the significant statements and the various personal journals. A more detailed description of these segments is located in appendix 5.7. The intention is to also illustrate that all segments of the wheel are inherent in all forms of supervision regardless of theoretical orientation or individual contexts. In other words these are the interconnecting themes that emerged from the research. I believe it also allows for the ontic concept, essentially acknowledging that each person (whether supervisor or supervisee) will have a different relationship to the givens.

- *Establish Relationships between a) supervisor & supervisee and b) self-to-self*

Since formal supervision always exists in relationship whether between two individuals or between group members, this 'theme' or 'given' is implicit. However, how this relationship realm is used in supervision will depend on the particular model or theoretical orientation employed by the supervisor.

Supervision texts (Gilbert & Evans 2000, Bernard & Goodyear 1998) write about the importance of supervisees developing their own internal supervisor and also too how supervisors need to be aware and to promote this aspect in their supervisees. The significance of this self-to-self relationship will vary from a specific skill in some models, to that where both the supervisor and supervisee need to self-reflect as part of the process of understanding the client-counsellor relationship

- *Establish relationship between counsellor and client*

The ultimate purpose of supervision is to promote the relationship between supervisee and their client so that the client achieves the best possible outcome from the counselling process. The direct significance of this relationship will vary according to the model. For instance, some supervisors will work indirectly with the supervisee, while others will work specifically on skills that enhance this outcome.

- *Identifying theories, values and assumptions*

All supervisors and supervisees enter into supervision with particular theories or models regarding counselling. In addition they will bring their personal values and assumptions about life, counselling and supervision.

- *Identifying self-concept and self-esteem*

Other people's opinions are often at the forefront of how we view ourselves which in turn effects how we value ourselves and how we relate to others. Since supervision involves more than one person, issues of self-concept and self-esteem are always present and can effect either positively or negatively the supervision process. Issues of trust and self-revelations are closely connected to how we view the other.

- *Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies*

Included in this section are the impact of professional bodies and legal structures that impact on the counselling relationship. The client, counsellor and supervisor will also bring their own cultural background into the room. In addition, counselling can take place within a variety of private and public (agency) settings which affects the counselling or therapy in relation to aspects such as number of sessions, theoretical model used, financial transactions and so on. The manner in which the agency or private individual employs the supervisor will also impact on the supervision process.

- *Identifying choices and meaning*

Although this theme is an existential concept, I felt that this supplement to the wheel added the component of attitudes and choice towards supervision as a process and the supervisor as a person. In other words, both the supervisor and supervisee will adopt a particular attitude towards the meaning and significance of supervision, which will impact on the supervision.

In order to validate whether my themes were true to the experience of the interviews, I listed some of the significant concepts under each of the givens (appendix 5:8). It was very apparent that there were many overlaps between the givens. This is entirely congruent with the original wheel and exemplifies the concept that supervision is a flowing system. The list in appendix 5:8 gives a flavour of the individual responses (or ontic characteristics), but is certainly not exhaustive. I added my own responses (Alison) under each of the givens to denote that the Wheel can be used for either the supervisor or supervisee.

An additional step in the validation process was the development of the following table. The aim of this was to check firstly, whether everything from the original statements was included in the themes or givens and secondly to become aware of any themes that might not be included.

**5:4 Table illustrating Validity Responses to The Wheel Of Supervision (Masters' students)**

THE GIVEN	RESPONSES INCLUDED	RESPONSES NOT INCLUDED
The Frame	Is included in all responses and reflects each supervisees need for a trusting, working relationship with clarity around the frame especially in relation to any possible dual relationships. This brought up the importance of safety in order to be willing to divulge anything and everything that pertains to the counselling relationship.	
Relationship between supervisor and supervisee	Very clear that a good supervisory relationship is one of trust and safety although each person had their own meaning around this. All participants had a clear idea of whether they wished to have a supervisor with more or equal experience or of the same or different theoretical model. Getting another viewpoint or being challenged was also important.	
Relationship between self to self	All participants believed that self-awareness was intrinsic to the supervision process to gain greater clarity to help clients. However there was a clear divide between therapy and supervision.	Aware that some theoretical models of counselling and supervision do not believe in the importance of personal self-awareness
Relationship between supervisee and client		Generally only alluded to as a bi-product of supervision
Identifying theories, values & assumptions	As well as the underlying theory used, all participants had a variety of personal values and assumptions that interconnected with their work as counsellors and supervisees.	
Identifying self-concept and self-esteem	The need for affirmation was evident in all responses, although the specifics of this need varied from the desire to be supported, the fear of criticism to the desire for challenge.	
Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies	The individual counselling setting was referred to by all participants and informed the way they practiced and the type of supervision they undertook. Understanding legal and ethical parameters was also significant.	
Identifying choices and meaning	This was very personal to each participant hut included their passion around counselling as well as their attitudes towards supervision.	

As a means of validation this process highlighted that the themes or givens were essentially congruent with the data. However, it revealed a glaring shortcoming in that the given of 'relationship between supervisee and client' was not of high priority amongst these participants who appeared to focus more on the supervision process

itself. On reflection, one hypothesis is that the interview questions were skewed towards eliciting each person's underlying meanings around the supervision process, rather than on the perceived outcome. Another speculation is that by reason of the high anxiety around the assessment process, the participant's focus tended to centre on this educational aspect of supervision. Nevertheless, since the counsellor-client relationship is of paramount importance and essentially the purpose of supervision, I decided to retain this segment as part of the wheel.

I am also aware that some models of counselling and supervision do not believe in using self-awareness as a supervision process in itself. However, I would argue that regardless of this, both the supervisor and supervisee would emerge from any encounter with some change in self-to-self.

This was the stage in the research, where I was actively using the phenomenological concept of imaginative variation where "The point of free variation is to imaginatively stretch the proposed transformation to the edges until it no longer describes the experience underlying the subject's naïve description" (Polkinghorne 1989 p55). In addition I believe I was transforming and synthesising the data into a model that allowed for the ontological essences of supervision as well as the ontic, individual responses of all supervisory participants.

#### *Validity and Reliability - Further Data*

After completing the interviews and before my total immersion in the data, I decided to extend the data collection for reasons of reliability and validity. Although the phenomenological process that I have described has an inbuilt continuous flow of validation between the gathered data, I wanted to explore these notions across other data sources. I used this concept of data triangulation to firstly, ask 10 of my private supervisees to write down their thoughts about supervision. Specifically I asked the question, "what do you expect from supervision?" and secondly, "what do you think would be important to include in a training program for supervisors?" By asking current supervisees to be involved in the research, there was a potential for an ethical contravention in terms of my power position as their supervisor. For instance, they might have felt the need to skew their answers according to what they felt I wanted, or that there could be repercussions if they failed to submit their thoughts. It was also

possible, that my interpretation of their data could be influenced by my personal knowledge and preferences. However, I felt that the questions were as neutral as possible and could apply to supervision per se, rather than our particular supervisory relationship. Indeed, the exercise proved useful outside the research arena in that the reflections also allowed for ruminations on the supervisory contract and relationship. There was no pressure to answer these questions and while six returned their written thoughts, four chose to abstain.

The second group of supervisees were given a specifically designed questionnaire distributed through 5 supervisors to hand out to their (unknown to me) supervisees of whom I received 10 completed forms. As with my second round of questions to the Masters students, I asked everyone to write down what they thought would be important to include in a training for supervisors. This aspect will be discussed in Chapter 6.

Although I had collected this additional data before the emergence of the themes described in the Wheel of Supervision, I still decided to analyse both sets of data in this way in order to get some sense of continuity. Using the validity table developed in the previous section I noticed the enormous similarities in the responses to the givens, especially the concern for safety and trust. However, there was some noticeable additional information from the anonymous supervisees (appendix 5:9), namely the prominence of the supervisee-client relationship. Acknowledgement that supervision directly affected their work with clients in terms of confidence, skills and self-awareness was specifically noted. Again this theme was missing in the table (appendix 5:9) where my private supervisees had written their thoughts. I will give this further consideration in my discussion at the end of the chapter.

Other additions included the awareness that for some counsellors, the cost of individual supervision was prohibitively high which meant limiting their supervision. Choosing one's own supervisor appeared as fundamental in terms of developing the trusting relationship and was linked to those counsellors who had experienced in-house supervision in agency settings.

#### **4. Transforming Themes into a General Description**

The idea behind transforming the themes into a 'general descriptions' is to tie together and integrate the themes as described above into a cohesive framework: "it requires an eidetic seeing of the whole. In the grasp of the whole, the elements are understood" (Polkinghorne 1989 p56). In order to achieve this, I used a combination of the generated themes and the individual responses to these themes as follows:

##### *General Description*

"Overall, supervision was seen as a means to developing increased confidence and self-esteem with regard to the supervisee's work with clients. The most significant component identified was the presence of trust and safety, which allowed for the development of personal confidence to freely reveal. This sense of openness allowed supervisees to talk about all aspects of their work with clients and to disclose both personal and professional concerns in a manner that enhanced self-awareness in relation to their client work. Additionally, they benefited from the supervisor's self-awareness as long as the focus remained with the supervisee. In the safety of the relationship, supervisees wanted challenge and different points of view as long as they knew they were accepted and affirmed by their supervisor. Closely connected to safety was the desire for supervisees to choose their own supervisor unencumbered from any potential dual relationship. Supervisees had a clear perception of the factors that would enhance their counselling in terms of their supervisor's level of experience, general knowledge, theoretical perspective and familiarity of counselling contexts."

Overall, I felt that this general description captured the themes or givens depicted in the 'wheel of supervision'. It was written from the point of view of supervisees with regard to their perspective of supervision, which is in keeping with the aim of developing a supervision training that was supervisee-centred.

##### **Personal reflections and Analysis of the Process**

At this stage I recognised that both the themes (as in the wheel of supervision) and the general description would constitute the basis of the training program. The themes



would form the shape or design of the program, while the general description informed the underlying philosophical intent.

I had originally intended to use other supervisors to broaden my concept of supervision and instead used supervisees with the same intent. This deviation is related to my reflection early in my research process, that I wanted to develop a supervision training that was supervisee-centred. In other words, I felt that since supervisees were the recipients of supervisor practice, they were also an important authority of what they required from supervision.

The phenomenological methodology as a process was a challenging venture in that I needed to be simultaneously cognisant of a range of factors and information to both 'stay in the moment' and to move forward into the next stage of research. I personally felt that I used the concept of 'imaginative variation' to its fullest extent in my leap from the 'significant statements' to the 'clustering of themes' into the 'wheel of supervision'. From a critical perspective, I could argue that I might have arrived at these givens or themes from any range of data collected about supervision. The converse argument being that the art of critical imagination has a creative element and the wheel did emerge as a conglomerate of themes, which are ontological to supervision.

The discrepancy in the data gathered around the theme, 'relationship between supervisee and client', is interesting in that it emerged when I was not part of the process either as a supervisor or as a researcher. I have argued previously that this might be due to my agenda of wanting to elicit supervisee's underlying meaning in relation to supervision and therefore the ultimate purpose was subsumed in the data collection. At this point, I also questioned whether as a supervisor I brought the client into the relationship realm and concluded that this was an important component of my supervisory style. The other alternative was that I had missed those points in the transcripts or subsumed them under different headings. On further reflection, I believe that the latter was indeed the case.

With regard to investigator triangulation, although I consulted colleagues at various stages, I felt this was more of an informal process and in hindsight I could have

explicitly systematised this relationship element from the outset. I also could have sent the descriptions of the ‘wheel of supervision’ and the final general description to the research participants for their comments. This would have allowed for further hermeneutic dialogue as well as another step in validating the analysis.

### **Summary**

In this chapter and in the numerous appendices, I have intricately described the analysis of the research that I undertook. Using the phenomenological methodology was truly magical in its unfolding of the material to reveal the themes and the general description. Even though from the outset I understood the significance of the supervision relationship and I had anticipated the stress and anxiety the Master’s supervision evoked, I still felt that the evolution of the data into the ‘wheel’ and the final general description had an ‘unknown’ and ‘unknowing’ flavour that was revealed through the process itself.

## **Chapter 6**

### **Transforming and Creation**

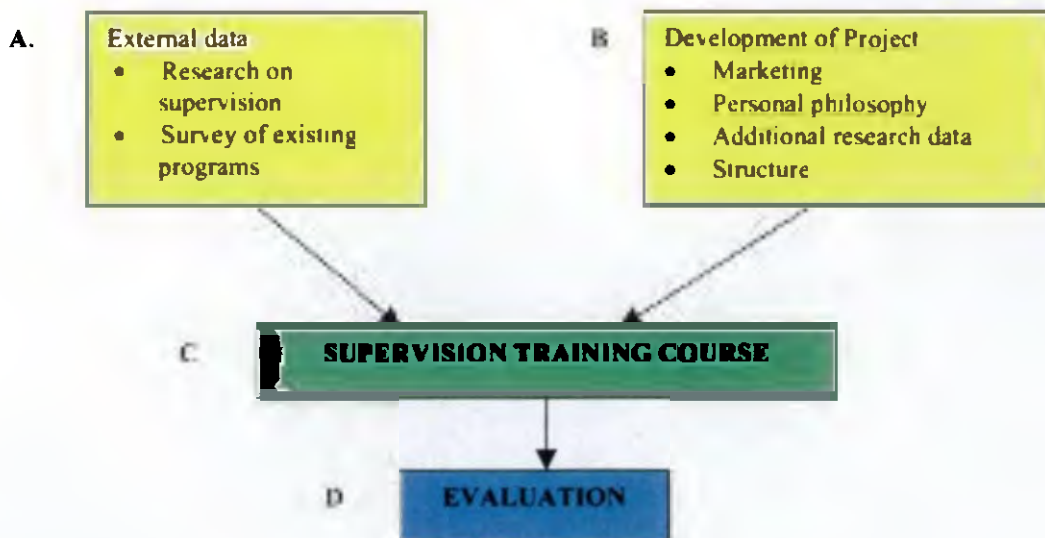
#### **Introduction**

The broad aim of this chapter is to illustrate the process of transforming the research findings into the project as defined as a training program for supervisors. At this stage I felt that I had the foundations of a program emanating both from the themes or 'wheel of supervision' and the general description. At the outset of the research, I wrote about the need to allow the research itself to define the supervision program, without being too influenced by outside sources such as other programs or the increasing amount of literature that was being generated around the world. However, I was now at the stage where it was necessary to return to these sources and this chapter will include a summary of these findings and how these as well as my research influenced the style and content of the training.

I also had additional and specific material from all the three data gathering sources (in-depth interview participants, private supervisees and unknown supervisees) who were asked the specific question about what they thought should be included in a supervision training. These responses and a survey of other training programs all influenced the design of the program.

Hence this chapter is divided into four sections. The first part includes a review of research in the area of supervision and existing training programs, as it both validates and extends my findings. In the second section I explore and integrate the research findings, my professional knowledge, and my personal judgments that helped create the training program. The supervision course is then described in section 3 and the final section is the evaluation of the course.

### 6:1 Diagrammatic representation of Chapter 6



#### A. External Data

External data at this point in the research was to integrate other research and writer's perceptions of supervision to both validate my research findings as well as add additional material that would benefit the supervision training.

As written by many writers (Carroll 1996, Bambling 2000, Weaks 2002, Wheeler 2003), research in the area of supervision is still in its infancy compared with the research into counselling and psychotherapy as a profession. However, in addition to specific research, there are numerous books and articles written about particular models of supervision as well as pertinent aspects of supervision such as ethics, context, dual relationships and so on. Although not research-based, I believe that this material also contributes to the general experience and perception of supervision and its functions within the counselling profession.

Historically, supervision was and is still seen as fundamental to the training of counsellors and psychotherapists mainly in terms of educational skill development and depending on the model, as providing for increased therapeutic and self-awareness. Ultimately, the purpose of supervision is to both benefit the supervisee and hence their work with clients.

## **1. Research on Supervision**

In the last 10 years there has been a conceptual shift which has been to some extent endorsed in the research arena (Spinelli 1994, Robinson 2003) which proposes that regardless of theoretical orientation, the relationship between counsellor and client is primary in terms of effectiveness. Research is only beginning to look at the specifics of the supervisory relationship and the perceived effect on the supervisee. To some extent, there is still an inherent assumption that a satisfied supervisee works more productively with their clients. Bambling (2000) notes from his summary of the research that firstly, there are many benefits of a strong supervisory alliance in terms of trust and modelling and secondly, it has been shown that supervision is effective in teaching basic counselling skills but not necessarily with regard to more complex relationship and process matters. He concludes by stating, "there is no clearly demonstrated connection between supervision and increased supervisee competence and quality of client work" (ibid p62).

I would suggest that much of a therapist's confidence or adherence to their approach is developed, modelled and enhanced in the supervisory relationship which allows for the development of the supervisee to come to fruition and to be of benefit to the client in the relationship as described above. This was evidenced in my research, which highlights the supervisory relationship as creating a sense of confidence and increased abilities when working with clients. However, it appears that more research is needed to further elicit the connections between supervision and client outcome.

This realisation that the focus on the relationship is of paramount significance has now been incorporated into many models of supervision (Carroll 1996, Hawkins & Shohet 1989, Bernard & Goodyear 1998) but interestingly has produced its own model too. Gilbert and Evans (2000) present an integrative relational model of supervision which is based on the intersubjective perspective as outlined by Stolorow and Atwood (1994) with its focus "on the co-creation of relationship and the importance of 'healing through meeting' in both psychotherapy and supervision" (Gilbert & Evans 2000 p6).

The research analysis that I undertook appeared to confirm the significance of the supervisory relationship in terms of supervisee satisfaction. Weaks' research (2002) describes three 'core conditions' that of equality, safety and challenge as that sought by experienced supervisees. A safe relationship was described in various ways but included the need for confidentiality, the need to no longer protect the self, to be able to discuss all aspects of client work and to be accepted regardless of theoretical orientation. Equality and power are closely linked in Weaks' (ibid) work and include words such as mutuality, collegiate and consultative. Self-disclosure on the part of the supervisor was also significant. Challenge was seen as totally necessary in order to gain new awareness and insight, however since all three core conditions needed to be present, safety was paramount before challenge was accepted.

In my research, I used trust and safety as synonymous, challenge was also seen as a necessary component and although equality was only mentioned by 3 of my research participants, I would argue that even if a supervisee wanted a supervisor with more experience, the need to be heard as an adult with equal power was a necessity. Indeed Lawton (2000) in her research noted that most supervisees needed to imbue their supervisor with more experience and status. This could be perceived from a variety of different reasons including that of wish-fulfilment where supervisees "need to regard the supervisor as a dependable expert who contains their anxieties and proves infallible when they felt vulnerable" (ibid p34). It would appear to be part of our cultural indoctrination that both the word and the institution of supervision has an element of the teacher-pupil relationship ingrained within. Lawton's (2000) research shows an inclination for experienced supervisees to seek someone older or 'smarter' than themselves. I would suggest that an experienced supervisee would still seek a supervisor who was able to offer a different perspective.

Trust and safety emerges in many disguises as discussed by Weaks (ibid), Bernard & Goodyear 1988. As in any relationship trust emerges over time, however, as in the therapeutic alliance, it would seem necessary to have clear, working boundaries in the supervisory relationship too. Although all the textbooks on supervision write about the importance of contracts and setting the frame, it would appear from some of the research (Lawton 2000) that this is not always observed to the fullest extent. She gives examples of where supervisors were managers, counsellors and friends and

blurred the distinctions by using confidential material in social situations. This blurring of boundaries is not only disturbing but possibly even abusive for the supervisee. My own research brought up confusion and disgust when a supervisor spent the sessions talking about herself or when supervision was part of line management. I would include as part of the boundary violation, my own role as supervisor, assessor, coordinator and Director Academic Programs which all contributed to some supervisees feeling unsafe.

Anxiety about performance is relatively normal; however there appear to be higher levels when clarity around boundaries is not observed. Webb (2000) discusses various aspects of supervision, which “makes it difficult for the supervisee to speak,” (ibid p60). She writes about the fear of making mistakes and how supervision can be a totally destructive process in terms of negative feelings both as a practitioner and as a person. This was certainly confirmed in my research when some of the participants spoke about not revealing aspects of themselves or their casework, which might be seen, in a negative light by the group or myself as the supervisor.

Webb specifically researched factors that might inhibit disclosure such as “fears of negative assessment, of being disliked, of revealing personal vulnerability in a sensitive area, feeling ashamed or indeed anticipation of disagreement with the supervisor over the approach to be taken” (2000 p65). Her findings are significant in terms of both confirming my research and taking some of my personal thoughts further. For instance, she found that supervisees felt able to reveal more in individual rather than group supervision. Although I did not specifically ask this question, anecdotally, I felt this to be true too in the sense that supervisees from across all three samples appeared to seek individual over group supervision. There was awareness that group supervision was useful in terms of learning from others but that unless the group dynamics was addressed, it was an anxiety-provoking experience. Again, when discussing group supervision in the supervision training itself, the majority of participants had negative experiences to report. This has further implications for supervision within a training environment where it is custom (usually for financial reasons) to offer only group supervision to students.

In addition, Webb (ibid) found that there was greater openness when there was a high level of rapport with the supervisor and this increased as the supervisee gained more experience. In relation to work settings, supervisees felt able to disclose more freely when supervision was independent to their work. This is closely related to the finding that choosing one's own supervisor and not being assessed is also significant in terms of self-revelation.

Many of these issues discussed above bring to mind the effects of power inherent in most supervisory relationships. Bernard and Goodyear (1998) discuss the use of power and gender dynamics. The theme of gender (or indeed cross cultural issues) did not emerge in my research, however power was a significant factor due to the nature of my 'assessor' role. They used the work of French and Raven's (1959) descriptions of different types of power (expert, referent, reward, legitimate and coercive) to demonstrate that these modes can be used to advantage or disadvantage depending on the circumstance. There is an argument for a supervisor to 'own' their 'legitimate' power especially in cases where assessment is incorporated into the supervision.

As discussed in my research, supervision is only partly seen by supervisees as a pure skills development venue, but more importantly, as a place to gain support for themselves in terms of understanding their client and themselves from a different perspective. In an ideal scenario, it is also a place to be able to offload and to bring personal emotional reactions about clients or about client work. This is confirmed by Lawton who quotes one of her participants as saying "it's mine, it's for me" (2000 p33). Again she confirms that supervisees wanted "a space to discuss professional issues with an informed colleague" (ibid p33) which is congruent with my findings that supervisees wanted a supervisor who was informed on ethical and legal issues. Related to this is supervisee's wish to discuss their practice as a whole in terms of fees, referrals and so on, rather than always discussing a client case.

In summarising some of the research, I realise that I have been skirting around one important issue, namely that most authors since the 1980's would argue that supervision is a developmental process, moving from training supervision to consultative supervision. Bernard and Goodyear (1998) point out that there appear to



be more than 22 different conceptions of counsellor development in the various existing models. Some of the models focus on chronological stages of skills development while others look at the psychological needs of the supervisee. The reason for my avoidance of this topic is that from an existential perspective, each supervisee will have different developmental needs. For instance, in my experience as a supervisor, some supervisees wish to focus on their skills, some on the theory, while others wish to examine the relationship aspect as well as broader issues relating to the context or professional and ethical concerns. Indeed in my research the Masters' group represented a range of levels of experience with each person having varying needs and different styles of supervision. It appears that my beliefs and criticisms of developmental models, are also acknowledged by others such as Carroll (1996) who proposes a task model of supervision, Page and Woskett (2001) who developed a cyclical model and Gilbert and Evans (2000) with their relational model.

In terms of supervision in Australia, as noted by Schofield and Pelling (2002) the first study of supervision practice was only conducted in 1995 among members of the Australian Association of Marriage and Family Counsellors. "This study provides a valuable starting point for future research, training and practice in supervision" (ibid p219) and later emphasises the need for the development and promotion of supervision training. As Vice President of PACFA, Schofield is expressing how supervision in Australia is in its infancy but has the potential to develop by learning from other models and countries, yet allowing for the Australian cultural component.

Since counselling in Australia largely emerged through the church bodies and the Marriage Guidance movement, it is interesting that they are still the main forces developing ideas around supervision. In addition to the study described above, one of the key writers and development of supervision training is Elizabeth Shaw of Relationships Australia. Her stance is that supervision should be viewed as a continuation of adult learning and not a continuum of the counselling and therapy process (Shaw 2004). She recognises the relationship is of primary importance, however, she believes that supervisors need to work at the 'pointy end' of supervision through acknowledging their role as managers since this is integral to quality control for all stakeholders. Although I think this is an important aspect of the supervisor

role, as a participant in her supervision training, I believe that this focus ignores the integral component of self awareness on behalf of both the supervisor and supervisee.

Both of the above studies are indicative of the Australian arena, which is that supervision as a profession is only beginning to be viewed as a point of discussion. In the last few years articles have appeared (Lewis 1999, Williams 1999, Bambling 2000, Shaw 2004) and notably the first book (McMahon & Patton, 2002) where personal opinions, surveys of existing research and adaptation of supervision models are written about but little is based on Australian research. A couple of notable exceptions are the work of London and Chester (2000) and McMahon & Simons (2004).

As social workers, London and Chester (2000) used a combination of a Supervision Questionnaire (developed in the US by Worthington 1984) and focus groups to compare responses of supervisors and supervisees to behaviours that contribute to good supervision. As in the American sample, their results confirmed differing supervisor and supervisee's perceptions of supervision. Although the research showed some cultural differences, more interestingly when analysed in terms of differing experience of both supervisors and supervisees, the responses indicated the necessity for different behaviours according to developmental needs. This has implications for both supervision training and for the lack of training in learning how to be a supervisee.

The latter point was the focus of McMahon and Simons research (2004) who developed a Supervision Training program based on the 7 competencies detailed in the Curriculum Guide developed by the American Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES 1990). Supervisees and supervisors were taught the skills of supervision to assess whether training aided both parties in their respective practice. Their conclusion demonstrated that supervisors were better prepared for their role and that supervisees benefited from understanding their role as 'self-managed learners' (ibid p7). This would concur with ACAP's realisation (and resulting development of a module devoted to supervision) that trainee counsellors are better prepared for supervision and more empowered when taught these skills.

There is not enough space to examine all the research on supervision and how it relates to my findings; however, I believe that fundamentally the research is pointing in the direction of the significance of the supervision relationship in all its multi aspects. I think it is also pointing to the need for supervisors to have a greater understanding of their role as supervisors within all the multifaceted parameters such as those described by Carroll (1996) and Holloway (1984). Traditionally experienced counsellors and therapists have taken on the role of supervisor without specific training or supervision of their supervision. Indeed, counsellors too, need to be taught their role as supervisees. It must be remembered “the main purposes of this (supervisory) relationship are the professional development of the supervisee and the welfare of the client” (Carroll 1996 p8).

## **2. Survey of existing Supervision Training programs**

In order to compare and contrast the design of my program, I felt it would further extend my knowledge by surveying existing training programs in supervision. Since the potential Sydney market is small, I thought it important to be offering a different product to those already on offer. Nevertheless, since Australia tends to follow the lead of the British market I thought that a survey of these programs would also validate and enhance my proposed structure.

### *Sydney Market*

When I began this project, there were two major institutions offering supervision training, namely, Relationships Australia with its focus on a systemic approach and the University of Western Sydney that offered a Graduate Certificate in Professional Supervision. The former was one 36 hour course and the latter, a year’s course comprising two subjects (supervision in the Clinical context and Supervision in the Agency context) from an integrative perspective.

A couple of changes occurred at the beginning of this year (2003) where Relationships Australia is now offering an accredited Graduate Certificate course with the University of NSW and there is a private newcomer to the market. Van Beekum Consult offers a 3 year training comprising workshops, tutorials and supervision. My understanding is that supervision training in Australia is still in its infancy and practitioners are only beginning to recognise the significance of further training.

Generally speaking, the shape and length of a program will be determined by the needs and demands of the marketplace. For instance the University of Western Sydney program has been offered since 1999 but have only run one course due to lack of participants. However in Britain, it appears that counselling and psychotherapy have created an entire niche for training supervisors.

### *British Market*

Philip McConkey in 1998 conducted a study of training programs in Britain in order to inform and enhance supervision training in New Zealand. In 1998 he estimated that there were at least 50 courses on offer at all qualification levels (Certificate, Diploma, Masters and Doctoral). Most of them were offered part-time over one or two years.

McConkey found “a surprising homogeneity” (1998 p48) amongst the 11 courses he studied in detail. By this he meant homogeneity from “the respective target groups and entry criteria of each course, through the ‘shape’ and content ... to the assessment and evaluation design” (ibid p48). The differences he found were in emphasis so for instance authors such as Carroll, Shohet and Woskett, who have all developed and written about their models of supervision, taught largely from their perspective. Other courses were designed to allow participants to develop their own models such as that run by Metanoia and the University of Birmingham. In addition McConkey found some slight differences in orientation in that some were overtly offered for counsellors and therapists to train as supervisors, while others were designed more generally for practitioners in the helping profession. Some courses were more orientation-specific (eg person-centred, psychodynamic) while others focused on supervision as a process in its own right.

I did a mini search on the Web and 10 institutions sent me further material which would concur with McConkey’s findings in 1998. However, from a personal interest I noted that from 2003, the New School of Psychotherapy and Counselling were offering a Certificate in Existential Supervision and Training which from the weekly outline, had similar but also different topics. This would be interesting to explore if in the future I decided to explicitly train supervisors from an existential position.

### *North American market*

As has been noted by English authors (Wheeler 2003, Carroll 1996), the market in the United States is different in two important respects. Firstly, supervision is compulsory only for trainees in the United States and secondly, counsellor training is predominantly university based. Therefore the focus of research and resulting articles and textbooks are skewed towards supervisors of trainees. Additionally there is more of a focus on accountability (than in Britain and Australia) which impacts on supervisors in that professionally they explicitly act as gatekeepers to the profession (Getz 1999). Supervision is overtly seen as a profession in its own right, hence training for supervisors is widely accepted.

In 1990 the Association for Counselor Education and Supervision (ACES), (Borders & Bernard 1991) issued a curriculum guide for training supervisors based on competency based learning. Written into these standards are both the knowledge competencies and the specific personal traits of a supervisor required to meet the curriculum requirements. Explicitly, the supervisory relationship was seen as of primary importance (Cottrell 2002). Seven core curriculum areas are named that are: models of supervision; counsellor development; supervision methods and techniques; supervisory relationship; ethical, legal and professional regulatory issues; evaluation and executive (administration) skills. In addition three sets of learning objectives (self awareness, theoretical and conceptual knowledge and skills and techniques) are assigned to each of the seven curriculum areas.

Although a confusing matrix emerged (Borders & Bernard 1991), I think that the process of arriving at these learning objectives and the goals of the curriculum are admirable especially in light of the range of models and supervision approaches in the marketplace. These broad curriculum areas remain cognisant and respectful of the array of approaches and hence allow models of integration to be taught. However, having been involved in competency based learning in Australia, where the drive for courses at the vocational level is on the rise; I have my reservations as to its efficacy since there is little evidence that assessment against competencies matches the counsellor or supervisor's effectiveness. This does not detract for the need to have useful learning outcomes that can be properly assessed and evaluated in terms of success.

I shall return to these and other learning outcomes later in this chapter when exploring the learning outcomes of the Supervision Training program as developed in this project.

## **B. The Development of the Supervision Training Project**

It was now 'January 2003 and I had promised the Australian College of Applied Psychology to deliver a 36 hour module for training supervisors commencing in March. Since I had decided at an earlier stage to initially design the program from the required needs of the supervisee (i.e. supervisee-centred), I could infer a good deal from the findings described in the previous chapter. At this stage, I also needed to include the additional material collected from all participants, which specifically related to the training. In addition, I needed to incorporate my personal philosophy as well as other research and writings on supervision in general. These would all inform the learning outcomes for the training.

### **1. Marketing**

It was decided to run a 36 hour module, which was in keeping with the existing structure of the College where students build on modules (both core and elective) to gain their qualification. Since this was a pilot program and would be marketed as such, I felt that one module on supervision would suffice since this could be explored further at the evaluation stage. In addition, my experience in Australia demonstrated that the Sydney market disposes itself towards short courses. The two other courses offered on supervision in Sydney were a year long and led to a specific qualification.

After consulting with the Finance Director, I knew that I could run the course with a minimum of 6 participants so we decided to specifically target graduates of the College as well as our contract Trainers. The latter target was necessary because as the Director of Training, I also needed more supervisors.

Since the target market was professional counsellors and therapists, I resolved to break away from the traditional 3 hour delivery over 12 weeks and offer the program with a 6 hour delivery, every fortnight. There were several reasons for this. Firstly, I felt that it was often easier for people to get a full day off work, rather than half days.

Secondly, I felt that a full day allowed for enhanced group dynamics specifically in relation to building trust and thirdly, the 2 week interval allowed adequate time to develop each training session.

In terms of entry criteria, the PACFA guidelines state that a supervisor must demonstrate a minimum of 3 years experience as a practitioner. In addition, to become a registered member, counsellors and psychotherapists need to demonstrate a minimum of 750 hours of practice and 75 hours of supervision, over and above their initial training. Hence, the entry requirements incorporated both the above, as well as the requirement to have to be supervising at least one person for the duration of the course (appendix 6:1).

## **2. My personal philosophy**

McConkey's (1998) survey of supervision in the British market made me realise that as the facilitator and designer of the program it was essential to ascertain my personal philosophy on supervision and supervision training.

### *Definition of Supervision*

Most of my thoughts on supervision are contained in appendix 5:3, however to summarise I believe that supervision is a complex phenomenon where the supervisor ultimately provides a space for internal reflection both for the supervisee and for themselves in relation to the absent client. Interjected within this space are the multifaceted 7 tasks or roles described so well by Carroll which are to set up a 'learning relationship', to teach, to evaluate, to monitor professional and ethical issues, to counsel, to consult and to monitor administrative aspects (1996 p53). This definition allows for each supervisor to incorporate their own values, theories and beliefs into the defining whole, much in the same manner that the 'wheel of supervision' aims to provide.

Working within the existential approach I would further extend this definition for myself to highlight the factor of self-awareness as it is paralleled between the relationship domains of counsellor-client and supervisee-supervisor. This self-awareness is incorporated on the four relationships realms of "I focus", "You focus", "We focus" and "They focus", as described by Spinelli (1994). Hence, as a

supervisor my awareness is about helping the supervisee explore their relationship with themselves, their relationship to their client, the aspects of the relationship that are co-created between them as well as recognising others in their lives and the social and cultural milieu. Overlaid within this are the same parameters between the supervisor and supervisee.

I think it is also important to incorporate the characteristics of a supervisor as indicated in the research. For instance I believe a supervisor should have a minimum of 3 to 5 years of experience as a practitioner, have experienced personal therapy, understand more than one model of counselling and be open to allowing each supervisee to develop personally and professionally in their own manner. In addition, I would suggest that the supervisor be able and willing to incorporate the 7 tasks (Carroll 1996) described above.

#### *Personal aims for the supervision training*

Although on the one hand, I would have liked to have developed a training for supervisors that was existentially focussed, I realised that one, this was not in keeping with the College philosophy and secondly, I would be reducing the market interest. However, I felt that in the process of developing and teaching, I could further refine my own model of supervision with an existential flavour, which I might take further at a later stage.

As with all my teaching, I felt it more important for each student to formulate their own style and their own model of supervision. I wanted the program to open everyone's mind to a whole range of models and styles of supervision from which they could learn and develop. My ideal was to help develop the confident, knowledgeable, self-reflective supervisor that could set up a safe relationship of trust and the ability to transmit this awareness to their supervisees. I felt this could be best achieved through the facilitation of adult learning principles as described in Chapter 2.

Since this was a pilot program with no accreditation, I decided to have no assessments. Participants would receive a Certificate of Attendance issued by ACAP. The issue of assessments could be appraised in the evaluation of the program.



### **3. Additional research data**

In terms of designing the course, I had asked all the research participants (in-depth interviews, private supervisees, unknown supervisees), the specific question about what they thought would be important to include in a supervision training. Using the answers, I constructed a table, which was sub-divided into specific topics on supervision and the characteristics of a supervisor sought by supervisees (appendix 6:2). Although in the table I added the number of responses to each category, I felt that this was not necessarily representative or statistically relevant since the initial question I had asked was extremely broad. However, it is interesting to note that the highest number of responses were for the supervisor to be informed on ethical issues.

Out of interest, I then took the topics from the initial table and placed them within the 'wheel of supervision' as follows:

## 6:2 Table illustrating how responses corresponded to the Wheel of Supervision

<p style="text-align: center;">“WHAT DO YOU THINK IS IMPORTANT TO INCLUDE IN A SUPERVISION TRAINING PROGRAM?” “The Wheel of Supervision”</p> <p><b>THE ‘SELF’ OF THE SUPERVISOR</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be in personal supervision</li><li>• To be an experienced counsellor/therapist</li><li>• To be flexible and open to a range of options – an openness to be challenged</li></ul> <p><b>THEORIES, VALUES &amp; ASSUMPTIONS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To have knowledge of multiple theoretical frameworks</li><li>• To have knowledge of individual, peer and group supervision and the different skills involved</li><li>• To have knowledge of supervision models</li></ul> <p><b>RELATIONSHIP WITH OUTSIDE AGENCIES</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To be informed on ethical dilemmas</li><li>• To be informed and up-to-date on legal issues</li></ul> <p><b>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR-SUPERVISEE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To facilitate a relationship with supervisee including appropriate self-disclosure</li><li>• To facilitate self-awareness through the dynamics of relationship including transference, counter-transference and parallel process</li><li>• To explore blindspots with the supervisee</li><li>• To explore and to apply the differences between supervision and therapy</li><li>• To understand what might be abusive in supervision</li></ul> <p><b>RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SUPERVISOR-CLIENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To teach skills and share knowledge</li><li>• To explore different ways of presenting a client</li><li>• To explore the practical aspects of counselling such as contracting, first sessions, fees, consent forms etc</li><li>• To explore burnout and vicarious traumatisation</li></ul> <p><b>CONTRACT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To establish framework (including boundaries) and goals (contract)</li></ul> <p><b>CHOICES &amp; MEANING</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand the strengths and deficits of supervision</li></ul> <p><b>SELF-CONCEPT &amp; SELF-ESTEEM</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• To understand the individual needs of the supervisee including reluctant supervisees</li><li>• To be supportive and caring (not judging)</li><li>• To give critical appraisal – giving honest and constructive feedback</li></ul>
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The emergence of these topics helped inform the structure of the training.

### 4. Structure of the Course

As described in the previous chapter, the intention was to design a course using the themes as depicted in the ‘Wheel of Supervision’ to inform the shape, while the underlying philosophy to be derived from the General Description. On reflection, I realised that the overall aim of the training was to instil greater confidence and

competence in all participants to work as ethical supervisors. This in itself could be evaluated at the end of the program. Confidence and competence derive from many sources but would include understanding, knowledge and experience of the multiple aspects of the supervisor role in the various counselling contexts. This hopefully allows for the emergence of safe trusting and self-revelatory relationships between the supervisor and supervisee. Indeed, in a more concrete form Bradley and Whiting's (2001) model of supervisor training has four major goals: to provide a theory or knowledge base relevant to supervisory functioning; to develop and refine supervisory skills; to integrate theory and skills into a working supervisory style and lastly, to develop and enhance the professional identity of the supervisor (p363). A statement of aims and objectives (goals) for any training course is vital since they corroborate the philosophy, purpose and direction. At the same time, they specify the cognitive, behavioural and affective designs that underpin the training.

Using the research data and bearing in mind these goals, I developed the Learning Outcomes for the course, which flowed into the weekly course structure as indicated in the following table:

### 6:3 Transformation of research into Learning Outcomes and Course Structure

Information from Research (Interviews, questionnaires, textbooks, other research)	Learning Outcomes	Wk	Course Structure – Session Plan (numbers relate to learning outcome)
Need for safety in the relationship Knowledge around the different modes of presenting clients Use of parallel process, self-disclosure, understanding the relationship (transference etc) to illuminate blind spots and gain clarity around client issues. Distinction between supervision and therapy.	1. Demonstrate skills to foster a safe supervisory relationship	1	What is supervision – roles and functions (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(7)(8)(10)
Awareness and clarity of the multiple roles inherent in the role Knowledge around different modes of supervising	2. Demonstrate appropriate skills relevant to the diverse roles and responsibilities of a supervisor	2	Who do I want to be as a supervisor? Personal awareness, theories, assumptions Contracts and context (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)
Significance of safety in defining boundaries in relationship Understanding of the context of supervision	3. Negotiate a suitable contract with a potential supervisee(s)	3	Models of Supervision (1)(2)(3)(5)(7)(8)(10)
Knowledge and skills of counselling theories Skills to impart knowledge	4. Understand the use of different theories and methodologies	4	Methods and Techniques – How to present clients (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(10)
Knowledge of supervision models Use of adult learning principles	5. Understand the range of supervision models and to articulate a personal model	5	Modes of Supervision – group, individual etc (1)(2)(3)(5)(6)(8)(10)
Fostering an empathic and trusting relationship to enhance skills, knowledge and self-awareness. Use of constructive feedback acknowledging the supervisee's strengths before challenging discrepancies	6. Demonstrate the ability to use authority appropriately	6	Negotiating the path to trouble-free practice – boundaries, dual relationships etc (1)(2)(3)(6)(8)(10)
Need for current knowledge in areas of legal, ethical and professional issues	7. Understand and apply the knowledge of ethical and legal frameworks	7	The Art of Creative Supervision (1)(2)(10)
To be a self-aware supervisor and to allow for challenge	8. Identify their scope and limitations as supervisors	8	Dilemmas of Ethical Practice (1)(2)(4)(7)(10)
Need for supervisors to be current in their knowledge to aid supervisees gain 'new' perspectives	9. Develop a strategy for continued professional development	9	Truth vs Deception – the power of evaluation (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(8)
The ultimate purpose of supervision Recognition of burnout and implications of caseload	10. Understand how supervision benefits the clients	10	The Hidden Processes – Parallel process, transference & counter-transference, self supervision etc. (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(8)(10)
		11	The responsible supervisor – legal issues, administrative tasks (1)(2)(4)(5)(6)(7)(10)
		12	Who am I as a supervisor? – personal model of supervision (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)

Comparing these learning outcomes and course structure to both the competency model as developed in the US (specifically the ACES curriculum guide) and other supervision training courses in the US and Britain (Wheeler 2003, Holloway 1999, and course outlines from Westminster Pastoral Foundation, Sherwood Psychotherapy Training Institute, Regent's College, The New School of Psychotherapy & Counselling and Metanoia Institute) an amazing confluence of similarities occurs. For instance comparing the ACES curriculum guide with the Learning Objectives of the project's supervision training and the Wheel of Supervision the following table demonstrates this confluence:

#### 6:4 Comparison of ACES Curriculum Guide with the Project's Supervision Training and Wheel of Supervision

<b>ACES Curriculum Guide</b> (numbers relate to learning outcomes from diagram 6:3)	<b>Learning Outcomes of Supervision Training</b>	<b>The Wheel of Supervision</b>
Models of supervision (1)(2)(3)(5)(7)(8)(10)	Understand the use of different theories and modalities Understand the range of different theories and methodologies	Theories, values and assumptions
Counsellor development (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)	Negotiate a suitable contract with a potential supervisor	Relationship between supervisor and client Self-to-self (awareness)
Supervision methods and techniques (1)(2)(3)(4)(5)(6)(10)	Demonstrate appropriate skills relevant to the diverse roles and responsibilities of a supervisor	Theories, values and assumptions
Supervisory relationship (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(7)(8)(9)(10)	Demonstrate skills to foster a safe supervisory relationship Identify their scope and limitations as a supervisor	Relationship between supervisor and supervisee The Frame
Ethical, legal and professional regulatory issues (1)(2)(4)(7)(10)	Understand and apply the knowledge of ethical and legal frameworks Understand how supervision benefits the clients	Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies
Evaluation (1)(2)(3)(4)(6)(8)	Demonstrate the ability to use authority appropriately Understand how supervision benefits the clients	Self concept and self esteem
Executive (administration) skills. (1)(2)(4)(5)(6)(7)(10)	Demonstrate appropriate skills relevant to the diverse roles and responsibilities of a supervisor	Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies

Although I have used a different language, the core competencies as outlined in the ACES curriculum guide are covered, especially when noting that self awareness, theoretical and conceptual knowledge and skills and techniques are intertwined throughout. Wheeler (2003) in her overview of supervision training says:

“The syllabus for a supervision training might include all or some of the following: ethics, law, organisational issues, supervisory relationships, supervisory models, supervision skills, evaluating trainees, contextual issues, equal opportunity issues, using authority, supervision process, research, managing complaints and mistakes, contracts, creative techniques and group supervision.” (p16).

The areas that had less emphasis in my outline were research, managing complaints and equal opportunity issues that might need further consideration if the length of training was extended.

Although I initially wished to use the ‘wheel of supervision’ as the structure (figure 6:2), I lost confidence in my ability to do this and instead the program that emerged included all the themes but in essence, resembled other programs. I think this was partly due to my inability at the time to see the ‘wheel’ as particularly different to any other of the models on offer. However, this is similar to the how the original ‘wheel’ was used in ‘Time-Limited Existential Therapy’ (Strasser & Strasser 1997) in that it was an innovative means of construing the method and practice of existential therapy, but not a reconstruction of the therapy per se. In addition, I felt I needed to teach a more ‘conservative’ approach to supervision before embarking on a more radical adventure. This I might consider further down the track.

In order to allow for different perspectives and expertise in the area of supervision, I asked four of my colleagues to conduct some of the sessions, namely on the models of supervision, group supervision, live supervision and a creative approach. I also invited a lawyer to talk about the legal aspects of supervision and an afternoon was arranged at the St James Ethic Centre where the Director has a particular interest not only in Ethics but had completed a Masters thesis on supervision.

Furthermore, to have structure and clarity, it was essential to write lesson plans for each of the weeks (appendix 6:3). Personally, I need to start with a structure when teaching to allow for the creative changes that naturally occur within the group process and discussions. Using the lesson plans it was easier to assemble a package of

readings (appendix 6:4). I wanted these to both inform the participants but also to allow for debate in the classroom.

I spent January writing the basic contents of the course using a mixture of readings and textbooks to inform and keep a broad perspective. However, my aim was still to keep each week as experiential and student-driven as possible, which meant thinking of exercises, and role-plays that would allow this to happen. My wish was to allow participants to develop their own personal model of supervision, which became part of the initial contract with students in week 1 and was further explored and examined in the last session.

### **C. March – May 2003: The Training program**

Ten people enrolled in the program of which two were trainers at the College, seven were graduates of the College and there was one participant who had heard about the course through the grapevine. There were three men and seven women which was quite a generous gender balance for a counselling-type course. One of the women only attended the first week and then withdrew due to work commitments. Nine of the participants satisfied the entry requirement, however one of the men had only completed the Graduate Diploma the previous year but stated that he would be moving into a supervisor role in his work. The other 9 participants had from 5 to 15 years experience as a counsellor but only 3 had begun working as a supervisor. Only one participant had completed a previous 3 day training course. On reviewing the applicants, I decided to abandon the criteria for the need to be working with one supervisee and to see the course as only an introduction.

I kept a journal (appendix 6:5) for the duration of the course including a weekly “what worked and what I would change” section, which would assist in the evaluation process as well as inform any future course. Overall, I felt that for a first-time delivery the course worked well. This was aided by the strong group cohesion that had already emerged by the second week. Since all the participants knew this was a pilot program and a component of my doctorate, I felt that this ‘wishing me well’ feeling also contributed to the overall satisfaction with the course.

In terms of the structure and content, I felt from day one that to cover the content with an experiential flavour was too ambitious. I had already condensed certain topics such as gender and cross-cultural issues and by week one I realised that I would need to do more of this. Although I had a lesson plan for each week, this was changed according to how the group responded and the direction of the discussion. This allowed me to group certain ideas and topics together as it emerged in the moment.

As in previous courses, which I have taught for the first time, I tended to focus too much on theory rather than the inductive idea of teaching that I ascribe to. On reflection once I have taught a course, I get a different sense of the whole or what I describe as the 'story' of the course, which allows for more risks and experiential learning.

There was a synergy amongst the participants and myself in terms of the level of anxiety experienced. For instance, I felt overwhelmed and anxious in the first week and this was paralleled amongst the participants who expressed "how they hadn't realised how complex and demanding a supervisor role was". In addition, they talked about their anxiety around the responsibility of the role. As the course proceeded and the role of a supervisor became clearer, their anxiety decreased; as did mine as I could envisage the course as a whole.

The students and I both benefited from having guest trainers and speakers deliver parts of the course. This allowed for different styles of facilitation as well as alternative perspectives and specific areas of expertise to materialize. All the guest speakers were stimulating although I felt that the afternoon spent at St James Ethics Centre was confusing and in future I would plan an alternative session on ethics, more relevant to their specific roles as supervisors.

The last session of the course explored the development of each participant's personal model of supervision. I covered the walls of the classroom with a series of mindmaps containing the main issues covered and asked everyone to reflect and draw a pictorial representation of who they were as a supervisor. A variety of symbolic drawings were produced but everyone was able to represent and talk about themselves as supervisors incorporating many different aspects of the course. I was impressed and



proud of this achievement. This 'exercise' and a later discussion on 'future directions' promoted a sense of completion and closure. In addition, the exercise fulfilled a secondary purpose of informally evaluating the course in terms of how and what each participant had learnt and incorporated into their practice.

#### **D. Evaluation**

There are several ways of assessing the course, both informally as above and formal in terms of written or verbal evaluations. Although participant's evaluation is of paramount importance, I would suggest that in addition, my evaluation in terms of personal and professional aims needs to be incorporated; as well as the marketing and curriculum objectives of the College.

##### *Participant's evaluation*

In some ways the informal evaluation of the drawings created in the last session, were more exciting and valuable than the formal evaluations. For instance as part of a drawing of a spiritual symbol, the following was written:

- I assist supervisees to grow in professional competence and confidence grounded in values, ethics and joy as facilitators of the liberation of the human spirit.
- As a supervisor I am a wise, perceptive, compassionate, solid mentor and example.
- I have a good understanding of legal issues and practice ethically as both a counsellor and supervisor
- Any power I might have is used to benefit and enhance the life of the supervisee and their clients.
- My supervisory practice is ethical, professional and informed by current legal and social debate.

This personal sense not only matches the overall aim of achieving confidence from the training but also incorporates the learning objectives of the program. The remaining drawings are summarised in appendix 6:6.

Two forms of formal evaluation were used. Firstly, in the final week I distributed the 'Final Feedback Form' that is a standard format for all modules taught and asks questions generic to the College syllabus (appendix 6:7). Secondly, I developed a questionnaire specifically to gain feedback about the course and any future directions it might take. The aims of the evaluation were to examine the program in terms of: content, structure, length, delivery (balance of theory and experiential), pitched at the correct level, usefulness in terms of supervisor development, achievement of personal aims and to explore whether further follow-up courses were required. An example of a completed questionnaire is located in appendix 6:8.

The 'Final Feedback Forms' which were completed in class gave me a good indication of the overall sense that participants had of the course. These were further elaborated upon in the Questionnaire. All questions were answered within a range for Agree and Strongly Agree and there was a consensus that the group interaction enhanced the learning. They enjoyed the practical components and some of the participants wished for more role-plays and small group discussions. In addition the guest speakers were all well received with two people mentioning the St James Ethic Centre specifically, one in favour and one against. One of the trainers was quite specific in her suggestions including a need for two modules so that a complete day could be dedicated to each topic. She also suggested that although she was clear of the overall objectives of the course, it might have been useful to have objectives for each session.

The questionnaires were returned within a fortnight and I asked the Marketing Director to analyse them. This was partly because I wanted an alternative perspective and partly because the subject of supervision training would be discussed at the Executive at a later stage. Her analysis was extremely positive (appendix 6:9) but as a Marketing Director, her focus tended towards future directions for the College. For instance, she suggests that ACAP could offer customised Supervision Training to organisations who incorporate supervision in their work.

My reading of the questionnaires confirmed her points but also felt that the answers were more complex. For instance in terms of whether participants would wish to extend the training into a Graduate Certificate, although most responses confirmed this was a good idea, they also said that one module was adequate to satisfy their

present needs. A similar response was noted in terms of assessments. Yes, assessments were the best way of consolidating theory and practice, but they may not have attended the course if assessments had been included.

Several practical points emerged from the questionnaires; such as participants receiving the readings package ahead of the course and that it was imperative that entry criteria be maintained. One person wanted more on group supervision, another on the legal aspects and another on responsibility in general. A lessening anxiety and increased confidence to work as a supervisor was the overriding answer to the question about how they benefited from the course which correlates with the overall aim of the program. For instance one participant wrote, “I became very aware of who I am and who I can become as a supervisor. I learnt that my values, beliefs, attitudes, truths – in essence my way of being stems from my spirituality. I found myself eager and excited about the future of being a supervisor”. This would concur with the research surveyed by Wheeler (2003) which reported that confidence and self-efficacy was increased through supervisor training and that those who had undergone training were less critical, more positive and less rigid in their overall stance towards supervisees.

In hindsight, I could have used the questionnaire more effectively to match the learning outcomes with the evaluation and effectiveness of the course. However, I have noted some comments from the questionnaires, which demonstrate the correlation with the learning outcomes in appendix 6.10.

### *Personal Evaluation*

As indicated above, the feedback and evaluation of the course was positive with certain suggestions for improvements in content and process. From my perspective I had the journal to help provide answers and I also completed the same questionnaire as the participants. On the whole I would concur with the participant findings. My particular emphasis was on having more time to get the balance between theory and experiential and to cover other topics such as ‘working with difference’ which could include a whole host of interesting issues. Throughout the course I was keenly aware that ideally I would have liked all participants to have supervisees and to have the time (or another module) to learn through supervision on supervision.

In relation to my original personal aims for the course as described previously, I believe that all participants showed an amazing degree of self reflection and were able to articulate a personal model of supervision which they could put into practice. Partly due to the inexperience of the participants as supervisors, I need to realistically describe the course as an introduction only. Taking this factor into account, I believe that the majority of participants achieved all learning outcomes. In future, I would ensure that everyone had adequate experience since the one person who was only beginning his career as a counsellor was definitely at a disadvantage during group discussions and his conceptual abilities to understand the intricacies of the counselling process.

Reflecting on the future direction for supervision training, I believe from the replies regarding assessments and follow-up courses, that offering one 36 hour module appeared to satisfy their present needs. A different perspective might have emerged if the attendees were more experienced supervisees. However, I would hypothesise that this is probably indicative of the Sydney market at its present stage of development. I will further discuss this issue in the following chapter when several options for future courses were considered at the College Executive level.

Personally, I don't think I 'reinvented the wheel' which would be congruent with McConkey's (1998) findings that there is an intense similarity with all supervision training courses. However, I do believe that my 'supervision wheel' informed my teaching and continues to inform my practice as a supervisor in the sense that it allows me to keep all aspects of supervision in focus. Congruent with the College's philosophy centred on the humanistic dimension, I felt the participants were able to understand the importance of the relationship aspect of supervision as well as the corollary with clients.

### **Summary**

This chapter aimed to draw together the results of the data collection process from the previous chapter and to enhance these findings with a review of other research completed in the area of supervision to inform the composition of the project itself. As part of the research, a review of the learning outcomes and teaching prerogatives of

other training courses was conducted in order to ascertain whether the findings of this research and intended structure of the supervision training course was congruent. The final aspect to the research was analysing the answers to the question asked of all research participants, namely what they would want included in a supervision training program.

All aspects of the research were used to draw up learning outcomes and the course structure using the themes or givens from the Wheel of Supervision and the final General Description to inform the philosophy and content. Once the course was completed, I used both formal and informal evaluation processes to gain greater clarity around the achievement of the learning outcomes and to get further understanding for future directions.

## **Chapter 7**

### **Completion and Incompletion – the Revolving Cycle**

#### **Introduction**

“Implicit in any form of qualitative inquiry is the realisation that, ultimately, we can never really know how the world is constructed. ... The best we can do is to arrive at a truth that makes a difference that opens up new possibilities for understanding. This understanding is forever incomplete.” (McLeod 2001 p4)

This quote by John McLeod (2001) sums up the underlying connotation of where I feel at this juncture. The research and the project are complete in the physical sense, yet I am aware that in many ways there are more questions than answers. These questions include reflections around what I could have done differently, as well as ruminations about what the future holds.

Broadly, the aim of the project was to use a phenomenological approach to research and understand more fully the phenomenon of supervision as it was perceived by students and myself in the Master of Counselling program. The resulting information informed the development, implementation and evaluation of a cross-theoretical training course for supervisors.

The intention of this chapter is to reflect on the entire journey and attempt to tie together all the transient pieces of information contained in the previous chapters and to make meaning of them with regard to the entirety of the project and future developments. In order to achieve this task, I will return to the learning aims and objectives outlined in my Learning Agreement (December 2000) to consider and reflect upon both the process and the future. In other words, the revolving cycle of completion and incompletion. On page 7 of the Learning Agreement I constructed a table (appendix 7:1) of my aims and objectives. However, on reading through the document, I realised that there were many hidden aims. In addition, further aims emerged as the project proceeded. These I will now include in my reflections.

Hence, I have divided this chapter into three sections. The first section explores my aims and objectives with regard to theory; the second section examines the

professional aspects of the project; and the third section considers the integration and future direction of my personal aims. Finally I will provide an overall reflection on the entire project in terms of completion and incompleteness.

### A. Theory aims and objectives

From the outset of the project one of my major challenges was to transfer and translate my understanding of my professional practice as an existential/phenomenological therapist into a comprehensive and meaningful methodology.

Although many of my struggles were documented in previous chapters, the following section demonstrates my achievements and future goals.

**7:1 Table illustrating Theory aims of the project:**

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	FUTURE
1. To develop a phenomenological research approach (that allows for didactic and honest feedback amongst the co-researchers)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A greater understanding of the intricacies of phenomenological research</li> <li>• Renamed co-researchers as participants</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To write a journal article on the research process</li> <li>• To do more phenomenological research with more confidence</li> </ul>
2. To research and understand the key elements of supervision from the perspectives of supervisor and supervisee within an educational setting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness of the impact of the supervision relationship on supervision in relation to self construct, self esteem and personal confidence</li> <li>• Need for varying contracts to take into account the context of supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need for clarity around issues of dual relationships, group process and assessment.</li> <li>• To reflect on the need for individual supervision within an educational course</li> <li>• Further skill development for group supervisors</li> <li>• To research the key themes from the supervisor's perspective</li> </ul>
3. To understand and to evaluate the research using concepts of validity, reliability and ethical practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of triangulation</li> <li>• Analysis of 'truth' &amp; 'trustfulness'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To use mentors in a structured fashion</li> </ul>
4. To evaluate the Supervision Training	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Formal and informal evaluations conducted</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More direct questions related to Learning Outcomes of Course</li> </ul>

Objective indirectly written in Learning Agreement

Objective contained in Learning Agreement

*1. To develop a phenomenological research approach (that allows for didactic and honest feedback amongst the co-researchers)*

As an existential therapist using the phenomenological philosophical principles, my overall theoretical aim for the research component of this project was to implement a research methodology using the tenets of phenomenology. On reflection this was my overall aim even though in the Learning Agreement I had written the objective in relation to allowing for didactic and honest feedback amongst the co-researchers. Indeed when I started writing, co-researchers became participants since I realised that although they were participating in the gathering of the research, their participation in the analysis was minimal. It would have been interesting to have returned to them for further dialogue with both the theme clusters as developed into the 'wheel of supervision' and the 'General Description'. This would have allowed the hermeneutic process to be continued.

In Chapter 3, I outlined the theoretical rationale and personal interpretation of the phenomenological enquiry I intended to pursue. This was one of the hardest chapters to write because in the process I discovered the complexity and diversity of the theory. At one stage, I was convinced I could never be a phenomenological researcher and even began to have doubts about my own practice as an existential therapist. However, when I discovered that I could marry the thoughts of Husserl and Heidegger into what is sometimes known as Interpretive Phenomenology, I felt harmony return.

I decided to essentially follow the phenomenological steps delineated by Colaizzi (1978) to allow for the "rigorous and unbiased study of things as they appear so that one might come to an essential understanding of human consciousness and experience" (Valle and Halling 1989, p6). The focus of research is on lived subjective experience within an objective stance. One of the questions, I now ask myself, was whether I indeed achieved this aim?

Chapter 4 and 5 described in detail the gathering and analysis of the research material out of which emerged various themes or 'givens' of supervision (the wheel) and an overall description of supervision which I felt captured the underlying meaning of



supervision and was applicable across the supervisory spectrum. Essentially, I was pleased with the outcome, even though I know there is more work to be done on the development of the wheel of supervision.

However, although I certainly followed the phenomenological 'rules' such as to consciously 'bracket' out all my assumptions about my experience of the supervision and my view of the participants in the Master's program, I felt that the structure of the interviews themselves might have been too 'agenda-driven'. Although during the interviews I felt totally immersed in the process with an intense concentration on the participant's subjective experience, it is possible that the agenda at some level drove the process towards a conclusion. I wonder if a different outcome would have emerged if I had remained with one overall question about their experience of what supervision meant to them? Essentially the answer has to be yes because the nature of qualitative research always allows for difference.

In essence, I believe that the interviews did focus on the participant's subjective experience. In addition their personal meanings pertaining to their concrete experience of supervision emerged and almost as a bonus, their ideal perception of supervision was also revealed.

I began the process of analysing the data with a certain degree of suspicion because it felt as if I was constructing a platform for a rigid outcome and was afraid that I would eliminate the essence of feeling and emotion that the participants expressed in the interviews. Another fear was that my experience and emotions as a supervisor would not get a voice or that the particular context of supervision within the Masters would get swallowed up and ignored. As expressed in chapter 5, I was surprised that these essences could be retained which is what makes qualitative research so enriching compared to the starkness of statistical outcomes.

Although one of my future aims is to write a journal article on my experience of the phenomenological methodology, I would also hope to embark on further phenomenological research with more courage and with the knowledge of experience.

Overall, I felt I developed a phenomenological approach that sat within my personal parameters at the time. As written above, there are certain aspects that I might change but I achieved an outcome that was congruent with the original objectives.

*2. To research and understand the key elements of supervision from the perspectives of supervisor and supervisee within an educational setting.*

The focus of the research ultimately focussed on the in-depth interviews of the Master's supervisees using the other two groups (private and unknown supervisees) as a means of validation. I also included myself as their supervisor as part of the research both in terms of my own reflections on supervision within an educational context but also as part of the relationship process.

In terms of the in-depth interviews, I experienced an intensity of honesty and emotional awareness of the impact of supervision on a supervisee's sense of self and the value of the relationship. Although I did not feel surprised in terms of the issues raised, my personal awareness was heightened around the significance of them. This in itself is a spur for change to occur both within myself as a supervisor, but also to bring this to consciousness amongst other supervisors as well as to attempt change in educational courses.

For instance, the research brought up issues for further debate around how to deal with the conflict of dual relationships, assessment, choice of supervisor and group process within a course structure such as the Masters. The issue of dual relationships, choice and group process also emerged in the other two validation groups, however, the conflictual role of assessment was more evident with the Masters' students due to the nature of the supervision. I think these are all areas that would benefit from further clarity and research.

In addition, I would like to consider exploring the themes or the 'givens' in a more concrete form to assess whether they do form the foundations of supervision across all theoretical and contextual forms. I would include both supervisors and supervisees to understand and extend the concept.

On a practical level, I think some of the issues raised deserve further attention. For instance, in the Masters program I can be more mindful of potential dual relationships and clarity of the contract. I will consider if it is feasible to include some individual supervision hours in addition to the group supervision. It appears important too for supervisors to have experience in running groups and understanding group dynamics. I will explore the possibility of implementing a professional development workshop for all supervisors at ACAP.

### *3. To understand and to evaluate the research using concepts of validity, reliability and ethical practice*

At the end of chapter 5, I discussed the use of triangulation in the research as a means of reliability and validity. Triangulation as a process allows for different vantage points from different data sources to check the currency of the data collected. In terms of data collection, I used the in-depth interviews as the main source of data and validated the emergence of themes with the private and unknown supervisees. In addition, the analytical procedure allowed for validation from the participants in the in-depth interviews in terms of the First Descriptions and further questions. I also realised that the flow of the analysis from the Descriptions to the Essential Themes allowed for a self-reflective hermeneutic dialogue, as I needed to go back and forth between the emerging data.

In-depth interviews and questionnaires were used as method triangulation, although I could argue that in terms of consistency, it might have been interesting to use one means of data collection throughout. Since I was the sole researcher, there was no investigator triangulation used. However, in reality the groups of private and unknown supervisees were used essentially as a means of data triangulation.

In addition to triangulation, I also wrote in chapter 4 about the concepts of 'truth', 'trustfulness' and 'critical reflexivity' as important criteria in qualitative research. Did I achieve these aims?

The notion of trustfulness, I believe, is linked to the processes of triangulation. Critical to these notions is the use of 'myself' in the research and how I conducted

myself in an ethical manner. Overall, I would say that I have a capacity to be self-critical and therefore throughout the research process I kept various journals and reflections, which was integral to the research. I felt I was as honest as I was able during the research as well as in the writing of this document, pointing out discrepancies and alternatives where applicable. However, although I used various colleagues to discuss certain issues, in hindsight, I would have been more structured from the outset and asked specific people to serve this purpose.

Truth, as discussed previously, is relative and my findings will continue to remain open to debate both by myself and other readers. Murray Davis' (1971) suggestion that truth is linked to a theory that is 'interesting' allows for further reflection. I was certainly excited to be able to link the concepts of the 'existential wheel' (Strasser & Strasser 1997) to the 'givens' of supervision and this was confirmed by a number of people that understood the concept. However, I will need to find the confidence to take these ideas further.

I believe that in terms of ethical practice, the research was conducted within all of the parameters. All participants were fully aware of the purpose of the research and signed consent forms accordingly. Each was sent copies of their transcribed interview with my synopsis (First Description) of their subjective experience of supervision. Although the participants were given the opportunity to change or to add to their experience, none chose to do so. In the writing of this research, either a pseudonym has been used or a denoted letter of the alphabet to represent each of the participants.

#### *4. To evaluate the Supervision Training Program*

Since the crux of the project was the Supervision Training itself, it was also important to evaluate the program in terms of student satisfaction and achievement of Learning Outcomes. A section in Chapter 6 was devoted to this analysis where it was shown that the Learning Outcomes were achieved as long as the course was seen as an introduction. I believe from both the formal and informal evaluations received demonstrated that the overall aim of gaining confidence to work as a supervisor was apparent. In terms of research, in hindsight, I would have designed the final questionnaire more specifically to assess the achievement of the Learning Outcomes.

## **B. Professional Aims and Objectives**

In chapter 4 under the section of ethical practice, I quoted Marshall (1986) discussing accountability as serving three audiences. The 'for me' audience concerns my own dissemination of knowledge from the research and how this was transformed into the Supervision Training. In addition, I would include my own development as a supervisor and will describe this further in the following section. The 'for them' audience concerns informing relevant professional bodies and organisations about the results. Hence, I will examine the relationship and impact of the training on ACAP as well as my attempts to interest the professional organisation (PACFA) in my research. Finally the 'for us' element concerns the professional impact of the supervision training both to the counselling community and the general public, i.e. clients.

**7:2 Table illustrating Professional Aims of the project**

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	FUTURE
1. To establish a supervision training program that is congruent with the research findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supervisee centred within the context of the counselling profession</li> <li>• The Wheel of Supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To reflect on the potential use of the 'wheel of supervision' both personally and professionally</li> <li>• Further research into supervision</li> </ul>
2. To create the training program that is congruent with ACAP's philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of adult learning principles when facilitating the training</li> <li>• Allowing the students to create their own model of supervision and find their own style of supervising</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To write the material into the Distance/ Online</li> <li>• To explore various options to include accreditation</li> <li>• To market the program for use in other organisations</li> </ul>
3. To have an impact on the Counselling Community within Australia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provision of trained supervisors to enhance counsellor effectiveness</li> <li>• Initial consultation with PACFA to discuss training standards for supervisors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To become involved in the PACFA Training Standards Committee</li> </ul>
4. To write articles and present papers on the research findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Presentation of research methodology at Conference in 2001</li> <li>• Facilitated discussion around supervision standards at Conference in 2002</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To write article(s) on phenomenological research and the 'wheel' for the Journal of Existential Analysis</li> <li>• To follow up proposal to write a book on supervision</li> </ul>
5. To continue my partnership with ACAP so that the project is of benefit to all parties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of an additional course</li> <li>• Research informed discussions around the future of supervision</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To develop a research faculty within the College</li> <li>• To explore possibility of DProf program</li> </ul>

Objective contained in Learning Agreement

Objective indirectly written in Learning Agreement

*1. To establish a supervision training program that is congruent with the research findings.*

At the onset of the research process, I made the decision to develop the supervision training largely on the findings from the research. Since this main focus was to discover and understand supervisee's subjective experience and needs from supervision, the resulting program aimed to be supervisee-centred in its broadest definition. As Carl Rogers writes:

“... the more I can keep a relationship free of judgement and evaluation, the more this will permit the other person to reach the point where he recognises that the locus of evaluation, the centre of responsibility, lies within himself” (1967 p5)

And responsibility lies at the heart of supervision too, whereby the supervisor aims to create a space for the supervisee to be professionally competent in their skills and understanding of the dynamics of the relationship. In addition there is a social and legal responsibility to the client and the counselling profession as a whole.

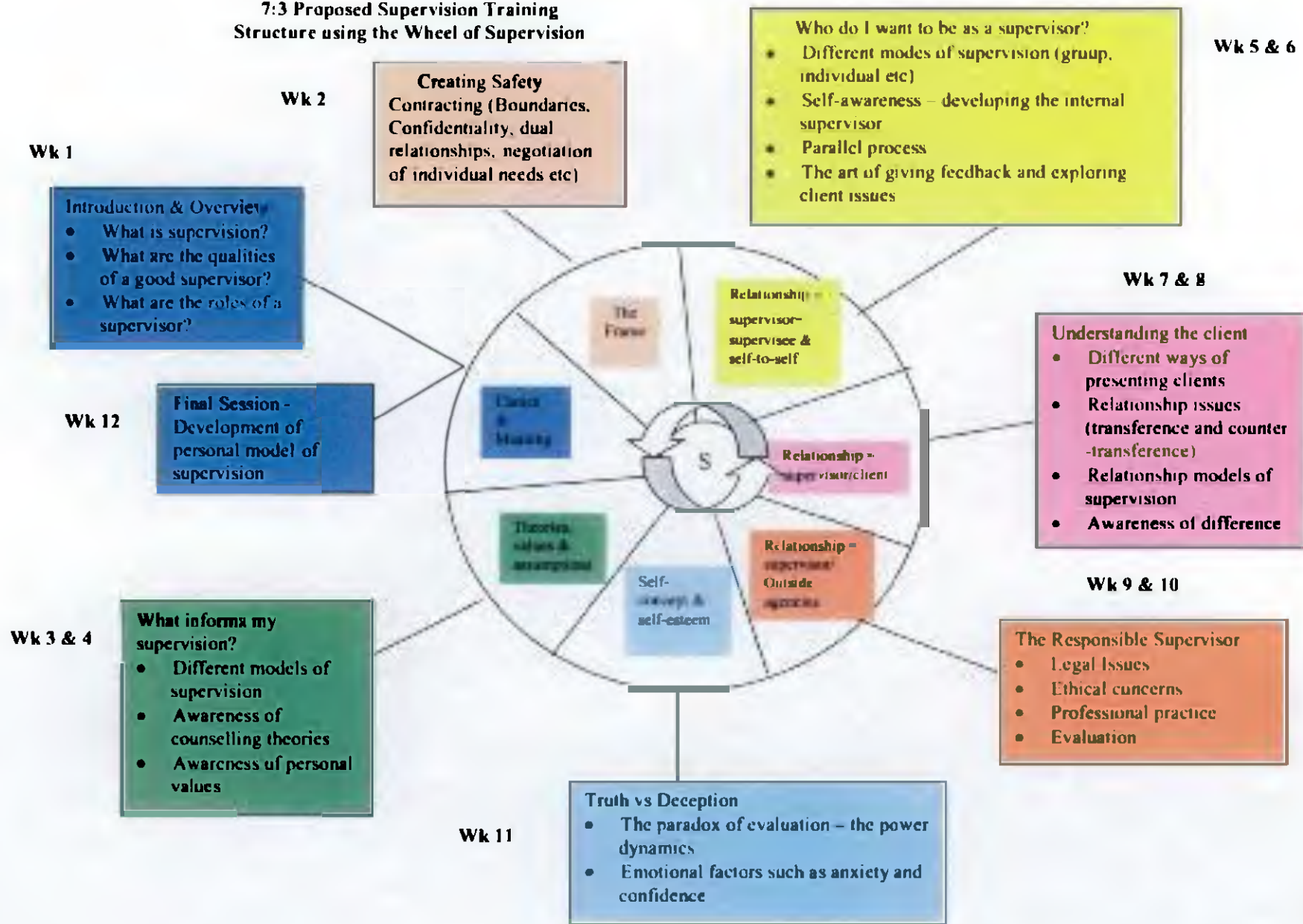
In line with this thinking, I too had a responsibility to create a training program that was both compatible with the research findings but also accountable to the counselling profession. Although the research focus was on supervisee’s subjective experience, as part of the phenomenological research, I included myself as a supervisor to bring forth not only my subjective experience but also to incorporate the contextual environment of supervision. For instance, the experience of criticism raised in many of the interviews in relation to the role of assessments in the Master’s supervision, needed to be viewed in a wider context. This and other examples of contextual supervision, such as within an agency setting, were all explored in the training with a view to understanding the role of evaluation.

One of the main developments was the concept of the ‘wheel of supervision’, which incorporated what I believe to be the essential themes or ‘givens’ regardless of theoretical orientation or context. As discussed previously, although I did not overtly use the wheel as a specific model, I ensured that all the ‘givens’ were covered in the training program. Included in these ‘givens’ are the multi-faceted notions of relationship, namely supervisor to supervisee, supervisee to client, self-to-self as well as the relationship to outside agencies. Although these are difficult to teach specifically, the relationship aspect was a continuous underlying theme. The idea being that if supervisors are more consciously aware of who they are as supervisors, then they will directly impact their supervisees to become more aware of themselves as counsellors, which bears upon their work with clients.

When writing this chapter, I decided to look into the future and explore the possibility of using the 'wheel' in a concrete manner as the basis for later training. The following diagram breaks down each section of the wheel into a viable training structure.



**7:3 Proposed Supervision Training Structure using the Wheel of Supervision**



The intention is to use this model in September 2004 when the next supervision training is scheduled. One year after the pilot, I appear to have gained the confidence to impart something new.

Again, reflecting on the future and congruent with the revolving cycle of research, there are a number of research areas generated from this project that would be interesting to examine. Specifically in relation to expanding on this project, some possibilities would include:

- Returning to the supervision course participants to evaluate the effects of the training in terms of their supervisory role.
- Expanding the initial research to include supervisors as well as supervisees to gain greater clarity around the 'wheel of supervision'.

In addition, the research highlighted gaps in specific knowledge inherent in supervision. For instance, it would be interesting to explore:

- The effect of supervision on client outcome
- The effect of supervision on prevention of counsellor burnout and boundary violations.
- The advantages and disadvantages of group and individual supervision in terms of supervisee experience.
- Organisational supervision – how it is organised and how it is experienced by the supervisee.

## *2. To create the training program that is congruent with ACAP's philosophy*

Adult learning principles, experiential learning and a humanistic stance towards counselling are all integral to ACAP's philosophy of training which was described theoretically in Chapter 2 and depicted in Chapter 6 when writing about the supervision training. Essentially, both the evaluation from students and my own perception is that essentially all these were achieved, however, I feel that less theory and more inductive and experiential learning would have benefited the students and myself as the Educator.

Linked to adult learning principles was one of my personal outcomes, which was for each student to both create their own style of supervising and develop their own

model of counselling. On the whole I believe that everyone certainly developed and understood their current role and their potential as supervisors. They also had the beginnings of a model of supervision from which to grow from and to change as experience permits.

Both during the development and implementation of the program, I had continuous doubts about the duration. I had to remind myself continuously that this was both a pilot program and an introduction to the concepts of supervision. Throughout, I kept imagining different course structures that would allow for more reflection and more practice. A simple idea would be to have two modules covering the same material with a third module devoted to supervision on supervision. One model that particularly appealed was the course designed by Sue Wheeler at the University of Leicester (Post-graduate Certificate in Continuing Professional Development), which is divided into 3, 30 hours courses consisting of 'The Relationship', 'The Process' and 'The Organisational Context'.

However, it is important to bear in mind the Australian context and the evaluation from the supervision training, which appears to reflect the notion that supervision training is only in its infancy. At present too, the potential market for training is relatively small since the perception that supervisors require training is not evident. This was confirmed with an informal conversation with a colleague in Melbourne who designed a one year supervision training but only had 5 enrolments. Taking these factors into account, I did have preliminary discussions with two other providers of supervision training with the idea of combining forces. One idea is to combine forces with the University of Western Sydney who are offering Graduate Certificate specialisations that can be integrated into a new-look Master of Counselling. Within each specialisation there is a theory, a workplace project and supervision unit, which I believe, would address some of the conundrums discussed above.

The future of supervision training was discussed at the end of last year (2003) with the Executive of ACAP. Since there is a current waiting list for the training, it was decided to run the same program in September 2004 with either myself as the Educator or a contract Educator who would use my notes. This is in line with ACAP's philosophy whereby courses are designed to be taught by anybody with experience in

the field. At present, until there is further clarity around the format, there is no thought to developing the program into a distance and online module. As described earlier, since this discussion, I intend to conduct the training using the 'wheel of supervision' as the framework.

In addition, it was suggested by the Marketing Director to market the supervision course to outside agencies that use internal supervision. The New South Wales Registration Board for Psychologists are exploring the need for their supervisors to have training and this is another avenue to be explored.

### *3. To have an impact on the Counselling Community within Australia*

Since the ultimate aim of good supervision is to enhance the professional and personal growth and development of the supervisee so that they can greater benefit their clients; creating and implementing training for supervisors is one of the possible steps in a supervisor's journey. Although running one course for 9 potential supervisors is not very large, the intent is to develop and market the training, which hopefully will raise awareness around the need for this professional development.

As described in chapter 2, I also developed a supervision module for all students completing counselling courses. One of the objectives of this course was to empower students to use supervision effectively. Some of the feedback received is that these graduates are seeking supervisors with relevant experience and/or qualifications. This is one way of creating the market force for more qualified supervisors.

In my Learning Agreement, one of my outcomes stated that the research findings could inform continuing discussions with PACFA (Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia) around supervision, the qualifications of supervisors and the Code of Ethics. Although the Training Standards give a comprehensive view of supervision as a process, there is still only a minimum of words stating the qualifications of a supervisor, namely " .. as supervision presumes a level of competence beyond the most basic, supervisors should have been eligible to be full members of a relevant Professional Association for at least three years" (PACFA 2000). This is in stark comparison to the British Association for Counselling and

Psychotherapy's (BACP) contribution to the specific code of ethics for supervisors and alternative pathways to becoming an accredited supervisor.

I discovered in various talks with PACFA that supervision in terms of a specific Code of Ethics and qualifications has been on the agenda for at least a couple of years. Initially I was directed to become a member of the sub-committee, however, since there was no apparent activity, I took the opportunity to facilitate a debate at the first PACFA conference in August 2003. The intention was to raise awareness and to position supervision back on to the Training Standards agenda.

Since August, the chair of the Training Standards Committee (PACFA) is to write a proposal outlining the need for further clarification around the qualifications of supervisors. It appears that the report will recommend that supervisors attend specific training courses and continue to receive professional development in this area.

After completion of the doctorate, I would hope to be more proactive and involved in this continuing debate and to actively seek a position on the Training Standards Committee at PACFA. I believe that the research material has the potential to be used for a variety of other ventures such as revealing the ideal nature of supervision and the characteristics and qualifications of a supervisor. It could also be an additional source of material for drawing up an ethical code of practice for supervisors.

#### *4. To write articles and present papers on the research findings*

In September 2002, after I had completed the research interviews and began the analysis of the data, I gave a paper at the Psychoz Conference in Melbourne titled "The Phenomenology of Supervision (research in process). The intent was to describe the phenomenological process and to show how the emerging themes would influence the design of a supervision training program. Using an experiential style of delivery, and asking the audience to discuss what they most wanted from supervision, the resulting responses appeared to confirm the themes that emerged from the research.

I believe that there are several prospective papers to be written from this project. Chapter 3 on the phenomenological approach to research has been rewritten several times to retain its focus on the project itself. However, I believe that the more

detailed understanding of phenomenology (as originally written) in relation to research would make for an interesting article. In addition, I would like to write and expand upon the 'wheel of supervision. This could possibly be integrated into a book since last year I was approached by an Australian publisher to explore writing on supervision for the Australian audience.

5. *To continue my partnership with ACAP so that the project is of benefit to all parties*

Apart from my own professional development and my curiosity to discover more about supervision, it is important for ACAP to have a member of staff with a doctorate. Although there are contract Educators with this higher qualification, as the College has moved from the vocational sector into the equivalent of a university status through the Higher Board of Education, it is becoming increasingly necessary to have suitably qualified staff.

Indeed in various strategic discussions, the Executive have begun to explore possibilities for the evolution of a faculty as well as developing a strategy to encourage Educators to give conference papers. This is about changing and enhancing ACAP's professional profile within the counselling community. Concurrent with these ideas would be to develop a research arm of the College. All of these are future growth areas and will become part of my portfolio once this doctorate is completed.

Another item on the agenda is whether it would be viable both academically and financially to pursue a Professional Doctorate in Counselling in conjunction with a university.

All of these possible directions are both interesting and exciting as projects in themselves and give personal focus and purpose for my future within the College.

### **C. Personal Aims**

The personal and professional aims for the project were closely linked. However, to make a distinction, my personal aims were more focussed on my personal development over the period of the project.

### 7:4 Table illustrating Personal Aims of the Project:

OBJECTIVES	OUTCOMES	FUTURE
1. To use research to develop a supervision training program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supervision training for counsellors ran in March 2003</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To be involved in further advancements in supervision training</li> </ul>
2. To understand my style of supervision and to learn from the process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal awareness of my strengths and weaknesses as a supervisor</li> <li>The genesis of a personal model of supervision using existential themes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To continue to grow as a supervisor and to use my supervision on supervision appropriately</li> <li>To continue to develop and write about an existential model using the 'wheel of supervision'.</li> </ul>

Objective contained in Learning Agreement

Objective indirectly written in Learning Agreement

#### *1. To use research to develop a supervision training program*

This aim was slightly different to the one described under the theory section in that it related to having the opportunity to develop a module that was research based, rather than not. Under usual conditions, I have had an idea for a module and used textbooks and readings to write the content using my personal views to drive the process. This time, as the project demonstrates, research was the key driver in the supervision training development.

However, I often wonder how different the end product would have been if I had set about the task in my usual way? My sense is that the overall content would have been much the same but the emphases and the additional knowledge from the research I brought to the class was an added bonus to the participants. In other words, my awareness about the complexities of supervision grew during the research and this included my own gaps in certain areas, which is when I asked other colleagues to teach on the program.

My future aim is to stay tuned to the changing market demand for supervisors and supervision training and be able to adapt and/or extend the existing course to suit these needs.

## *2. To understand my style of supervision and to learn from the process*

This was probably one of the key underlying personal aims of the project. I had been supervising for several years both within the Masters' program and in my private practice and I often felt confused and inadequate about both my role as a supervisor and my style of supervision. The in-depth interviews with the Master's students and the reflections provided by my private supervisees both made visible and 'named' the same conundrums, both positive and negative.

As I've mentioned previously, I think there are inherent problems with supervising students when the assessment process dominates. In addition, students are allocated to supervision groups and it is perchance that the members are able to gel, support each other and use the supervision for their personal growth rather than for solely the attainment of the qualification. On a practical level, I am still unsure how this can be changed. However, I feel that on a personal level, as a supervisor, I have altered my expectations to allow for more difference (both developmentally and theoretically) within the groups. In other words, I have become softer and more open to individual needs rather than fulfilling the overriding assessment objectives of the Master's course. In future, I would like to incorporate an individual component of supervision in addition to the group process.

Anecdotally, this personal change appears to be evident in my private practice as a supervisor. Supervisees have commented on my ability to sit with them in a more reflective space without needing to leap to conclusions. This would be congruent with the idea that more knowledge leads to greater confidence and existentially speaking, allows for being with the 'unknown'. In addition, I have worked with my supervisor on some personal issues and in combination, I feel that I am able to enter into the world of my supervisees with less judgment and have found that greater trust has ensued.

In hindsight, I believe that the Masters' group employed for the purpose of this project was one of the most difficult I have experienced probably due to their diverse backgrounds and differing levels of experience. Two of the members were known as 'complainers' during their time as Graduate Diploma students. Nevertheless, all their



thoughts, comments and criticisms were still congruent with my experience of previous groups, although probably heightened because of the above reasons.

In terms of dual relationships and my multi-dimensional role at the College, I experimented the following year with limiting my role to only teaching the group, stepping out of my role as supervisor. Interestingly, I emerged as the recipient of their complaints about both supervisors and other educators so I was faced with working with the group in a different way. I think this confirms that a clear boundary is needed and as an Educator with no role in their assessments, I could become the person in authority that they needed.

The inception of the wheel of supervision is a novel concept in that it allows for an innovative means of viewing supervision from a cross-theoretical perspective. I hesitate to call it a model because inherent in the wheel is the leeway for both supervisors and supervisees to not only use their personal models and theories but to understand them in relation to the supervisory process. Rather, the wheel gives a framework for noting and working with those aspects of supervision that are universal, and simultaneously takes into account the individual characteristics and preferences of both the supervisor and supervisee.

At this stage my personal learning is to understand that the wheel of supervision is a significant leading development and to explore options of both expanding the ideas and promoting this new framework. In September, I will be training a team of educators to use the wheel as the basis for the next supervision training. Hopefully, the students will be able to use this framework as a basis for not only understanding supervision in its complexity but to also apply it in their work with supervisees. Once I have evaluated and received their feedback, I will explore the possibility of writing a book on the topic.

Another personal aim was to develop an existentially focussed model of supervision. I feel that I have the germ of a model based on the relationship realms described by Spinelli (1994), intertwined with the 'generic tasks' of supervision (Carroll 1996) and 'the wheel' as described in this project. This is another area for future focus and development.

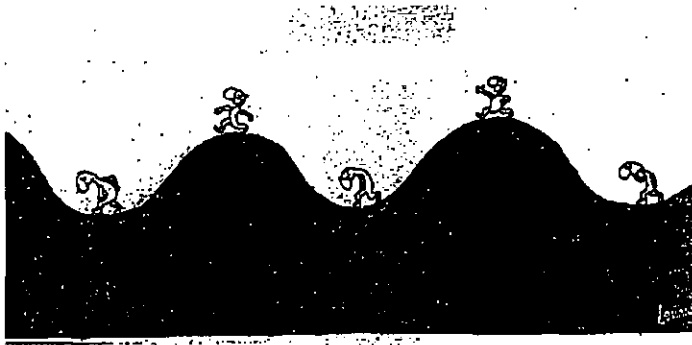
### **Summary**

The aim of this chapter was to revisit the original learning objectives outlined in the Learning Agreement of December 2000 in terms of assessing whether the project fulfilled the agreed benchmarks. In addition, I explored where I departed from these objectives and the reasons for these deviations. In order to achieve this objective, I divided the chapter into the synthesis and analysis around the aims of theory, professional and personal aims and discussed and explored some of the key factors that emerged from the entire process.

Congruent with qualitative research, the writing of this chapter demonstrated that there is never an absolute truth or conclusion. Interpretation and reinterpretation of the data is available both to myself and others who read this project. Nevertheless, I believe that both professionally and personally I have learnt a great deal about research, supervision, training and the importance of all of these in relation to the counselling/supervision community at large.

## Conclusion

### 7:5 Cartoon: Leunig: A Bunch of Posey



"Let it go. Let it out  
Let it all unravel  
Let it free so it can be  
A path on which to travel"  
*(Leunig: A Bunch of Posey)*

I used this cartoon as an opener to the paper I presented at the conference in Melbourne to show the 'highs' and 'lows' of conducting research. It appears to also be appropriate for the symbolic nature of this chapter indicating that completion and incompleteness is a natural flow of life to be embraced. For instance, although I completed the project as initially prescribed in my Learning Agreement, there is still a sense of incompleteness as regards the use of the 'Wheel of Supervision', which I hope to address later this year. In addition, research opens up more doors for research and although this project is complete, I would like to be in a position to continue researching and understanding some of the areas covered in this chapter. This learning process additionally allows my own personal development as a therapist and educator to continuously flow forward.

In terms of the Level 5 descriptors I believe that I have addressed them all to some degree in the development and writing of this project. Knowledge, analysis, synthesis and evaluation comprise the cognitive descriptors and I believe that I have demonstrated these components in relation to my learning and comprehension of the research process, personal development, supervision and the development of the training course. In relation to the transferable skills (self appraisal, management of learning, problem solving, communication and research), the nature and design of the

project has continually been a learning journey in terms of self-management, creating the environment for the project to take place and the ability to draw on other people's learning and expertise. During this time, I have grown in my own role as Director Academic Programs at ACAP in terms of managing my team while attending to this project. This links to the operational descriptor of context, responsibility and ethical understanding. As demonstrated throughout, these were all addressed both during the research and in the facilitation of the supervision training program. Overall I believe that the leading edge aspect of the Level 5 descriptors was using the phenomenological research process to develop the Wheel of Supervision.

As I come to the completion of this phase, I realise that my learning on all these levels has increased exponentially. In concrete terms, I have applied the research to a project on supervision that is now part of the curriculum at the Australian College of Applied Psychology. Hopefully in the future some of the results from this research will have longer term effects on the counselling and psychotherapy community in Australia such as in the defining an ethical code of practice for supervisors.

# **APPENDICES**

## Data gathering: Personal reflections around supervision

### RELATIONSHIPS

- Research shows the importance of the relationship between supervisor and supervisee. But what does this actually mean? For me this is probably about trust – that the supervisee trusts the supervisor in their judgements. That they understand where the supervisor is coming from. Like a client/counsellor relationship, each relationship will be different and will bring up different transferences or sedimented patterns. For example, wanting my approval – which maybe a combination of personal approval and/or educational approval/marks.
- It also reveals a lot about me, which I think is different (in some way) to the relationships that I have with my clients. I push them to understand themselves so that they can understand what is happening between them and their clients. But I tend to push them too fast – maybe they don't have the initial skills to get to that point or maybe they don't have self-understanding because most supervisees have not had in-depth therapy.
- Like supervisees to own their stuff. Will tend to be overcritical of those who want my approval and to be more supportive of people who are overcritical of themselves.
- To look at learning styles. I am predominantly kinaesthetic. The buttons that push me are people who are predominantly audio/right brain who get bogged down in details and not able to see the big picture. Possibly also why it is hard for me to work with younger students who may not have developed the big picture point of view.
  
- Although I question my supervisees in terms of both the relationship and their own 'stuff', am I as critical of myself in those terms. Sometimes a sense that noone is good enough for me – that noone can hold me?
  - Power? Who holds it? How does it fluctuate?
  - Is this linked with charisma? How much charisma do I hold and how much do I play on it?
  - Knowledge too. Are people attracted to me because of the knowledge they assume that I have?
  
- Where is the line between supervision and therapy? My own assumption that therapists have to look at themselves and themselves in terms of their relationships with clients leads to sometimes to the blurring between supervision and therapy.
  - Assumptions that training is had? Used to be but now more about assumptions about the person – that they should be self-aware.
  - Am I dismissive of people who think differently to me? Some truth in that I'm always astounded at how people assume because what they do works, that somehow means that they never look at their assumptions about how they work.
  - Dismissive about a lot of supervision. That most supervisors tend to be too supportive and work around brainstorming different ideas but do not do much challenging.
  
- Pressure of time in the Masters. Want people to see what I have to offer and somehow push them to do so.
  
- How much am I critical of myself? What about the blind spots within myself? How willing am I to look at them?
- My own self-disclosure within the group. What it feels like for me – and when I do things wrong.

### PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT

- My need to understand my supervisees in the same way as I try to understand my clients. Eg to come from a position of curiosity – to want to know more about their position viz a viz their clients and their process. This is about trust but also about not making assumptions on many levels – about what they do, where they have been trained, what constitutes their orientation and therefore what must be bad, etc.
- What is it like for a supervisee to notice their supervisor developing too? There could be some parallels with some clients needing you to remain the same.

## Appendix 4:1

### GROUP VS INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISION

- My own realisation of lacking trust in the group situation. Similar feelings to being with my sisters – never knowing when they were going to tell on me. Same in group situation where they all speak to each other (in the peer situation and also with Sandy - their therapist) and the fear that they will talk about me and I have no representation – no place to answer back or to defend myself. My lack of trust can translate into trying to be in control – not going or showing my vulnerabilities and hating the unknowing so I become more dogmatic and my opinions and defences come to the fore.
- Trust more the one-to-one situation whether that is relationships in general or the supervisory relationship. I don't think I need to control so much – but could be worth exploring.
- THIS MEANS THAT I WILL NEED TO INTERVIEW SOME OF THE INDIVIDUAL SUPERVISEES (eg Maria and Inga who have both been part of the Masters group)
- What is the effect of me being in control? How do the supervisees experience this?
- What do I learn from this in terms of my own need for power? To find my own internal sense so that I can let go and allow the supervisees to find their own way – not mine. Link with charisma...

### CROSS-THEORETICAL APPROACH

- Important that each supervisee develop their own approach according to whom they are as a person. For instance a person who is not challenging in their own personal relationships cannot be expected to challenge their clients. Again about the crossover between supervision and therapy.
- Is it possible to be a good supervisor with supervisees from different theoretical backgrounds? The books say that a good supervisor will have knowledge of more than one orientation. But what is to know? I 'know' other orientations but my existential perspective will still mar my interpretation of them.
- I respect all the other models but what I find hard is when someone is so married to an approach that they can't see beyond it – to even be excited about other possibilities within their own frame of reference – eg object relations and looking towards self psychology.
- Developmental needs of supervisees. That you need to understand one way of working really well, before being comfortable in extending into other models or theories. Leads to my expectations of Masters students who in theory should be experienced counsellors and therefore able to incorporate other perspectives. But maybe some of them cannot.
- Assumptions. Interesting how assumptions (and that would include theory) effect the way we interact with clients. Even from an existential perspective, each counsellor will have their own assumptions – and these assumptions also change. For instance from previous supervision sessions, she had worked out what was blocking her working with certain clients. These then evolved into their own assumptions, which began to effect later clients.

### EDUCATION

- An important part of supervision in an education setting is not only the assessment process but also evaluation. Does this person meet the requirements and is he/she good enough to be allowed into the world as a counsellor? WHAT ASSUMPTIONS DO I HAVE AROUND THIS?
- On the positive side people do come to me for supervision because of my knowledge. Also their experience of me as a trainer where I think I tend to be more relaxed and allow whatever to unfold. Maybe I've learnt that I can't control such a big group so just let it go!
- That a supervisor should be able to hold more than one model.
- To be ethically responsible
- To know the legal sides
- To know how to keep notes and write reports

## INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

### Relationship

**1. What are you looking for in supervision?**

- How important is the relationship you have with your supervisor?
- What do you look for in your choice of supervisor?
- Do you need your supervisor's approval? In what way?
- Do you need your supervisor's support? In what way?
- Do you look for a supervisor who can teach you? In what way?
- Do you look for a supervisor who you can offload with?
- Someone with whom you know will keep you up-to-date with professional standards etc.
- Do you need your supervisor to challenge you?
- Have you found you wanted different things from your supervisor as you have developed as a counsellor? What would they be?
- How important is it for you to bring your own issues and to have self-awareness as part of the process of supervision?
- Where do you draw the line between supervision and therapy?

### Process

**2. Is there one event or events in the Masters that stands out as significant to you?**

- What do you think the differences are between the supervision you normally receive and what I call the academic supervision you received in the Masters?
- And the similarities?
- Do you think the evaluation process affected you at all?
- What do you like about group supervision vs individual supervision?
- What don't you like about group supervision vs individual supervision?
- How would you describe any changes in the way you work with clients during the Masters?

### Perception of Me as Supervisor

**3. How did you perceive my role?**

- What did you want from me? And did you get it? What didn't you get that you wanted?
- Was there anything about the supervision process that stopped you being entirely honest?
- As you got to know me, did you find yourself giving me the information or presenting a client in a way that you thought you might want to hear?
- Were there areas that you thought I ignored that you did wish to discuss? In other words – what didn't I hear?

### Cross theoretical

**4. Do you have any thoughts about working with a supervisor from the same or different theoretical orientation to your own**



## Confirmation Letter to Participants

Thank you for agreeing to participate in the research that I am currently conducting into 'the nature of supervision within an educational setting' for my DProf. The purpose of this letter is to reiterate some of the things we have already discussed and to secure your signature on the participation release form that is attached.

As you are aware, the research model I am using is fundamentally phenomenological, in that I am interested in understanding your experience and your descriptions of supervision within the Masters of Counselling program in the year 2000. Through your participation as a participant I hope to understand the essence of what constitutes supervision and to develop these findings further into a training program for supervisors.

During the initial interview, you will be asked questions relating to your perception of supervision during the Masters and to compare and contrast this experience with your other experiences of supervision. I am seeking your thoughts, feelings and behaviours as well as specific situations or events that were significant to you.

After the initial round of interviews, I will conduct some initial descriptive analysis on the transcripts and then report back to you on the results and my next steps in the research process. This may involve a further interview and/or your thoughts on the analysed transcripts.

I very much value your participation and thank you for your commitment of time, energy and effort. If you have any further questions, please contact me either at work on [redacted] or at home on [redacted]. Please bring the signed release form with you on [redacted] and if you were able to complete a journal last year, a copy would be greatly appreciated.

Looking forward to seeing you.

Alison Strasser

### **Participant Release Agreement**

I agree to participate in a research study into 'the nature of supervision within an educational setting'. I understand the purpose and nature of this study and I am participating voluntarily.

I grant permission for the data to be used in the process of completing a Professional Doctorate degree, including a dissertation and any other future publication. I understand that a pseudonym will be used in all written material.

I agree to meet on \_\_\_\_\_ at the Australian College of Applied Psychology for an initial interview of approximately 1 hour. If necessary, I will make myself available for further research to be negotiated.

I also grant permission to tape-recording of the interview(s).

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Participant/Date

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Researcher/Date

## QUESTIONNAIRE (for Unknown Supervisees)

This questionnaire will form an integral part of the research into gaining an understanding of supervision within your professional practice.

If you need additional space when writing your comments, please use a separate sheet of paper

### I. PERSONAL DETAILS

1. How often do you have supervision?

- on a needs basis     once a week     once a month     other

2. What kind of supervision do you have?

- group     individual     a combination

3. Where do you work as a counsellor? (private/agency etc)

- private practice     agency     hospital     other

4. How many clients do you see per week? \_\_\_\_\_

5. What theoretical orientation informs your practice? ( eg: CBT, psychodynamic, integrative, eclectic etc )

6. What theoretical orientation informs your supervisor's practice?

## **YOUR PERSONAL THOUGHTS ON SUPERVISION**

- 1. What were the factors that influenced your choice of a supervisor?**
  
- 2. Describe the way your supervision is conducted. Include in this description, aspects such as the method of presenting clients, the general focus of the supervision etc.**
  
- 3. What are the most important elements of your supervision?**
  
- 4. What are the limitations of your supervision?**
  
- 5. How would you describe the relationship you have with your supervisor?**
  
- 6. How does your relationship with your supervisor impact on your work with clients?**
  
- 7. How does your relationship with your supervisor affect the supervision process?**
  
- 8. If there are any other comments you would like to make about supervision, please add them here.**

## **SUPERVISION TRAINING PROGRAM**

Coming from the perspective of a supervisee, what do you think should be included in a training program for supervisors?

## **'First Description' of Interviews**

### **FIRST DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH INTERVIEWEE BEATTE**

Beatte thoroughly enjoyed the challenging and thought provoking components of the Master's supervision and this made her understand the importance and meaning of supervision in her everyday practice. In the first few weeks of the program, she changed from having peer supervision, which she likens to having a 'cup of coffee', to seeking out a supervisor that would bring about self-understanding and learning.

Until she had experienced supervision in the Masters, Beatte had not understood the meaning of the term. She had previously thought that supervision was 'tutorish' in the sense that it was a place where someone told you how you should work. Instead of finding supervision a frightening experience, she found a space where she could expand her way of thinking about a client, understand herself in relation to the client, learn different techniques and generally find illumination. This was an exhilarating experience for her. On the whole, she stopped needing other people's approval, realising that support was more important and generally gained confidence in her abilities as a counsellor. This confidence extended into her expression of personal thoughts and opinions about counselling in general as well as her willingness to state her views about how her colleagues work. This did not mean to say that she was always correct or even expected to be correct, but more that she had the right to express herself. There were also times, when she felt that she spoke too much and was aware that she might be perceived as a 'goody goody'.

Now what she seeks in a supervisor, is someone who she can share what is happening with her clients and to discuss what she terms as 'business related' issues. This encompasses the legal and ethical concerns of counselling practice, as well as checking on her boundaries in relation to her clients. Part of this sharing is to ensure that she informs an independent person of what she is doing, in case of legal ramifications. There was a sense the supervisor also shared in the responsibility of her clients, although Beatte recognised that ultimately her work was her responsibility. In addition, her supervisor is someone she can ask questions of, get feedback from, brainstorm ideas and get further material to read. Supervision is also a space where she wants to be challenged in terms of her counter-transference and to understand the positive and negative impact on her clients. However, she feels that if a personal issue were raised that needs further exploration, she would seek out personal counselling. Indeed, this was something she did when a personal issue was triggered in the Master's supervision.

Although Beatte felt the group supervision was the highlight of the Masters, she was at times disappointed by the lack of involvement of some of the members. She felt that at times they were not taking the process seriously and indeed were cheating themselves of the stimulating experience. This created a lack of team spirit. Sometimes, there appeared to be a competitive element that was not expanded upon in this interview. Beatte also felt that other members played on the safe side rather than opening themselves up to the challenge of supervision.

Related to this, is Beatte's desire to have supervisors who are not from her theoretical orientation. Although believing she was a cognitive therapist at the beginning of the Masters, she grew to understand her eclecticism and hence thrives on learning from other theoretical backgrounds. She believes that she will always need a supervisor who has more experience, either in terms of clients or in relation to theory.

This was also reflected in her view of the role of the Master's supervisor whom she felt was experienced in running groups and able to understand and illuminate on the different modalities used by the various group members. She felt in general that the supervisor was able to take everyone to new depths of understanding in their work with clients partly because of her ability to 'fossick around' and identify perspectives that Beatte had never thought of. Included in this was what might be happening in the relationship for both the client and the therapist. She did not feel that the supervisor's existential orientation interfered with the process but indeed enhanced the challenge to learn more. The supervisor was both able to adapt and ask questions from the supervisee's particular orientation or switch to an existential perspective.

## Appendix 5:1

The event in the Masters that stands out for Beatte is when she first presented a client to the supervision group in which she had devoted considerable effort and hours of work in order to present the client in the way she felt was expected and 'right'. Instead of being heard she felt jumped on and attacked, rather than listened to and understood. The hurt and the frustration was still apparent in this interview, and to this day, she finds this an extraordinary experience when as a counsellor one of the most important elements is one of listening, attending and observing which she felt was not happening in the group. However, this was the commencement of a turning point for Beatte where she used her reflections to confront the group the following week.

This sense of not being listened to was also triggered when she felt other members of the group had not been heard. Again, this also led to a turning point, when a few weeks later, in discussion with her 2 learning buddies, she realised that everyone has differing ways of perceiving the same situation.

During the year, Beatte reorchestrated both her office in terms of its feel and layout; as well as the way she worked with clients. Her room is now less clinical and has fewer barriers to allow for the relationship to emerge with her clients. She does less rescuing and goal setting and is able to let clients leave a session without needing her approval. There seem to be more clients coming to her for relationship issues rather than focus and direction.

Overall, Beatte was extremely enthusiastic and challenged by the Master's supervision. Challenging was not seen in a negative sense but as the only way to explore and understand the numerous and complex issues that emerge in a counsellor-client relationship, regardless of the modality the counsellor is working from. She feels that this kind of supervision was also a method of applying these principles to oneself when working on one's own and she proudly realises that she is still able to do this.

An important component that extended this critical thinking was the evaluation process and assessments. She enjoys being pushed beyond her comfort zone and feels this is where her real learning takes place. For the first time, she felt that she really met herself and can now see that she does good work. Her enthusiasm for discovery and researching new aspects of her work, remains with her, a year after finishing the Masters.

### **FIRST DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH INTERVIEWEE LAURA**

Laura felt on the 'outer' for the majority of the Masters course. This sense of being on the 'outer' was repeated at several points during the interview. In further discussion of this feeling, Laura revealed that this emerged partly because she felt that other members in the supervision group were more rigid in relation to their counselling practice and in their definition of ethical boundaries. During the interview, we discussed other possibilities including the idea that Laura had many years of experience as a counsellor in various fields of practice. Compared with the other group members, and their relative inexperience, it was possible that Laura had developmentally different requirements from the others and was more aware of how clients have divergent needs in terms of boundaries. Another alternative that emerged through our discussion was the idea that she worked with a different client group to the others. This was further clarified in relation to two members of the group who presented with predominantly homosexual clients whereas Laura works with predominantly heterosexual couples. She feels that although there are common themes, there are also lots of differences that she does not understand.

In terms of what Laura would like from her supervisor, the most important theme that emerged, was someone who was open and flexible enough to take into account her particular ways of working with clients and to discuss but not condemn the crossing of boundaries that occur in her practice. Laura's private practice consists of members of her church, which often means that she meets them not only as clients but also as fellow church members in more social situations. In addition to private clients, Laura also works with employer assistance clients, trauma counselling and life coaching. She expressed a couple of times that she might be expecting too much from a supervisor.

Other significant factors in relation to working with a supervisor was someone who was attuned to her particular style of counselling, and who was able to help her gain perspective with specific clients. She feels that her work can be very draining and needs a supervisor that she can talk to and find a way forward. This might entail looking further into personal issues that might be affecting the process with her clients. In this sense, Laura felt that there was a crossover between personal therapy and

## Appendix 5:1

supervision. However, awareness of the personal and the relationship she has with her clients is paramount in the way she works as a counsellor. Although all supervision has an educational element, it is important that Laura has a supervisor who respects her work and her experience. She is looking for someone who is an equal.

Over the years, Laura has had experience of group supervision and enjoys listening to other people's work with clients so that she can learn through identification. Group supervision helps her step back and see clients more objectively. On reflection, it is important that the members of the group are people that she can identify with and have constructive debates. She wishes that she had been part of the previous Masters group since she felt that those students were more aligned with her counselling practice and open to alternate ways of working. The downside of group supervision is when members are at different levels of experience or wanting diverse things from the process.

At first when Laura talked about the Masters, there was a sense that she had not gained much from the year. She had struggled with certain members of the group; in particular, one of the male students who she felt was very black and white in the way that he worked. She felt the group was unable to understand her particular position or relate to her personal struggles as a counsellor. This particular incident with the male student occurred at the beginning of the first semester and from that time on Laura quite consciously did not reveal too much about herself and her work with clients. She brought clients that were 'safe' to discuss and would not engender too much debate. At one point she used the word attack to describe how she sometimes felt in relation to the others and was afraid of being misunderstood and then feeling more isolated. This is in stark contrast to her personal supervision where she brings clients to receive honest feedback and debate. In addition, the possibility was discussed that the procedural requirements of the Masters, in terms of assessment, affected what she might bring to supervision.

The exception to this was when Laura risked talking about a client with whom she felt she had "done a lousy job". In this instance she was willing to explore her relevant personal issues in relation to this client. However, she felt that it was the group leader and not the group that facilitated this process.

On further reflection she realised that she had gained more from the Masters than she originally thought. At the beginning, she was unsure whether to continue working as a counsellor and she was aware that her clients would be affected by her thoughts. However, by being on the 'outer' she gained more confidence in the way she worked and was able to resolve her initial dilemma around counselling clients. During the course of the year she also realised that she had certain gifts as a counsellor. This revelation may have arisen out of comparison with the others.

The underlying sense that the group process remained covert and the fact that Laura felt that the group or the group leader had not resolved this during the year was a major component in terms of her responses and attitude to the Masters' program. She thought that the group agreed, implicitly rather than explicitly, to stay more focussed on the tasks of supervision, rather than address the personal aspects of supervision.

Laura was very sympathetic to the dilemmas of teaching on a program designed by another institution with a particular agenda in relation to content and assessment process. This gave no time to address the underlying group dynamics. However Laura thought that 'naming' what was happening in the group might have eased the situation.

### FIRST DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH CONRAD

Conrad works both in private practice and in an agency setting. He defines himself quite clearly as a psychodynamic therapist and as such seeks a supervisor that works within this model and within the parameters of the theory that he feels comfortable with. He likes understanding other models, but says he has clear limits of how far he can go before he starts feeling contaminated and moving too far away from his own comfort zone. Conrad needs to go at his own pace and explore and expand his own thinking and practice in his own time.

Supervisors form a very important and vital role in Conrad's professional life as a therapist in an agency and in his private practice. Generally he goes to supervision to understand more about his clients and to ensure that he is not missing something or to check that he is working correctly with his

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clients within the psychodynamic frame. He believes it is part of the supervisor's role to point out aspects that may be wrong as long as it is done in a way that allows him to 'mend the wrongdoing' and in a manner that is genuine and not malicious. It is important that his opinion on his work with his client is sought before the supervisor intervenes. In this way the supervisor/supervisee relationship mirrors the counselling relationship and is empowering for Conrad.

In addition he wants his supervisor to bring out and nurture elements of his personality that form his uniqueness and strengths in relation to his practice. He thinks that theory only forms the foundations of his work, however it is the fostering of his personal qualities that makes him different from another psychodynamic therapist. An intervention may be theoretically incorrect, but appropriate in relation to the particular situation between therapist and client. Ideally, supervision allows for the creation and development of the internal supervisor. Conrad describes this as feeling that his supervisor is behind him in his sessions with clients.

Conrad has two supervisors; one for his private practice and one from his agency. It was during the Masters' year that he realised he needed to have separate supervisors. These two contexts bring up different issues in relation to his supervision needs. For instance, money and the ability to change session times are two areas that are not considered in his agency work but are part of his private practice.

Ideally he believes the supervisor is like a colleague, rather than a teacher, whom he can trust and show both his strength and weaknesses. However, he realises that the supervisor has the final power similar to the role of a policeman in that he or she is almost duty-bound to point out potential unethical or professional practice. Of course the supervisee can always choose not to listen to the therapist, however, a good supervisor will engender trust as a professional person rather than because of the inherent position of power. There is an element of safety for Conrad in this regard.

Conrad believes that there is a distinction between supervision and therapy and recognises that it must be difficult for a supervisor if their supervisee is not or has not experienced personal therapy. It is therefore important for the supervisor to be mindful of how much self-awareness and personal work the supervisee has experienced. Ideally, the supervisor can point out personal issues that may be contaminating the client/counsellor relationship but if the problem cannot be resolved, the supervisee should explore further with a therapist. If the supervisee refuses to take on this responsibility, the supervisor may need to terminate the contract.

Although Conrad enjoys and benefits greatly from individual supervision, he also believes that group supervision is a way of sharing and learning from others. However, he thinks that the group (such as he has experienced) should be no more than three and that all members are working from a similar orientation. This allows enough time for everyone to explore their clients, and to receive feedback from everyone. He has also experienced groups as a place to share his emotional sadness and impotence in relation to his work, and to realise that like other therapists, he is only human and does not always have to be strong and capable.

The one event in the Masters that stands out for Conrad is a situation that emerged between him and his supervisor over a particular client in which he was describing the assessment process to ascertain whether the client was suitable to work with. The supervisor questioned the power dynamics and although Conrad understood that there was a power differential, he could not understand why the supervisor insisted on pursuing the topic. He felt confused and was unsure of how to answer because he did not know whether the supervisor was wearing her tutor or supervisor hat. It crossed his mind that the tutor role could mark him down for not working correctly. His stubbornness won and he refused to be manipulated by the supervisor. However, this situation is still disconcerting for Conrad since he felt that what surfaced was out of character with the supervisor, whom he was certain was able to determine the situation but still pursued her hypothesis.

On reflection, he realised that an earlier incident, could well have influenced the situation. Another female member of the group had attacked the psychodynamic model in terms of its male dominance and power ascendance. Conrad felt it was quite possible that, being both a male and a psychodynamic therapist, he had become the focus of the supervisor's transference.



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Conrad felt that a major factor that affected the Master's group, was both fear of criticism and fear of exposure, from either the supervisor or other group members. He acknowledged this was relatively normal since most of the members had not received this kind of supervision before. Two or three sub-groups surfaced in defence of this experience; for instance, there was one person who did not wish to examine their style of working and did not feel in need of supervision. Another person felt that their method of working was so alien and superior to everyone else's method that he was almost 'above' the need for supervision. Conrad feels strongly that this attitude prevented these particular members from learning and improving their performance. However, some seemed to learn despite their initial reluctance. They also were disrespectful of the group and the group leader and he is still amazed and horrified at their lack of awareness and inability to understand the significance of supervision. He likened the experience to working with reluctant or involuntary clients.

Not only were there sub-groups but each member was also bringing their own theoretical framework. He found that the supervisor was able to understand each of the models and although on the one hand, Conrad found this interesting, he also felt that none of the models was examined in enough depth, particularly the Existential model which was the supervisor's preference.

### FIRST DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH INTERVIEWEE DAVID

David has great enthusiasm and passion for his work with clients especially when he can work within a client-centred, slightly eclectic approach. He thinks that to be an effective counsellor, one has to be passionate and this is not a passion of compulsion but a passion of silence. The sense of wonder at the infinite possibilities that are created within the client-counsellor relationship is likened to the meeting of two souls that are both healed within the counselling process.

Ideally supervision too should be based on this kind of encounter, which can only occur if honesty and trust are present in the relationship. This creates a secure environment for David and it is only when this occurs, that he feels safe and able to show his vulnerabilities. Part of this safe environment is the ability of the supervisor to be honest, to create space, and to name the underlying processes occurring in the supervisor-supervisee encounter. This in itself is enhancing and empowering. If safety is not achieved he feels wary and then withdraws, only presenting aspects of his work that are more likely to gain approval from the supervisor. He is left with a sense of unfinished business.

Two examples of his experience of feeling unsafe in supervision were discussed in the interview. One was when his supervisor revealed personal issues that were inappropriate to the supervisory situation and David, although moved, felt that the supervisor had become his confidential client. Second, is the current situation of his supervision within an agency that provides solution focussed counselling for HIV clients. One of the problems, David feels, is that the supervisor has a dual role since he is also the manager and thus more answerable to the organisation than to his supervisees. In addition, because solution-focussed work is not the model that David feels comfortable with, he feels the supervisor would have too many assumptions about his work. David feels unsupported and therefore unable to reveal the dilemmas he faces such as not being able to focus on emotions and needing to achieve a desired outcome within 6 weeks.

This 'not feeling safe' was also apparent during the supervision component of the Masters. The first time David presented a client he felt that the supervisor wanted him not only to understand but also accept the point that she was making. David felt that it was not about whether the supervisor was right or wrong but more about the fact that a space was not made for him to explore for himself or to consider the issue at hand. He felt himself closing down and shutting off.

In a safe environment, David believes that supervision is a space for growth especially in terms of becoming aware of his strengths and weaknesses. He believes that it is imperative for the supervisee's strengths to be highlighted and nurtured because this gives him a sense of acknowledgement and caring from the other. If this occurs, then looking at his weaknesses becomes a natural part of his growth and not as a criticism of himself and his work.

David wants a supervisor with more experience than himself but not someone who wants to show him how brilliant they are. Such a supervisor uses his experience to allow the David to explore for himself at his own pace and to help him understand aspects of the process that may not at first be apparent. He sees a clear distinction between supervision and therapy. However, he expects his supervisor to pick

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up on personal issues that might interfere with the counselling relationship. He wants to be further educated so would like a certain amount of advice or suggestions about what to read or which conferences are coming up. However this must be done in a way that is neither rigid nor emphatic. David needs the space to think things through for himself and to arrive at his own conclusions. Inherent in the supervisor relationship is the idea that the supervisor has more knowledge, has the capacity to help David see things in himself; and therefore has more power.

At one point during the interview, when discussing the notion that a supervisor must be consistent, David acknowledged the possibility that his picture of supervision was an ideal. He has never had the kind of supervision he describes, although in one of the agencies he works for, his supervisor has such a potential. She works from a client-centred perspective but supervision is spasmodic and the relationship has not had a chance to develop. In relation to the Masters, David felt the supervisor was capable of achieving the honesty, trust and relationship aspects that he desires but also felt that the supervisor had let herself down in not pursuing her full potential.

First and foremost David believes that it is the position of the supervisor to name the underlying processes occurring either between the supervisor and supervisee or, as in the Masters, within the group situation. If David is the one to name it, then he feels there is too much of a power shift away from the supervisor. When the supervisor does name the process, the interaction between the two (or the group) becomes much more profound and healing. He gave an instance of when the supervisor in the Masters program did name the process and David felt that there was certainly a shift in the group. He likened the shift to the group functioning with one leg and without this he felt that he would have stopped participating altogether.

He felt there was so much happening within the Masters group and everybody put a big smile on in front of each other, whilst in the background there was another story that never emerged. David did recognise there were several factors in the Masters that made it difficult for the supervision group to achieve the potential he would have liked. Firstly, since a couple of people in the group had never done any personal work, they were unable to open themselves to more in-depth analysis. Secondly, there were time constraints, so that to move away from the main task of client supervision could have turned the process into a psychotherapy group. Thirdly, David found that he did not always respect the way other members of the group worked. He found himself irritated and losing interest. In addition, because supervision was only one component of the Masters and not an isolated, contained event, there were other issues that remained untouched in the group. David also felt confused around the dual relationships inherent in the role of the supervisor. Not only was she the supervisor but she also was a trainer, an assessor, the Coordinator of the Masters program as well as Postgraduate Coordinator for the College.

All of this made David feel unsafe, frustrated and at times angry. He felt there was nobody to complain to and he was unable to present himself fully. Instead he tended to show his best work in order for the supervisor to be happy with him and to see that he was competent to pass. He sincerely wanted to trust and reveal everything to the supervisor in her supervisor role but felt constrained because the assessor role remained dominant. In addition, he wanted the supervisor to concentrate more on his strengths as a counsellor and to help him grow in awareness. Instead his weaknesses remained with him.

David felt he had concentrated on the negative in this interview and wanted to point out that he had also gained a lot. He recognised that he had developed as a counsellor since completion of the Masters and that maybe he would now have more courage to voice his thoughts and feelings within the group situation. A real gift for him was the awareness of parallel processes and the significance of the 'self' in the counselling relationship. It also opened his eyes to the wide world of therapy and how there are so many different therapists and therapies. He recognised how hard it is for clients to know what they are receiving and that the potential for harm is rife.

Interestingly, the interview itself grew to be a place of safety for David to reveal aspects of himself and his thoughts about the Masters which he felt too unsafe to do whilst a student in the program.

### FIRST DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW WITH INTERVIEWEE IAN

Ian is a registered psychologist practicing a combination of counselling, therapy and meditation. He spent many years as a Buddhist monk in a monastery and when asked about his supervision needs, he

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likened the ideal experience to one akin to a spiritual teacher who has his best interests at heart. This includes pointing out areas of weakness but also positions of strength.

In general, he is looking for a supervisor who has more experience than himself but probably more important is someone who has the supervisory knowledge and expertise to create a connection with Ian as a human being. It is important for him to be working with a person who wants to know and understand Ian as a complete person in terms of his past history, frames of reference as well as his counselling practice. A person, who knows and understands Ian within this context, is capable of appreciating Ian's unique way of working with clients, without judgements.

A supervisor should not only focus on Ian's skills and techniques but also be capable of understanding Ian as a human being in relation to himself and to his clients. He wants to be told and to understand more about the qualities he brings into the relationship in terms of 'being', rather than the 'doing' skills. An aspect of this is wanting to know more about his strengths and weaknesses as a counsellor and Ian believed that more of this could have occurred in the Masters program. He gave an example of a workshop he recently gave about meditation. Feedback from one of the participants noted that Ian could have shown more humility, humanity and humour. Although Ian recognised that he had been nervous that day, he also appreciated this honest feedback and believes this kind of response is what is necessary for him to grow and develop better qualities as a counsellor.

Since Ian wants his supervisor to have this deep appreciation of human dynamics, he thinks there is a strong overlap between supervision and personal therapy. The supervisor can help the supervisee become aware of, and work with, blocks in personal awareness. He wants to know what elements might be affecting the counselling relationship or which areas could be enhanced to maximise his work. Ideally the supervision and therapy should merge where the supervisor becomes like a mentor, a coach or an ideal parent who can help the supervisee grow in all aspects of themselves.

Relationships and 'connectedness' are important to Ian. In terms of the Masters he felt that it was a privilege to be in a small group of experienced counsellors who had the potential to get to know each other both personally and professionally. He wanted the group to connect and help each other grow both during the Masters year and to continue forward into a peer support group. Anticipating this special connection, he was disappointed that this only occurred to a small extent. He felt that part of the process of supervision could have included more reflections about each other's work and learning about each other as people. This would have helped everyone to be more open and honest with each other and less afraid to reveal their weaknesses or to expose other's frailties.

As a member of the Masters group, Ian was aware that everybody was at varying personal stages of development, had wide-ranging counselling styles and different reasons for doing the course. These and a lack of time contributed to the group putting on a brave face and not sharing their vulnerabilities. He also recognised that there were underlying group dynamics that could have been addressed earlier. If he had felt more comfortable with the group, Ian felt that he could have been more open and honest about sharing his work and giving reflections on other people's work. He thought there should have been more time given for the presenter to reflect on his or her work, and for other members of the group to facilitate the supervisory process.

Ian felt that overall the course was "okay", the group leader "did well" and that there was a connectedness to a certain degree. Specifically he found it difficult to pinpoint exactly what he had gained from the supervision and the group itself, but acknowledged that there must have subtle or unconscious processes at work. On reading his notes, he found that he had written quite positive thoughts about the supervision and the supervisor's ability to self-disclose and be enthusiastic.

At one point during the interview, Ian said that he wished that there had been less concentration on the client in terms of issues and technique and more focus on the counsellor and what was happening for them. Later in the interview he commented that he had wanted more knowledge about specific theories and how an experienced counsellor practiced them. He had wanted to be shown particular techniques from the supervisor's position as an existential therapist and had been disappointed in a five minute role-play which showed little more than the usual listening skills.

During his training as a psychologist, he worked with a supervisor whom he felt understood and was interested in Ian's background and the way he worked. This supervisor was also able to bring a

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practical element to the supervision in terms of the specifics of working within a private practice. Ian found it crucial to discuss issues such as fees, client's unpunctuality or not showing up.

At present, Ian is not in supervision and does not particularly miss it, rather, he is enjoying the break. Since meditation is an integral part of Ian's life, both for himself and when working with his clients, he feels that this keeps him centred and balanced and stops him from being affected by client's issues and concerns. He is also aware that over the years he has developed an understanding within himself and does not feel that he needs supervision for these matters. However, he has recently joined with a group of peers and is hoping that they will be able to achieve the connectedness and depth that he seeks.

## Personal Reflections on Interviews

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON INTERVIEW WITH BEATTE

Beatte was the most enthusiastic student in the Masters, as she was the most enthusiastic of all the interviewees. She was the least experienced of the group and she took the 'bull by the horns' and literally saw everything that occurred as part of her learning. I felt that the interview itself was the same in the sense that this was the place where she could be totally honest and reveal her intimate thoughts about the Masters year.

As part of this, she felt that everything was a useful challenge – from the evaluation tasks, to hearing from others, to feeling hurt and working it out for herself, to being questioned about her style. She changed her personal supervisor very soon after starting the Masters when she realised that she needed someone more qualified and who would challenge her work. The same was true in her experience of myself as the supervisor, which she felt added greatly to her learning. She recognised that although I was existential in orientation, I was open to her style of counselling and indeed helped her to expand her thinking within her modality. I felt that she was the one person in the group who could not only understand where I was coming from but did not see me as a negative towards her. It seemed less important for her to be personally understood although she welcomed the moments of camaraderie she experienced in the group.

One of her biggest areas of learning emerged in the post-interview follow-up reflections where she revealed that she had been hurt by one of the group members but once she realised that everyone had different perspectives, was able to turn this around. She talked about 'shared regard' and that there can still be trust between people even if they have different opinions.

She felt that a lot of the disharmony in the group was around competitiveness, which she expanded upon this in her follow-up post-interview reflections. In this she wrote about how the evaluations themselves appeared to bring out this competitiveness to the extent that some members did not reveal anything that might make them look less than good. She expressed sadness at this fact and felt that these members did not get as much out of the Masters as she did and I think she was probably right.

In one sense she was the least experienced of all the group members, yet she grew the most and embraced everything and anything that was offered. Her attitude was to learn with the qualification an incidental to this.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON INTERVIEW WITH LAURA

I realise how much my views and expectations of Laura were in the foreground during the supervision year and were still apparent in the interview. Previous to my experience of her in the Masters, I had found her broadminded and personable. All my feelings rushed back to me during the interview – how I had been shocked by her resistance to the whole process and how she had kept herself removed from the other members. It appeared as if she didn't trust anyone at the beginning and certainly was unable to sustain any form of questioning from any group member that might resemble criticism. Her need to trust also emerged when discussing her ideal supervisor whom she wanted to have as an equal. It seemed that her only rationale for staying, rather than quitting was to get the piece of paper.

I remember spending time working with her in the group – almost as if I wanted to 'get to' the Laura I remembered and to allow the other members to see this person too. In the interview I came to realise how there was (and still is) a conflict between her Christian values and working as a counsellor within the church community and the nature of dual relationships within the counselling profession. This was paralleled in the group throughout the Masters year.

When talking about what she wanted from supervision, there were several times when she mentioned that she might be asking 'too much' from a supervisor. On an intellectual level she understood the limits of supervision, but on an emotional front, she wanted someone to respect her work even if she crossed the boundaries. Again, this comes back to not handling anyone who might contradict her way of working. This would support my feeling that I needed to totally enter and to understand her world

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of counselling in order to supervise her. At these points I could ask questions which allowed her to think beyond her original opinions.

Overall I think she respected my work and tended to blame the university and the program, rather than my style of supervising.

I thoroughly enjoyed the interview and felt myself becoming much closer to Laura. She has a divergent method of working with clients and part of me admires the maverick in her but this was exactly the aspect the group could not sustain.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON INTERVIEW WITH CONRAD

I had not taught and therefore had only known interviewee Conrad in a superficial manner before the experience of supervising him in the Master's setting. I found that he was very knowledgeable in terms of his psychodynamic approach and appeared to be interested in the overlap between my existential approach. I say appear because I felt that in reality, he needed to stay wedded to his method of working and only agreed to anything existential when it fitted in with his way. For instance, I am fairly strong on boundaries with my clients and this was where he felt we were aligned, especially when it came to other members of the group who were less aware or less firm about their boundaries.

In terms of his own supervision, I felt that he would only accept a challenge if it came from his psychodynamic perspective. In relation to his comment about the 'one incident that stands out', I do remember not wanting to let go of the possibility of a power dynamic occurring between himself and his client. In the end, I remember almost agreeing to disagree. In hindsight, he may have been correct in his assumption about my transference in relation to the inherent power dynamics in the psychodynamic approach. However, in my defence, I felt that a component of the learning at the Master's level was to broaden one's personal perspective to allow for more informed choice about one's approach. For instance, I felt that he could have learnt something from other psychodynamic approaches such as self psychology but he did not want to take this further.

Although pleasant and wanting to be as honest as possible in the interview, he was still quite scathing about certain members. It felt as if unless other counsellors met his standards, they were not worthy to be a counsellor. In the interview this emerged around their lack of knowledge about supervision or their lack of personal therapy. I'm sure that this attitude had an effect on the group dynamics, especially in regard to interviewee Laura.

I think too, that he is an anxious person and part of this anxiety emerged as needing to be seen by me as a good counsellor. It is interesting that he uses the word policeman to describe an aspect of a supervisor's role. I feel that he saw me in this police role, rather than the colleague supervisor that he would prefer. The effect of this was that he was scared of the evaluation process.

In terms of his learning, I found it interesting that he named his awareness that he needed 2 supervisors to allow for his agency and private practice work. I could be cynical and say that this might say more about his fear of being challenged.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON INTERVIEW WITH DAVID

Trust, trust and more trust is the theme that was uppermost in this interview. It felt as if during the Masters, he wanted to trust me and to learn more from the process but felt disappointed that this didn't happen. He wanted to experience the 'meeting' of two people in much the same way as the therapist meets the client and this is what he still hopes for in a supervisor. Yet, paradoxically, he wants his supervisor to have more power, which probably is about his own sense of feeling safe and supported. Indeed, when he described the incident with his supervisor revealing personal issues, this tapped into this sense of appropriate power.

Again this appropriate power emerged in relation to my dual roles in the Masters. It felt as if he was trapped with nowhere to go to vent his frustration. However, he did find an avenue and wrote a letter to the Executive Director outlining his complaints and making suggestions. Writing this made me remember that as a student in the college, he was always visiting the Director of Studies to discuss

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issues that had he had with his studies. In the same way that he expressed that his picture of a supervisor might be an 'ideal', this seems to be reflected in other expectations.

Anxiety is the other theme prevalent in what he was describing which obviously links to trust. He revealed how he felt unable to be honest in his talking about his work out of fear of being assessed and judged in the negative. This is an enormous theme for this group as a whole and makes me ask questions around whether this was particularly evident in this group compared to others. The answer is probably a slight 'yes' although it would have been apparent to a lesser extent in other groups that I supervised in the Masters. In addition, I question how much the evaluation process itself created the anxiety, as well as how much I created that anxiety in the sense of wanting these students to learn and to grow.

Again, similar to interviewee Conrad, he was scathing about the other members and their lack of counselling integrity and the way they worked which probably says more about him than the other group members. It's quite amazing how four out of the five members of the group had such intolerance of other members.

On the positive, I felt that interviewee David was so honest in this interview, I came away with tears in my eyes. This sense of relationship was probably what he wanted from me all along. In addition, he was aware of how much he had learnt and was quite specific about this.

### PERSONAL REFLECTIONS ON INTERVIEW WITH IAN

I left interviewee Ian to the last, mainly because I 'knew' that it would be the hardest of the interviews. It always felt as if Ian was removed from himself with the superficial appearance of being the Buddhist, the spiritual counsellor who somehow is in touch with something that no-one else had in the group. Yet, even his body language was rigid and he stayed aloof in the group, only commenting when specifically asked to do so. The interview had the same dimension and only lasted one hour compared to the others of one and a half hours. It was a struggle to get answers from him that were beyond the superficial. He was also the only interviewee that brought his journal notes with him, which he referred to on many occasions as if he needed to find his answers in them.

On reflection, this was the hardest interview to transform into the 'first description', namely because I had to bracket past my own judgements and see further into what he was telling me. Reading through the description, I am quite impressed by this achievement, yet naturally by removing myself, the text is totally one-sided and almost egocentric.

However, in terms of the supervisory relationship he also desired a supervisor that was on the same spiritual wavelength as himself and who could totally understand him as a complete person. He talked about the need for a relationship with his supervisor and his disappointment at the lack of relationship with his colleagues in the Masters; yet my awareness was that he did not reveal himself in relationship.

It seemed a surprise to himself when he consulted his notes and found quite positive comments about the course and myself as the supervisor. Previous to this revelation, it felt as if he agreed to be interviewed in order to tell me how the course and the supervision could be improved.

He had a slightly different perspective on the underlying dynamics of the group, which he put down to people being too shy or too afraid of offending one another, and did not see any correlation with the evaluation process. He also did not have much to say about his own learning.

## **Creating Categories: My Personal Responses to my experience of supervision**

### **My Experience of Supervision as a supervisee**

#### **Early Days**

When I began group supervision I had 2 hours a fortnight with a supervisor at my placement and 2 hours a week at college.

I remember that in the first week at college, I felt that I was the most inexperienced in the group and interestingly this was okay with me. It's easier for me to be the 'baby' and to plead ignorance and ask for help, than to be more experienced and need help. One of the key experiences in the group was when a fellow student explained that as she began to understand and acknowledge her personal anger, she found that her clients were able to express their anger with her. This made me feel both in awe of her personal development but also began my journey into understanding the complexities of the relationship between client and therapist.

My supervisor at college was from a psychodynamic orientation but understood the existential perspective. She was extremely gentle with me and I felt that she really was able to hold me in my baby-steps towards becoming a therapist. She was always very acknowledging of my achievements and would support me when I was being self-critical or not knowing – almost like a mother figure. However, I also experienced her as tough when it came to one of the supervisees who did not have a clear sense of boundaries or ethics. As a beginner therapist, I did not seem to be able to keep my clients for more than a few weeks and she put this into context by explaining that this was often a phenomenon of new therapists. I have remembered this and have placated my students in the same vein.

At my placement, I had a supervisor who was from a psychodynamic-communicative persuasion. She taught me a lot about boundaries and silence. The group consisted of students from different courses around London which allowed me begin to understand the range of approaches and the different emphases that various courses conveyed to their students. Again I felt held by the supervisor, but in a different way. She was more demanding in wanting us to understand how our theory informed our practice and to critically reflect on our work with our clients.

Both of my supervisors asked us to take detailed notes after our sessions with clients and in supervision, our notes were our starting point for discussion. Sometimes, we would be asked to role-play either our clients (to gain a better understanding of their being-in-the-world) or ourselves as therapists to get feedback from the group as to our skills.

I never felt undermined by either of my supervisors but also realised that I chose my supervisor at college for that very reason. I was scared of being in other groups run by certain other supervisors who I had heard were less supportive and much 'tougher' in their interactions with supervisees.

In addition to this formal supervision experience, I found myself seeking out extra supervision from my father, who also practices as an existential psychotherapist. On reflection, I think this was for several reasons. Firstly, I did not feel very confident working with clients and needed his affirmation, but also I found that he was able to put a slightly different perspective on my work. Interestingly, he was the first person to point out when the interaction between my client and myself might be something about my personal process that I could take to my own therapy for further exploration. This obviously calls into question the conundrum of our dual relationship, however, I feel that our discussions were not abusive and there was a clear dividing line of the difference between supervision and therapy.

#### **Latter days to the present**

This supervisory relationship with my father continued on my arrival in Australia, however as time progressed and I started supervising, it became more a co-supervision experience. I realised that I too had something to contribute to his experience with clients. We documented this experience in a chapter on co-supervision (Strasser F, 1999) and on rereading this prose, I realise that our encounter was extremely growth-enhancing both in terms of my work with clients and supervisees but also in our personal relationship. For instance I wrote about my personal issue of control with a client:



## Appendix 5:3

“These fears are also apparent with my relationship with my father and in supervision with him. He has more experience than I do both in life and in his years as a therapist. He helped me enormously during my training, but at this point he was still my father, my educator and the person who knew more than me. As I have gained my own experience, I have also had to question these former assumptions and to grow into a daughter as an individual and a therapist with her own knowledge and expertise. The question I often still ask myself is ‘where is the line between defending myself against knowing what I might not be right and having a valid argument for the way that I have been working?’” (p143)

After a couple of attempts at finding a supervisor and meanwhile attending peer supervision I eventually worked out a formal arrangement with a supervisor in Australia. I have been meeting with her once a month for the last four years. At the beginning I found it difficult to trust the process and on reflection this was because her partner had been a fellow student and I was unsure about the boundaries. It was only when she challenged me about my non-commitment to the supervision that I was able to begin our work together.

At this point, I feel that it is important to answer the same questions that I asked in my data collection process.

### **What is supervision?**

Supervision is a container, a place where I can expunge what has been going on in my mind regarding my clients, my internal process, my feelings, my awareness, my connections, my theories. I spend a lot of time in my head and this is a place where I can talk through and make further connections in all these areas.

I will bring clients that I am struggling with as well as those I feel that there has been a breakthrough. My supervisor is very validating and the refrain that echoes in my head is “stop being so hard on yourself, Alison”. The process will be different every time although usually it starts with self-awareness and what is coming up for me. This may be to gain greater understanding of my client’s internal world and her relationship with me, or it may be about my personal reactions to the client and its impact on our relationship. At times, my supervisor will bring the reflection back to our relationship and we will explore that together. It can be both challenging and confronting and although it is not therapy, it is certainly a place where I have explored personal issues.

### **What are the characteristics of a supervisor?**

My impromptu answer to this question would be someone who was of the same theoretical orientation to my own; however, this cannot be the case because all my formal supervision has taken place with people of differing modalities. Therefore, the answer lies more in needing a supervisor who understands my existential theory and process but is also able to take me to different places.

I need to feel safe and confident in my abilities in order to be challenged because I feel that it is at the point of challenge, that my learning takes place. In order to feel safe, I need to have total confidentiality and feel that my supervisor is on my side and believes in my capabilities.

### **Is Personal Awareness part of supervision?**

The one event that stands out with my present supervisor is when I was challenged about my attitude towards power, not so much in relation to my clients, but with regard to my position as a trainer and supervisor. I had to come to terms with the idea that some students/supervisees found me both charismatic and powerful to the extent that they had fallen in love with me. My supervisor was brave too in that she revealed that she too was sometimes in awe of me. I had always considered myself as the powerless person and this was now the time to ‘own’ my power and make it work for others and myself. So yes, personal awareness is central to the supervisory process.

### **Is Approval part of supervision?**

I cannot conceive of a supervisory relationship where approval is not important. I realise that if this is not present, then neither am I. The sessions become a parody of skills that may or may not have been used with the client and I am unlikely to reveal much of myself. I am more likely to present clients where I know there are not any major personal issues or controversial dilemmas.

## Appendix 5:3

Approval means accepting me as a person and as a therapist. It does not mean that the supervisor has to accept everything I say at face value but to use my thoughts on a case study as a springboard for further reflections and exploration.

### **Is there an Educational component to supervision?**

When I first started seeing clients I was unquenchable in my thirst for more. This was more knowledge, more skills, more awareness, and more of everything. However, this soon stopped when I realised that the relationship between the client and myself was probably the most important component in the way that I work. This aspect cannot be learnt through education but through a painstaking and ongoing process of self-reflection. Nevertheless, there are times when I need to explore ethical or legal aspects and in addition I would like my supervisor to be more expansive in her sharing of knowledge.

### **What are the benefits and limitations of group supervision?**

I have not been in group supervision for many years. One of the main advantages is that a group tends to meet on a more regular basis and for a longer period of time. It is also a cheaper option. On the negative side, there is less time to present and often important issues remain unfinished.

As a student I learnt an enormous amount from my peers in terms of their practice and their self-development. It allowed me to overcome some of my fears of presenting and to begin to own who I was in relation to others in the group.

In any group situation, group dynamics are an intricate component and if these are addressed, it takes time away from the supervision itself. However, we can all learn from the group process, even if it is demanding both in terms of time and self-disclosure.

### **What do I want from my Supervisees?**

I was asked this question recently and I realised that in the main, I have two major expectations. Firstly, I think self-awareness is key to any therapeutic encounter and this is related to the relationship realm of "I focus", "You focus", "We focus" and "They focus". Hence, awareness is about my relationship to myself, my relationship to you as the client, the aspects of the relationship that we co-create and the idea that none of us our isolated human beings but live within a social and cultural milieu.

Secondly, I believe that as therapists we need to be open to possibilities and options. In other words, I expect supervisees to be fluid and not defensive.

**Personal Reflections (Journal) of the supervision group during the  
Master's year  
(Reflections from my ongoing log)**

On reading my log, my first impression is how critical I am as a person, both of myself and of others. This is especially so at the beginning and changes quite radically by the beginning of the second semester. I am critical of my challenges and critical of not being supportive enough towards the students. In hindsight, this was also the time when I was challenged by my supervisor around issues of control and power. The students also overtly challenged me throughout the year, especially around certain incidents when they felt I had either been too hard or too soft on particular students. They also challenged each other around their individual style of counselling as well as their involvement or rather lack of involvement in the group at various times. Overall, it was a group that challenged me as well as a group that contested each other.

At times, it was quite an angry group and in reviewing the log I can see that when I was able to bring the group dynamics to the fore, there seemed to be a lessening of emotions at least in the short term. I can see that if we had more time to focus on the group dynamics, the group may have reached another level of trust. However, I am also aware that this type of disclosure can do more harm than good, especially when the primary task was supervision around the student's clients.

I also notice how much I learnt during the year. The log reveals my change of attitude towards each of the students in that as I get to know them and vice versa, there is a softening in each of us. Indeed, when we debriefed at the end of the semester, the feedback was extremely positive in terms of each of the student's learning and personal awareness.

The issues of trust and levels of anxiety are predominant in my log. I also notice that when I spent more time working with them individually in the group without challenging but truly understanding their position, there appeared to be a softening towards trust. Indeed, there are individual comments from students, which support this notion. Again, this is a personal challenge to be more aware of the need for support and the building of trust at the beginning of a supervision group. I appear as distrustful as the students!

Although anxiety was high throughout the year, I notice that in my log I have written that it came to the fore halfway through the second semester concerning the evaluation process. I would hazard that this anxiety had been an undercurrent and was now able to be voiced more clearly.

It was also the year when I began to understand more deeply the concept of parallel process and appear to have brought this up several times during the year when students talked about their clients.

Overall, I think this type of supervision benefits most of the participants. The challenging style takes them to a new level of awareness. Past students who have spoken to me about their experience of the Masters confirm this. The pattern is definitely one of high anxiety at the beginning, which eases off by the second semester as the students begin to see that they are progressing and passing. It is interesting that I wrote notes about each of the students at the end of my log. In other words, these were written at least 6 months before the interviews and never referred to again but I can see the pattern remained with me when I wrote my pre-interview reflections

**Beatte**

There was enormous change for her both personally and professionally over the year. Never really had formal supervision before and I think it shocked her about what could emerge and the benefits of it. Begun her own supervision in Adelaide, which I think has also benefited her greatly in being able to look at her work from a different perspective.

Again extremely challenged during the year - yet was able to openly admit her emotions and her exposures and especially at the beginning her fear of the group and of me. But has challenged herself to speak up and will often speak for the group or for the person she feels may be being scapegoated in the particular session. Tendency to see the positive in everything.

## Appendix 5:4

### **Laura**

In some ways the person who has learnt the least except maybe to feel more confident about working as a counsellor again. So resistant at the beginning to having to do the course - yet very supportive of Beatte.

Not really sure how she works still - very informed by her Christian views yet also aware of the existential principles. Maybe more about being herself and feeling comfortable with that. Still not sure about all her boundaries and feel that she still needs to question them.

Would tend to bring clients or issues into supervision, which were blocks within herself. Maybe that's how she views the process or maybe that's how she wants to please me.

### **Conrad**

Was saying how he saw me as a colleague - that the group and I challenged him to think beyond his model which he found scary but so beneficial. He did admit to his anxiety about failing at several points.

And me - well I question how much he did change - how much he did challenge his belief in the psychodynamic model. Felt he hides behind it - that he's scared of really bringing himself out. Will hide behind transference and counter-transference in such a way that it protects him from himself.

But maybe he did begin to look beyond and to look more at himself. I do imagine that he is a good therapist - which he sits well with his clients - so no problem about passing him.

### **David**

Puts so much effort into everything. Also highly anxious. But his anxiety allows him to critique and to learn extremely fast. Very congruent with his humanistic approach and also open to other thoughts. Writes well and puts himself into the process.

Probably been the most openly critical of me and what he feels I do i.e. my critical approach. Also if he feels that I am wrong he will also say it.

### **Ian**

Seems to have become more relaxed during the year - but only a bit. Still find his body so rigid yet seems to want to push the edges a bit more than before. Comments about me are that he enjoys my challenges but would like some more support about what he does do well.

His evaluation was good and his sense that things are moving but still uncertain about the basics in order to achieve more depth with his clients - still can't quite grasp that he is the one that has to go with the depths himself. Maybe has used meditation and visualisations as a way of trying to do this - but these are only as deep as the man himself

## INITIAL THEMATIC DESCRIPTIONS EMERGING FROM THE INTERVIEWS

### 1<sup>st</sup> Category: What do I want to experience from supervision?

#### What is supervision?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share what's happening with my load of clients.</li> <li>• Discuss what I term business related issues - what happens if they haven't turned up for 2 weeks</li> <li>• You could look at it this way or do you think perhaps, if you did that?</li> <li>• So it's very opening, it's like a branching out from a fine tunnel. Its branching out into so many different avenues and roads that you can go exploring</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probably in the early years I would have seen myself very much as the student and now I see the supervisor as a peer in a sense - equal</li> <li>• It's a human encounter - I don't know how you can remove relationship</li> <li>• I'm wanting to actually get perspective with specific clients. Its not just shallow and I'm not going because I'm supposed to have supervision</li> <li>• Its hard to bear alone - As I talk it through that I find a way forward too and feel somewhat relieved that I don't have to keep it all to myself</li> <li>• Of who you are ... as a counsellor ... is more fundamental than any other thing</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's very important that the feedback I receive reflect the theoretical work that I'm using - if I'm actually understanding my clients, if there is something that I'm missing, if there is an area of I'm not looking at, or misinterpreting. Secondly is if my understandings and techniques are coherent with my framework and there is a coherence with my aim of the work</li> <li>• An affirmation of perhaps my inner ability or inner quality that makes me the therapist that I am, compared to another. There must be something in every counsellor that makes them unique</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A space where I will be helped to be more aware of my strengths and weaknesses.</li> <li>• It's a person I trust - having more experience and somebody, I like the way he or she works</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Probably somewhat similar to the relationship that one might have with a spiritual teacher, which is what I have in a monastic environment. A teacher being there with my best interests at heart - being able to point out where I'm wanting or lacking but also to point out my strengths to encourage those as well</li> <li>• In terms of setting up a private counselling practice. How do you go about that?</li> <li>• Being with that client as opposed to what we're doing with them. What we're doing with them will come out of who we are and how we are with them</li> </ul>

## What are the characteristics of a supervisor?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think its good for me to not match just where I think I'm at and to seek someone who comes from a different perspective because I think that keeps me learning and exploring</li> <li>• That had more experience</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Somebody who'll be attuned to my particular style - not perhaps their own agenda. - Who's going to be flexible enough to move around</li> <li>• Objective</li> <li>• Honest</li> <li>• Courageous enough to confront when I need it</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In the beginning I felt that more coming from the teaching point of view, was more like an interrogation</li> <li>• But over time I gained the trust of the relationship and understood that was not the aim or the aim was, to let's reason together what we come up with</li> <li>• is the fact that she always asked my opinion first of all - and allowed me to come up with 'oh that's right' ... 'I was wrong oh gosh I did not see that'</li> <li>• It's like she is there behind me you know ... which perhaps is the internal supervision</li> <li>• I know she will act in my safety - in my clients safety of course, but in my safety too, because in saving me, saving me from doing something harmful or unethical to my client</li> <li>• I guess she still holds the power. She can't come and stop me. It is to me to recognise in her position a supervisor. It's her decision and I will stick with that. A bit of the policeman yea ... and this is given by my trust in ber, not necessarily her position</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need to feel safe, as a result of my relationship with the person, because without safety, then the feedback in terms of weakness has become criticism and in return the growth becomes nil or very little because I would lose the me if I'm not safe</li> <li>• I (want to) feel vulnerable in my work, without thinking "oh gosh, he or she will really think I'm nuts". I want to be able to say, you know I dreamt sexually of my client last night and I'm worried about that.</li> <li>• Being nurtured. It's a sense of acknowledgment and it's a sense of (small pause) hearing from somebody else things I'm telling myself - so it's more about my strengths, it's more about my doing well. My weakness is part of my awareness, if you want, but it's not part of my nurturing</li> <li>• I don't need somebody who is going to be this brilliant (person). I would like my supervisor to operate from a space where he can just take me a step forward that I can't do on my own and check before he or she takes me another ten steps.</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Someone said on the feedback that I could have done with more humility, more humanity and more humour and I thought, wow, that's really good and so that's the sort of thing that I'd like a supervisor to be able to pick up on because it would help me to, to grow and to be more as a person</li> <li>• That has knowledge, experience and expertise in being a supervisor, as well as knowledge and experience in the particular area of supervision – and someone that can supervise me - there needs to be some type of connection</li> <li>• An openness - the supervisor being open to the supervisee - having an appreciation of where the supervisee might be coming from in terms of their world of experience and their past history and their frames of reference, and certainly the ability to help the supervisee grow - not just in, for example, the practice of counselling but more essentially, to grow as a human being</li> <li>• An openness - a sense of caring, concern - coming from a heart of compassion and wisdom as opposed to just sort of being critical and judgemental</li> </ul>

Is there an educational component to supervision?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Educating me to think beyond what I've what with that client</li> <li>• There'll be like a book that they've recommended or a different piece of text they've suggested</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The boundaries are always blurred for me. I just have to keep stepping back and seeing if I'm doing what's best for this person.</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I need to be educated and be given advice at times or as another option. I would like for example my supervisor to say, for example, I would suggest you go and read these, or last week I came across ... not necessarily sitting and telling me stuff but referring me to books or referring me to something or give me an article</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>

What are the benefits of group supervision?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I like a time-limited thing - like six sessions. If it works well maybe you can re-contract</li> <li>• A lot depends on the person who's leading it and whether and where they're coming from and whether they allow diversity and whether supervision is to them just technical or personal</li> <li>• The group sort of owns it and makes, makes choices</li> <li>• There's learning by identification. A good group can be very stimulating and ... a place of real learning. It helps me to step back and bit and see it objectively</li> <li>•</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A small group, three people in the same group, which I found even better than personal one to one supervision</li> <li>• I've time to do my bits, to have my supervision, listen to others and the presentation and the case management</li> <li>• So all the other participants have possibility to become supervisor</li> <li>• I've seen others also offloading and there is a lot ... sometimes to offload on emotionally level. There were time where I really felt emotional sadness with some clients and this sense of um impotence and powerless in my intervention. So it was good to offload and know that it was okay that I didn't have to be always strong and capable</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The group supervision liquid dynamics has a lot to do with the group leader or the supervisor - so again it's important to have a supervisor that's able to encompass, to know the group, to know the parts of the group, to encompass the whole group to bring the group together, so the group becomes more than what it would be if it was just individuals</li> </ul>

Is Personal Awareness part of supervision?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think that therapy is involved if within the clients that I'm discussing there is some evidence that maybe I've got myself in there perhaps more than is healthy for that relationship</li> <li>• And if that stirs something more than that, then I need to go somewhere to deal with that issue – I don't see more than that to be part of supervision</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sometimes I need personal counselling which comes into the supervisory role</li> <li>• To know what was going on for me and how it was influencing my client. Then work on my own stuff and set it aside</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I think it will be important to know if something emerged, important for the supervisor to be able to say, "well this perhaps something you can work with your therapist"</li> <li>• Supervisor can perhaps, can point out issues that are personal issues of the counsellor that are affecting his work or her work with the clients. More than that they can't do ... there is no time, is not the place it will become too dual</li> <li>• If you are not driving the car properly, unsafely, I have to tell you ... perhaps you have to go back for a test drive. I think it's the right of the supervisor to refuse to continue to work with you, I don't want this responsibility</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I wouldn't expect to do therapy but I would expect to pick it up and name it - and then if I really need to do that work it's not the right person for me - I think it's my therapist</li> <li>• But if we move into doing the therapy ... then we have blurred boundaries and then I'm not going to get supervision, I'm going to get a bit of everything which means nothing</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even where the overlap between counselling and supervision merges into even, say psychotherapy - whether the supervisor has a deep appreciation of the dynamics of being a human being and can help the supervisee with issues that maybe come out as blocks to their performing. It would be nice if the supervisor was able to help with the personal issue - somewhat like a guide, a mentor, a coach - someone that's a bit like your role model or someone that you that's there like a parent - to help you grow</li> </ul>



## 2<sup>nd</sup> Category: What was my experience of supervision in the Master of Counselling?

### How I experienced the supervision?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• probably the 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> week that I started to get really comfortable about what was supervision really about and to be able to get off that fear thing, autocratic thing</li> <li>• as the group started to get used to it - I guess I'm almost tempted to say, not be so competitive about having something to say or input or instead to wait and to listen to more</li> <li>• I'd look forward to that cos I'd learn and see through people's eyes as well only your own</li> <li>• through watching others present and starting to see the process where we could see things that necessarily the person presenting couldn't see</li> <li>• it was critical evaluation without criticising</li> <li>• I don't think I've ever stepped out of a supervision segment at the masters where I haven't felt somethings grown within me - whether it was something I liked or didn't like</li> <li>• I certainly didn't like when I felt people weren't putting into it. I'd get very upset um ah that they felt that they didn't take it that seriously enough to write something down a few scribbled lines or whatever and I felt that I felt upset that they didn't want to share that value ... I think that for me that's part of team.</li> <li>• I felt let down I suppose a couple of times I felt people may were maybe were very ah defensive about ah what they'd presented in terms of getting feedback and I suppose I didn't enjoy the unpleasantness of them um not being open to feedback ... that they were a bit of a dill to miss out</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I don't want to open Pandora's box here and become attacked ... for my particular style. I protected against that in the group by remaining removed and a bit safer</li> <li>• Particularly the men if we as a group addressed the personal stuff it was quite defensive</li> <li>• I was sort of trying to decide whether I'd stay or not and he got really angry with me and said that ... I was going to make it not a good experience for him. I'm not sure we ever dealt with that well - in fact I am sure we didn't deal with it well and I think it got in the way. I think that was a very defining moment for me</li> <li>• So yea there was a frustration ... because I felt I couldn't talk about my particular issues because 'well this is the right way'. So I tended to be silent about a lot of my stuff. And then I'd be more angry and more pressurised. And more isolated on the edge of the group</li> <li>• I felt like in the group too that everybody was trying to be so politically correct and so tolerant of everything that nobody stood for anything. So there's not the freedom to have stimulating discussion and debate without toes ... being stepped on</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There was a sense of, which is normal I will say, the fear of the criticism and each one was a little bit on their tip toes and very sensitive and ah um about this whatever came out act often very sulky. I guess it's a position that everyone has that vulnerability</li> <li>• However I felt that some people were less experienced in supervision felt that more - which was probably typical of first timers in supervision ... there is the sense of being judged ... and criticised. I guess that's something that has to be taken in consideration, especially in the beginning till the relationship trust is built.</li> <li>• There was a bit of faction - that this particular person not wanting to participate - was even defiant of the group. Other parts of the groups were - they underdog feeling matching up, we're all bruised and so we came up together and we whinge a bit together. Or other people then thought that their method was so alien to everything that was presented, they were never really made a very good</li> </ul>

	<p>use of it because they were so out there in something different</p>
<p>David</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I thought we were a difficult group. It seemed like we were all, you know - I believe we were a very different group and we were working very, very differently from each other. It was good in terms of seeing so many other ways of working.. It was bad and again, maybe that's not the word, but at times I would say 'oh no I don't even like' I would lose interest because it would never be the way I would work and at times I would probably be irritated</li> <li>• There were between the different participants - you included - but the whole group ... there was so much happening ... and everybody was putting the big smile on, okay ... as if nothing was happening ... and it created a lot of unsafety for me. A lot of lack of honesty - it was almost like that was a space I go to get a degree and I do my best. It hasn't been, it hasn't been a very good experience</li> <li>• Be wary. When I would present anything - feeling angry at times with you - frustrated</li> <li>• A lot of things were happening out of your course - unfinished business with clients - most of the things say would happen, let's say in the corridor and would do something or somebody would say something ... you don't feel safe you or you feel ... 'what is this person talking about it's not what he or she told me in the corridor'</li> <li>• that would turn in to be a group psychotherapy and not supervision in terms. You remember once you touched it over the year - just once - maybe half a session and without half, without this, I think I wouldn't have participated. I found that after that the group started functioning it wasn't functioning before - but functioning you know with one leg</li> </ul>
<p>Ian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Chinese restaurant (laughs) ... and I guess, I guess - what feeds into that, was a sense of connectedness that was there. I think for me - could have been accentuated or developed more within the environment here</li> <li>• But I found that with the counselling with our group, there were that wasn't a mutual thing that was felt by everybody. People were at different or different places about even why they were there - and also about how open they were to sharing their vulnerabilities and also encouraging each other as well</li> <li>• Not because people won't be not honest but they just felt shy about being totally honest ... and also shy about what might hurt the person or the person might sort of erupt or be reactive</li> <li>• I didn't feel I was intentionally holding anything back but I felt there was degrees of inhibition because the group wasn't as open as it could have been</li> </ul>

## What personal changes occurred during the year?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that I really met myself for the first time - ever in my life. I really met myself and I still at times have this little inward chuckle to myself where I'm sitting there with someone that might have just left and I'm thinking I did good work</li> <li>• I would not have gone off and thought about researching anything you know - what I'd learned I'd learned and I now I'm always finding something new to read (laugh)</li> <li>• I completely reorchestrated my office cause it was so cognitive um my teddy bears are now at work instead of home ah I don't care who comes in whether their a corporate client or a lifestyle uh client life issue client they're still coming to see me</li> <li>• not rescuing clients so they go out of the door thinking 'ooh that was a wonderful session ooh that was worth every penny' and now actually being ah brave enough to let sometimes them sometimes go out still dripping with tissues or something</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oh it did challenge me to think about things like boundaries ... I mean the incredible pressure that I felt forced me to address it and redefine what my own personal style and where I was coming from ... I just got comfortable with after all those years of operating in my own personal style</li> <li>• I mean I hated it but it was a very beneficial ... it probably strengthened my own personal style in a sense and that was a good thing because it made me a lot more comfortable with who I was and that I do challenge the boundaries and that I and it is okay with each individual client to think about what is appropriate</li> <li>• It gave me a lot more confidence in that even though the pressure was the opposite it actually gave me a lot more confidence that 'no that's the way to go'</li> <li>• Was at the beginning of the year I wanted to chuck it all in ... and I actually did begin to see I have some real gifts. Some was comparison um some was a movement inside of me that was an acceptance, that you know, I'd fought it up till then I'd fought it all the time</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To realise that among my colleagues not everybody sees supervision as so important or so um beneficial, so relevant which sadly enough, and I felt quite horrified to tell you the truth</li> <li>• And by seeing what I thought was missing, another way of practising, I thought no I would make sure that I would have that because I don't think it's right to go without this.</li> <li>• I've decided to have another supervisor specific for my private practice, tailored a little bit more suitable for that and go and pay for it</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm amazed even how much I've changed in the way I see things so. I mean if you had to do that a year ago like mid, mid way through the masters you wouldn't get a third of what I'm telling you ... for me it's absolutely amazing - and the work I do as counsellor I (small pause) I would never have thought it would take me so far</li> <li>• There's something that was extremely helpful in terms of the masters - is you bringing me in and the other people back to look at the parallel process between the client and ourselves</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing particularly striking other than I see the value of supervision and the joy that can come through supervision - being able as a supervisor to help enable someone that has a desire to grow and develop and to give themselves to help nurture and at the same time be challenged</li> </ul>

What personal changes occurred during the year?

<p>Beatte</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• that I really met myself for the first time - ever in my life. I really met myself and I still at times have this little inward chuckle to myself where I'm sitting there with someone that might have just left and I'm thinking I did good work</li> <li>• I would not have gone off and thought about researching anything you know - what I'd learned I'd learned and I now I'm always finding something new to read (laugh)</li> <li>• I completely reorchestrated my office cause it was so cognitive um my teddy bears are now at work instead of home ah I don't care who comes in whether their a corporate client or a lifestyle uh client life issue client they're still coming to see me</li> <li>• not rescuing clients so they go out of the door thinking 'ooh that was a wonderful session ooh that was worth every penny' and now actually being ah brave enough to let sometimes them sometimes go out still dripping with tissues or something</li> </ul>
<p>Laura</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Oh it did challenge me to think about things like boundaries ... I mean the incredible pressure that I felt forced me to address it and redefine what my own personal style and where I was coming from ... I just got comfortable with after all those years of operating in my own personal style</li> <li>• I mean I hated it but it was a very beneficial ... it probably strengthened my own personal style in a sense and that was a good thing because it made me a lot more comfortable with who I was and that I do challenge the boundaries and that I and it is okay with each individual client to think about what is appropriate</li> <li>• It gave me a lot more confidence in that even though the pressure was the opposite it actually gave me a lot more confidence that 'no that's the way to go'</li> <li>• Was at the beginning of the year I wanted to chuck it all in ... and I actually did begin to see I have some real gifts. Some was comparison um some was a movement inside of me that was an acceptance, that you know, I'd fought it up till then I'd fought it all the time</li> </ul>
<p>Conrad</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To realise that among my colleagues not everybody sees supervision as so important or so um beneficial, so relevant which sadly enough, and I felt quite horrified to tell you the truth</li> <li>• And by seeing what I thought was missing, another way of practising, I thought no I would make sure that I would have that because I don't think it's right to go without this.</li> <li>• I've decided to have another supervisor specific for my private practice, tailored a little bit more suitable for that and go and pay for it</li> </ul>
<p>David</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm amazed even how much I've changed in the way I see things so. I mean if you had to do that a year ago like mid, mid way through the masters you wouldn't get a third of what I'm telling you ... for me it's absolutely amazing - and the work I do as counsellor I (small pause) I would never have thought it would take me so far</li> <li>• There's something that was extremely helpful in terms of the masters - is you bringing me in and the other people back to look at the parallel process between the client and ourselves</li> </ul>
<p>Ian</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nothing particularly striking other than I see the value of supervision and the joy that can come through supervision - being able as a supervisor to help enable someone that has a desire to grow and develop and to give themselves to help nurture and at the same time be challenged</li> </ul>

How and in what way did the assessment procedure affect the supervision process?

Beatte	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I found myself seeking less approval and finding it important to say what it was that I thought because it was my growing insight that was blossoming and I had a real need to offer it</li> <li>• I wouldn't have felt um challenged enough without the process. I think that it really made me think beyond my normal range of thinking and that's what I came to do the masters for</li> </ul>
Laura	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I found myself not wanting to appear less then professional</li> <li>• Not willing to share perhaps some of my struggles in those areas but I've since thought, no, that's ridiculous</li> <li>• In the video clip yea probably I would have shown a part that I wanted people to see - not a part that I didn't want them to see</li> </ul>
Conrad	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Even for me perhaps when I was starting supervision, I was thinking," oh my god what should I say that or ... I wonder if I have to say then I muck up this one"</li> <li>• Reluctant, it's not reluctant uh clients - so there is this lack of participation - there is not a need a feel or wanting it a just let's go and do it</li> </ul>
David	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I didn't like that at all, it really interfered ... oh well I wanted to pass my masters so ... at some level I wanted you to be happy with me</li> <li>• But I would choose you know, something which I thought 'oh I'm doing well here and maybe there's a little bit she could say so that's safe' um and so forth so I would have to calculate so that I make sure that I'm one of these people that you say 'well he seems to know what he's doing' ... and yet I wouldn't show you parts where I wouldn't know what I'm doing</li> </ul>
Ian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would see that in having a supervisor there is a degree of evaluation where being evaluated as to our qualities, skills and so forth, as a counsellor and, there is not a particular mark given to that, but there is an evaluation of 'okay this is where you are with this but not with this - we're going to work on this and emphasis this and' ... and uh so I don't see too much conflict</li> </ul>

## What could be changed?

A	•
B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It would have been very conflictual (to have looked at the group process) and I don't know whether that was the right way to go or not. But to actually be part of challenging each other and each other's style of relating. To actually name it and bring it out in the open - and maybe discuss how we could meet different needs in a different way</li> <li>• I would have like to have brought some of that struggle to the group and worked through a bit of that. I found I had to do it alone</li> <li>• Some of that people in that group went through without that happening and there's no way that I'd ever go to some of those people for counselling which I think is sad</li> </ul>
C	• I wish there were more opening to take things in the group
D	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In any relationship whether it is with a client or whether it is with a supervisor, naming the process allows the interaction to be much more profound – protective, healing whatever - enhancing empowering. I know you're capable of that Alison - because again it was like well if there was anyone to do that it would be you so at times I could see the point why you wouldn't it</li> <li>• I would have liked you ... stopping more on my strengths and validating my strengths - helping me see and grow in terms of awareness. I think it's a gift it's ... really wonderful and I'm there for that. And in terms of awareness - part of it is my weaknesses and part of it is my strengths and I found that, we spent at times, too much on weaknesses</li> </ul>
E	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There were dynamics happening in the group which probably could have been addressed a bit earlier on or when they came up</li> <li>• Asking the group how I could have been better? Did you recognise that in me? How could I have done that better or how could I have been better within myself, with the client?</li> <li>• I thought the supervision could have been deeper - more in terms of getting to know who I am and what my strengths and weaknesses are - helping me develop certain things or emphasise certain things and then also helping that occur - not just supervisor to supervisee but also towards within each other. So it's two supervisions occurring - so where the members of the group are supervising each other, helping each other grow. Many of the people came there with lots of skills and experience - so tapping into that and so the supervisor can help the supervisees even developing supervising skills to supervise each other</li> <li>• To see you working and to see where you can be a role model with certain ways of doing things or certain approaches or certain way of questioning or looking.</li> <li>• We're a group and a feeling of wanting to have a connectedness and a closeness that maybe we could continue on with once the course had finished. That sense of the our group - and keeping up with each other as the years move on and the fact that we haven't - we haven't really kept up with each other afterwards - to me is a hit of a loss</li> </ul>

## SIGNIFICANT STATEMENTS EMERGING FROM THE INITIAL THEMATIC DESCRIPTIONS

### I. What do I want to experience from supervision?

#### What is supervision?

**BEATTE** Supervision is a place for sharing, discussion and debate. It's a forum for branching out and exploring different techniques and theories as well as learning about oneself in relation to one's clients. Ethical and legal concerns are part of supervision as well as practical issues such as payments, boundaries and the set-up of one's counselling room.

The word supervision implies a student/tutor relationship where the supervisor is the educator and font of all knowledge. The possibility of a more appropriate term is considered.

**LAURA** Supervision is a human encounter where equals meet to gain perspective. It's also a place to offload, share and learn about oneself in relation to the clients.

**CONRAD** Supervision is about learning and understanding about one's work with clients from within one's personal theoretical perspective and to ensure that nothing has been missed or is going wrong. Part of the process is to develop the internal supervisor.

**DAVID** Supervision is akin to the client/counsellor relationship which ideally is a meeting of two souls bounded by trust and honesty. This kind of relationship allows for safety and trust and both enhancing and empowering. If this safety and trust is lacking, then the supervision is meaningless and only aspects of his work that will meet approval will be aired.

Supervision is a place to become more aware of strengths and weaknesses and a place to be vulnerable and open.

**IAN** Supervision is about leaning how to be with a client rather than only learning techniques about what to do. On the other hand he does want to be shown techniques and to learn more about specific theories. Supervision is about growth and learning how to confront oneself as a human being. It is also a place to discuss practical issues such as fee structures and cancellation policies.

Does not feel the need for formal supervision and is exploring a peer group as a mentoring process.

#### What are the characteristics of a supervisor?

**BEATTE** A supervisor must be challenging in that the supervisee can learn to view the client from different perspectives both within a theoretical model and from outside the supervisee's model. It is preferable that the supervisor has more experience than the supervisee and therefore must take some responsibility for the supervisee's work with clients.

**LAURA** A supervisor has to be open and flexible especially in relation to the particular way she works. Trust is paramount so that challenge, which is important, is not criticism. She is aware that she might be asking for the impossible.

**CONRAD** A supervisor has to be genuine in needing to understand the supervisee's perspective and must seek the other's opinion before pointing out aspects of the supervisee's work which may need changing. It is important that the supervisor works within the same model and needs to go at his own pace without feeling pushed beyond his limits, otherwise he feels contaminated. A supervisor ideally is like a colleague who can foster the supervisee's personal qualities. This is about trust.

There is a power dynamic, however, the supervisor must use this judiciously so it is not seen as a negative criticism. The other kind of power is like a policeman where a supervisor must hold the

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power when matters of unethical or potential unethical practice occur. Here the supervisor might have to ensure a particular process is adhered to.

**DAVID** The supervisor needs to be honest in naming any underlying dynamics occurring in the relationship as long as this is achieved through a position of supporting the supervisee.

A supervisor should have more experience but should allow for respect and personal space in order for the supervisee's own conclusions and thoughts to emerge. This is about feeling nurtured and empowered.

Has never experienced this type of supervision and realises this type of relationship might be an ideal.

Supervision is not about dual relationships or working with someone who imposes their model of working. It is not a place for a supervisor to reveal personal issues.

**IAN** A supervisor is akin to a spiritual teacher who has the knowledge, experience, connection, caring, concern and compassion to understand the supervisee in all aspects of their lives. He wants a mentoring, ideal parent type of relationship where honesty and trust rather than criticism is paramount so that he can grow as a counsellor and as a human being.

### Is personal awareness part of supervision?

**BEATTE** It is important to understand the transference and counter-transference occurring in the client/counsellor relationship, which would emerge from an over-involvement with the client.

**LAURA** Important to know oneself and how this might influence the client relationship.

**CONRAD** The supervisee is not the therapist and can only point out personal issues that might be affecting the relationship. Personal work is with the therapist and it might mean that the supervisor terminates the relationship if personal issues continue to contaminate.

**DAVID** Personal awareness is significant in terms of learning about one's strengths and weaknesses. However, there is a clear distinction between supervision and therapy although the supervisor needs to explore and name any personal issues that might be interfering with the counselling work.

**IAN** There is a strong overlap, even a merging between therapy and supervision so that supervision is a place to overcome personal issues and blocks that might be occurring in relation to client work.

### What are the benefits and limitations of group supervision?

**BEATTE** No comments specifically to this question

**LAURA** Group learning is enormous if the group is constructed of like-minded and similarly experienced people so that she can learn through identification and constructive debates. The group leader has to allow for diverse ways of working with clients.

**CONRAD** Enjoys group supervision as a place for learning and sharing from others as well as sharing his emotional stresses and strains. The group should be no more than 3 people and should be of a similar theoretical orientation and level of experience, which allows for time to be heard and to be vulnerable.

**DAVID** No comments specifically to this question

**IAN** Ideally the group is a place for connection and growth so that everyone can learn about each other and reflect upon each other's work.



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### Is approval part of supervision?

**BEATTE** Approval seemed to be important but would now see support as more significant to allow for growing confidence with client work.

**LAURA** Afraid of being criticised for working in a different way, especially around her boundaries with clients. Approval is about being understood for the way she works.

**CONRAD** It's important to be affirmed and empowered in one's work so that a mistake is not a criticism but a point of learning. There was a personal fear of criticism and of being exposed.

**DAVID** Need for safety and trust, then approval is not the predominant theme.

**IAN** Does not want to be criticised.

### Is there an educational component to supervision?

**BEATTE** A supervisor should be able to recommend books, texts and upcoming conferences.

**LAURA** No comments specifically to this question

**CONRAD** Advice-giving, or different options need to be explored as well as recommendations of books and articles as long as it is only a recommendation.

**DAVID** Wants to be further educated by a supervisor in terms of suggestions of reading or forthcoming conferences.

**IAN** To learn about different theories and techniques.

## II. What was my experience of supervision in the Master of Counselling?

### How I experienced the supervision?

**BEATTE** A sense of exhilaration and positive challenge around learning and understanding.

The group itself was competitive and defensive which did not allow for honesty both in relation to feedback to others and in client presentations. This hindered both the group and individual learning and was therefore limiting in terms of group cohesion and growth.

Perplexed by the lack of being heard and understood in the group.

**LAURA** She did not feel understood and her fear of attack by particular members of the group, namely the men, meant that she had to protect herself which she did by remaining isolated from the group and did not bring controversial clients to the supervision.

She experienced the group as afraid and that this underlying dynamic remained covert, focussing on the group tasks.

**CONRAD** Fear of criticism was the dominant dynamic in the supervision, which meant that people did not make the most of their learning potential. Confusion around the role of the supervisor as to whether they were being supervised or assessed and confusion around the group dynamics. Felt the group was not equal in terms of their experience of counselling, personal awareness and supervision, which led to differences in expectations of learning. In addition, there was disrespect towards other group members and the supervisor. The whole experience was similar to working with involuntary clients.

**DAVID** Felt that the group was difficult because there was no consistency in experience or methods of working. Lack of respect and irritability for other group members emerged which meant that he did not want to participate. Rather than using supervision as a place for self revelation and learning process, many of the participants were concerned with passing.

There were too many underlying dynamics occurring both inside and outside of the supervision that was not adequately addressed. When an attempt was made to discuss the issues in the group, there was a feeling of personal relief, which at least allowed the group to function on 'one leg' rather than none.

**IAN** Experienced the group as one of difference in terms of counselling styles, level of experience and reasons for doing the course. There was a lack of trust and a need to put on a brave face, rather than sharing in each other's vulnerabilities or indeed fear of hurting each other.

Had wanted a connection to the group and a desire for this to continue outside and beyond the course. Wanted to experience more sharing and honesty in disclosure.

### What personal changes occurred for me?

**BEATTE** Supervision in the Masters was a place to overcome fear of other's evaluation and to learn about oneself and how others can perceive the same situation from a different perspective. "I met myself for the first time" is a statement that resonates.

Self confidence and self trust grew as well as the ability to challenge and express personal opinions even if not accepted by the group.

Her work with clients changed significantly due to increased self-awareness around the client/counsellor relationship and openness to learning.

Challenge was the key word both in terms of the group and supervisor's challenges but also to learn how to self-reflect and self challenge.

**LAURA** Although she hated the year, in hindsight she learnt to challenge herself around her boundaries and redefined her personal style, which gave her more confidence in her counselling work.

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**CONRAD** Self-confirmation that he was practising in the model that suited his personality. Realised that he needed two supervisors to reflect his two counselling practices.

**DAVID** Realisation that he had developed as a counsellor during the year especially with regard to understanding the client-counsellor relationship from a different perspective and the concept of parallel process.

**IAN** Could not name any specific changes although felt that it must have been a subtle process.

### How I perceived the supervisor's role?

**BEATTE** Everyone had their say in the group and everyone could be heard from within their theoretical perspective, which is core to being a group leader. In addition, the supervisor was able to look beneath the surface of a client presentation and ask questions, which took the work to a deeper level.

**LAURA** The supervisor appeared to understand her position and was able to challenge her to think differently about her role as a counsellor.

In relation to the group, the supervisor's role was to balance and ensure that the tasks set by the university were met. There was identification that this role was difficult

**CONRAD** The supervisor had to understand everyone's orientation, which meant that there was not enough depth. Wanted to understand more about the existential model of the supervisor, which was not achieved. Conflict of the dual relationship between the supervisor and her role as assessor, which manifested in a power dynamic.

**DAVID** Thought the supervisor held too much power in the inherent nature of the dual relationships of course coordinator, supervisor and assessor. This led to his feeling unsafe with no one to turn to for support. However, at times he felt the trust and was able to be honest and forget the potential judgements. Respected the supervisor but felt that she did not reveal her potential in terms of the relationships building espoused by the existential model.

**IAN** Enjoyed the encouragement and enthusiasm of the supervisor and her willing to share ideas and self-disclose. On the whole he felt that the group leader did her job well, although had plenty of ideas for improvement.

### How and in what way did the assessment procedure affect the process?

**BEATTE** Assessment procedure was vital to expanding her critical thinking and self reflection in relation to her work with clients.

**LAURA** The assessment procedure was curtailing because she wanted to be seen as professional especially in view of her experience as a counsellor. This meant that she only showed the parts of herself and her work that she wished other people to see.

**CONRAD** Fear that not agreeing with the supervisor could mean loss of marks so tended to be careful about what he revealed.

**DAVID** The assessment process was continually in the foreground, which meant that he chose to speak about issues, and clients, which he thought were safe in terms of the supervisor's assessment.

**IAN** There was no conflict between the assessment procedure and the supervisory process.

### What could be changed?

**BEATTE** No comments specifically to this question

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**LAURA** She felt strongly that by looking at the group process might have helped her attitude towards the Masters. This would have allowed for more trusting challenging amongst group members and more honest revelations.

**CONRAD** More time for group process and more time to understand the existential model.

**DAVID** To name and to explore the group process, which would have empowered the group. To focus awareness around people's strengths.

**IAN** To address the underlying dynamics of the group and to focus more on the counsellor's self-awareness in relation to the client. This would have helped a connectedness within the group and would have allowed more honesty amongst participants. He wanted more depth with regard to each person's strengths and weaknesses, which could have been discussed as a group.

Thought that the supervisees could have developed their skills as supervisors within the group.

## Themes/Givens contained in the Wheel of Supervision

- **Establishing the Frame**

One of the key themes that emerged from the significant statements was uncertainty and the anxiety that surrounded the supervision process within the Masters' setting. In 'Time Limited Therapy' (1997) we linked the existential given of uncertainty with the need to establish the frame within a context of safety and to negotiate a contract. This frame of reference is equally important within the supervisory setting in order to reduce the level of uncertainty and anxiety for both the supervisor and supervisee.

The contract would obviously vary according to the setting and nature of the supervision but includes the frequency of meetings, the fee (or not), purpose, nature and style of presentations of clients, confidentiality and so on. In the Masters, the contract stated very clearly that all students must concurrently attend their own supervision since the supervision in the Masters leaned towards an academic understanding of the student's work in relation to their clients. It also stated that the group was primarily task oriented to achieve the assessment criteria laid down by the University of Western Sydney.

From an ontic perspective, each of the participants in the group, including myself, had a different relationship to the contract and the setting. For instance 'Conrad' was very clear about the nature of his frame, reflecting his psychodynamic model, whereas 'Laura' talked more about the characteristics she required from a supervisor, rather than the contract itself.

- **Establish Relationships between a) supervisor & supervisee, and b) self-to-self**

In most models of therapy and supervision, the relationships that are created are part of the process; indeed this is commonly referred to as 'parallel process'. Even if the relationship were not paramount in a particular model, I would argue that it does exist for "everything and everybody in the world discloses themselves by one means or another as long as they exist" (Jourard 1971 p19). Therefore, the relationship is a given, whether acknowledged or not.

In supervision I believe there are inherently three levels of relationship: that established between the supervisor and supervisee, that between the supervisee and client and also the relationships that the supervisor and supervisee have privately with themselves. However I have separated the relationship between supervisee and client to acknowledge the importance of this aspect. To what degree these are discussed as part of the supervision, will depend to some degree on the model of supervision, but also on the individual participants and their willingness to participate in self-disclosure.

At some point in all of the interviews, the relationship(s) or lack of them were mentioned. Trust is the linking feature at all levels of relationship, however, how each person develops trust and what they mean by trust is individual. For instance 'David' talks about the relationship between his supervisor as "like a meeting of two souls" but if the honesty, trust, and safety are absent, then he feels disempowered, angry and withdraws. This trusting relationship has a knock-on effect with regard to self-awareness, so for instance 'David' believes that it is the supervisor's role to help the supervisee become aware of any personal blocks and indeed the parallel processes at all levels of the relationship. This awareness had a direct effect on his work with clients.

- **Relationship between supervisee and client**

The ultimate purpose of supervision is to promote the relationship between supervisee and their client so that the client achieves the best possible outcome from the counselling process. This was at the forefront of Laura's struggles with her potential dual relationships with her clients and in the final analysis she wished to ensure she was working with her clients in an ethical and professional manner.

From an existential perspective, the relationship that emerges between the counsellor and client is often reflective of other relationships the client holds in their wider world. This relationship realm is a useful component to explore in supervision and can offer valuable insights into the multiple levels of parallel relationships.

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- Identifying theories, values and assumptions

In the 'Time-Limited Therapy' wheel, we had two segments that reflected values and beliefs and how it was an important part of the therapeutic process to discover and critically reflect on them in relation to one's complete sense of being human. We (Strasser & Strasser 1997) examined the concept of sedimented beliefs and how as humans we choose to remain 'stuck' in a belief because to change it often has enormous consequences on how we viewed our 'self' in terms of values, behaviours and so on. One of the tasks of therapy is to explore and challenge these belief systems.

Similarly in supervision, both the supervisor and supervisee will bring to the relationship their own particular theories about life, therapy and supervision that are often integral to their work as a counsellor. Part of the supervisor's role is to explore these theories and beliefs and how they benefit, or not, each of the supervisee's work.

This was particularly evident in the Master's group where each of the participants brought their own idea of what supervision should be, as well as their own particular model of counselling. As the supervisor, I too have my own beliefs, theories and attitudes about supervision in general as well as what supervision should be at the Masters' level. It is the task of the supervisor to explore and understand each supervisee's perspective in order to take the supervision process to a deeper perspective. I think this is highlighted by the various statements in the interviews stating 'the need to be understood as a complete person' by the supervisor before any 'challenging' can take place. This was irrespective of the person's belief system, whether Buddhist, Christian, relationship-driven and so on.

Under this theme or 'given', I also included individual values around morals, ethics and legal matters since this juxtaposes into the counselling relationship.

- Identifying self concept and self-esteem

Other people's opinions are often at the forefront of how we view ourselves which in turn effects how we value ourselves and how we relate to others. From an existential viewpoint, I would add that anxiety is closely linked to our self-concept and self esteem. All of these can manifest itself in supervision around feelings of self-worth, self-expression, validation, support, evaluation, professional and professional competency and so on.

In relation to supervision, I believe that it supports the view of the supervisor needing to understand how each supervisee manifests their anxiety in relation to their self-concept and self-esteem. Since all supervisory relationships inherently have some degree of formal or informal assessment, this information might help this process. Naturally, the supervisor too needs to be aware of these aspects in terms of their own reactions to criticism and how it manifests and affects their self-esteem.

The major undercurrent in the interviews was around each person's level of anxiety and how it manifested itself in the supervision group. For instance, 'Conrad' spoke about his personal fear of criticism which was linked to feeling exposed and vulnerable while 'David's' focus was on his dislike of any form of dual relationship which left him feeling unsafe. On the other hand, 'Beatte' responded to her initial anxiety by using the process of supervision as a complete learning and felt supported in her project.

- Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies

One of my realisations during the year of the Masters was the significance of the context of the supervisee's practice. For instance, I have my own ideals of what a counselling practice is in terms of boundaries, dual relationships etc, however, there are many different counselling scenarios, which engender a different set of rules. Counselling within an agency may mean the necessity of working with a specific model, with a specified supervisor and may have a set of rules and conditions that the counsellor has to work within. It is therefore paramount that the supervisor understands the particular context and rules so that the supervision can reflect these dimensions. 'Conrad' who spoke about the inflexibility of the agency compared to how he needed to work in private practice highlighted this aspect.

Outside agencies can also include the broader context of the various professional bodies that the counsellor belongs to as well as the legal dimensions of the particular state or country. In this 'given' I would also include cross-cultural factors of where the counselling and supervision is taking place.

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The supervision within the Masters of Counselling itself was taking place within an educational framework and therefore had assumptions and assessments built into the curriculum. Both the supervisor and supervisees needed to acknowledge this outside agency as part of the supervision.

- Identifying choices and meaning

Although this theme is an existential concept, I felt that this addition to the wheel gave some feeling of attitudes and choice towards supervision as a process and the supervisor as a person. The existential position is that we choose to create ourselves and that there are always many possibilities to choose from within the context of limitations. For instance since there were very definitive 'rules' surrounding the Masters, there were an infinite variety of attitudes that the participants chose towards the supervision itself. Participant 'Beatte' decided that she would embrace all the learning on offer, while Participant 'Laura' chose to only participate to the extent that she achieved the piece of paper at the end.

These attitudes can be extended to all types of supervision whether 'voluntary' or 'involuntary'. Participant 'David' talked about revealing different aspects of his work depending on the agency he was working with, while Participant 'Ian' had decided to join a peer supervision group since he could not find a supervisor that matched his expectations of a spiritual leader. In summary, I believe this theme includes the supervisee's attitude towards the role of supervision and their relationship between other supervisees, supervisor and outside agency. It is closely tied with the notion of responsibility towards self and others.

Again, the supervisor too is included under this given, in the sense that he or she will strike a particular attitude about their role at all levels of the relationship – between themselves as supervisors, the supervisee, the agency as well as the broader ideas of ethics and professional responsibility.

**MASTERS GROUP:  
INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES TO THE GIVENS OF SUPERVISION  
“The Ontic”**

**The Frame**

**BEATTE:** The supervisor would have more experience than ‘Beatte’ and have knowledge of several theoretical models to allow for growth, personal challenge and expansion. It is important that the contract and the definition of supervision are defined clearly at the beginning so that there is a shared clarity between the individual or the group. Part of the contract would include the parameters of private practice in terms of fees and boundaries. The ethical and legal aspects of counselling are very important to ‘A.’

**LAURA:** The frame for ‘Laura’ is less definable which probably reflects her way of working. She requires someone who can understand her particular way of working which might mean crossing the boundaries in certain situations. Therefore the frame is about herself in relationship with the supervisor and her relationship with her clients.

**CONRAD:** Very clear that his supervisor needs to work from his object-relations psychodynamic model, otherwise he starts to feel ‘contaminated’. This is about safety for himself. The boundaries and frame are inherent in this model and includes the power or expertise of the supervisor.

**DAVID:** Safety is the defining aspect of the frame because it is only within this honest and trusting kind of relationship that he is able to show his vulnerabilities. It is also important that the relationship has clear boundaries with no dual relationships between the supervisor and the organisation. An aspect of the frame is also for the supervisor to name any underlying dynamics occurring in any of the supervisory relationships.

**IAN:** The most important aspect for ‘Ian’ is to find someone akin to a spiritual teacher or an ideal parent who has his best interests at heart and can understand his perspective on life. This teacher would impart knowledge and skills but also show him how to ‘be’ in relationships with his clients. Since he has not found this kind of supervisor, he was seeking this connection with peers.

**ALISON:** Within the Masters’ setting, the frame was very clear in terms of using the supervision to deepen the student’s learning around their theory in relation to their work with clients. The contract clearly stated that the group would not have time for exploring the group dynamics since there were specified tasks to complete.

**Relationships between:**

**a) supervisor & supervisee**

**BEATTE:** Apart from the thirst for theory and further skills, ‘Beatte’ wants a relationship between her supervisor that is one of sharing and connecting to allow for a deeper richness in her work with clients. This can only occur if there is trust and openness between herself and the supervisor and/or other members of the group. If there is trust, then it is safe to hold different opinions and to discuss these openly. “We may have had different opinions, but it was the openness, trust, unconditional setting that took misunderstanding into learning.”

**LAURA:** This relationship is crucial because without a trusting and honest relationship, ‘Laura’ withdraws and only reveals what she feels is safe within the supervisory environment. She is looking for an equal relationship with her supervisor. In the group situation, she seeks a group of like-minded people so that she can learn through identification and debate.

**CONRAD:** This relationship must be genuine and it is important for the supervisor to understand the supervisee’s perspective and opinion before pointing out aspects of the work that might need changing. The supervisor must go at the supervisee’s pace so that he doesn’t feel pushed beyond his limits. Trust is again mentioned. The metaphor of the policeman is used to define the inherent power dynamics, which must be used when matters of unethical practice are at play.



**DAVID:** This is a major factor in 'David's understanding of supervision. The relationship that he aspires to "is like a meeting of two souls that are both healed" within the dynamic. If there is safety, trust, honesty and a 'space' to be reflective, then he feels empowered and willing to share in all his vulnerabilities. It is important for the supervisor to nurture his strengths before exploring any weaknesses. The supervisor needs to have more experience than him but must not abuse this knowledge in terms of power in the relationship.

**IAN:** Connection and understanding is all important in the supervisor-supervisee relationship. Hence he believes that there is no distinction between supervision and personal therapy since the supervisor's role is to explore any blocks in personal awareness. This connection and knowing and helping each other are also part of working in a group.

**ALISON:** My role was as a facilitator in their learning. I needed to understand their personal beliefs, their theoretical models and the context in which they worked. Although I personally believe in the importance of the relationship between supervisees, and myself, this was not handled particularly well by myself and other members of the group. Anxiety levels were high and although they dissipated over time, I felt that this was still a dominant theme.

#### **b) supervisee and client**

This aspect was not part of the interview and I would have to speculate on each of the participant's responses from my knowledge of them in the Masters. I therefore decided not to take this leap. Broadly speaking, all participants believed that growth took place in the relationship, although there would be differences in what this meant according to the theoretical model espoused.

#### **c) self to self**

**BEATTE:** Understanding oneself in relation to clients and to other members of the supervision group was one of the key learnings for 'Beatte' in that she used her growth in self-awareness about relationships at all levels to change her work with clients. "I met myself for the first time"

**LAURA:** She believes that understanding herself in relation to her clients is crucial to her way of working as a counsellor. This is especially so if she finds that she might be negatively affecting her clients.

**CONRAD:** There must be a clear distinction between one's therapist and supervisor. However the supervisor must work with the supervisee's transference and counter-transference. Personal work stays within the limits of therapy. The ultimate aim is to develop the internal supervisor.

**DAVID:** It is the role of the supervisor to name any underlying processes occurring between either members of a group or between the supervisor and supervisee. In terms of the group, this allows for empowerment and healing within the group to own their own process. The exploration of parallel process in the relationship realms is an aspect of learning for 'David'.

**IAN:** The supervisor's role is to help 'Ian' become aware of himself as a complete human being, which includes his awareness in relation to his clients.

**ALISON:** Self-awareness and the concept of parallel process were used throughout the year. In terms of my own self-awareness, I learnt a lot about my own relationship to power and the need to focus more on people's strengths.

#### **Theories, Values & Assumptions**

**BEATTE:** 'Beatte's values are around making the most and growing from any situation. This was evident in her attitude towards supervision and her work with clients. Her need for a supervisor to direct her to potential ethical dilemmas also defines her values around counselling.

## Appendix 5:8

**LAURA:** As a practising Christian and working as a counsellor within the Church, her values are congruent with her spiritual ideals. However, since some of her clients attend the same Church, this is also where sometimes her boundaries are loose.

**CONRAD:** The psychodynamic model dominates 'Conrad's work as a therapist. The model itself encapsulates the theories and values. However having a space to offload and be vulnerable is important part of his work too.

**DAVID:** One aspect of 'David's belief system was around his values regarding supervision and his notion of an ideal supervisor. This emerged around his ideas of power and lack of power in any relationship that may have characteristics of a duality. In addition, he believes that all the relationship realms possess the potential for healing and learning.

**IAN:** As a practising Buddhist counsellor, his values are tied closely to his spiritual beliefs. Therefore his supervisor needs not only to understand these values and beliefs but to embrace them as part of their lives too.

**ALISON:** Apart from my existential theoretical underpinning, I have my own beliefs around the level that a Masters' student should achieve in a year. Juxtaposed with this belief is the notion that people should embrace learning and explore as many avenues as possible to take themselves further.

### Self Concept & Self Esteem

**BEATTE:** Although approval appeared to be important, she realised soon that she wanted to feel supported to allow her confidence to grow. As a member of the supervision group she would try to support others when she felt they had not been heard. She embraced the assessment process in the Masters as a key to her learning.

**LAURA:** Her fear of criticism and her sense that she was an outsider in the group, spoke about her level of self-concept. However, when she felt understood by the supervisor, her confidence grew.

**CONRAD:** A personal fear of criticism and of being exposed, which engenders a high level of anxiety. It is important to be affirmed and empowered so that a mistake is a point of learning.

**DAVID:** His revelations about his position on dual relationships (which included the assessment process in the Masters) revealed his fear around being judged and not feeling safe to be honest. Needed his supervisor to be happy with him so would only reveal aspects of his work that would allow this to occur and for him to pass.

**IAN:** Since he did not feel the connection he so desired within the Masters group, 'Ian' felt that he was not understood in his entirety and therefore did not reveal himself totally.

**ALISON:** I was very aware throughout the year of the level of anxiety and everyone's need to be affirmed as good counsellors. However, it also felt as if positive praise was lost in the anxiety and criticism remained dominant. In terms of my own self-esteem, it often wavered, as the group seemed to be falling apart at the seams. On a positive note, I got good feedback at the end, which says something about the need for a level of anxiety.

### Relationship between supervisee & outside agencies

**BEATTE:** As a counsellor in private practice within a medical setting, 'Beatte' developed quite definite boundaries around her work as she realised the significance of safety for her clients. Working within ethical and legal bounds is high on her agenda.

**LAURA:** Her private clients were from the Church so she had a particular arrangement with the organisation.

**CONRAD:** Since 'Conrad' has private clients and works in an agency, he is very aware of the differences in 'rules' in both settings. This realisation led him to find another supervisor for his private clients so that he could discuss issues relating to this difference in frame.

## Appendix 5:8

**DAVID:** Clarity around dual relationships and to not have a supervisor who is also his manager or his assessor.

**IAN:** 'Ian' works in private practice offering meditation and spiritual healing as part of his counselling work. In this sense he creates his own definition of counselling.

**ALISON:** My relationships were dual in many aspects since I was Deputy Director of Studies, Coordinator of the Master of Counselling as well as the student's supervisor. My personal dilemma was my relationship to the University of Western Sydney's curriculum, which was, so task driven that it did not allow for exploration of the group dynamics which would have been my preference.

### Choices & Meaning

**BEATTE:** Life and work is about learning and making one's own decisions.

**LAURA:** She began a cycle of feeling excluded from the Masters group because of her perceived difference, which meant that the only way she could stay was to "go for the piece of paper". However, my experience of her outside the group, would say that she was passionately committed to her work as a counsellor within the Church setting.

**CONRAD:** It is very clear that he knows his limits and does not want to be pushed beyond them. If he is pushed, he becomes defensive.

**DAVID:** Full of good intentions to do and be the good counsellor. At the same time is critical of anything that might not be to his liking and needs to know that he has an avenue of safety to reveal and talk to someone who has the power to change matters.

**IAN:** His meaning is around Buddhism and spiritual healing.

**ALISON:** I chose to follow the edicts of the course, which had its limitations in terms of group dynamics. The following year, I opted out of the supervision and stayed with the teaching to avoid one aspect of the dual relationship.

**VALIDITY RESPONSES TO THE WHEEL OF SUPERVISION –  
Anonymous Supervisees**

THE GIVEN	RESPONSES INCLUDED	RESPONSES ADDITIONAL TO THE ORIGINAL PROTOCOLS
The Frame	Is included in all responses and reflects each supervisees need for a trusting, working relationship with clarity around the frame especially in relation to any possible dual relationships. This brought up the importance of safety in order to be willing to divulge anything and everything that pertains to the counselling relationship.	Cost of supervision can be prohibitive More focus on client issues than original interviews Importance of choosing one's supervisor
Relationship between supervisor and supervisee	Very clear that a good supervisory relationship is one of trust and safety although each person had their own meaning around this. All participants had a clear idea of whether they wished to have a supervisor with more or equal experience or of the same or different theoretical model. Getting another viewpoint or being challenged was also important.	
Relationship between self to self	All participants believed that self-awareness was intrinsic to the supervision process to gain greater clarity to help clients. However there was a clear divide between therapy and supervision.	More use of transference and counter-transference as an explanation.
Relationship between supervisee and client		There was a direct correlation between having supervision and the supervisee's experience of working with clients in terms of confidence in relation to skills, knowledge and self-awareness
Identifying theories, values & assumptions	As well as the underlying theory used, all participants had a variety of personal values and assumptions that interconnected with their work as counsellors and supervisees.	
Identifying self-concept and self-esteem	The need for affirmation was evident in all responses, although the specifics of this need varied from the desire to be supported, the fear of criticism to the desire for challenge.	
Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies	The individual counselling setting was referred to by all participants and informed the way they practiced and the type of supervision they undertook. Understanding legal and ethical parameters was also significant.	
Identifying choices and meaning	This was very personal to each participant but included their passion around counselling as well as their attitudes towards supervision.	

**VALIDITY RESPONSES TO THE WHEEL OF SUPERVISION –  
Private Supervisees**

THE GIVEN	RESPONSES INCLUDED	RESPONSES ADDITIONAL TO THE ORIGINAL PROTOCOLS
The Frame	Is included in all responses and reflects each supervisees need for a trusting, working relationship with clarity around the frame especially in relation to any possible dual relationships. This brought up the importance of safety in order to be willing to divulge anything and everything that pertains to the counselling relationship.	
Relationship between supervisor and supervisee	Very clear that a good supervisory relationship is one of trust and safety although each person had their own meaning around this. All participants had a clear idea of whether they wished to have a supervisor with more or equal experience or of the same or different theoretical model. Getting another viewpoint or being challenged was also important.	More focus on wanting existential supervision.
Relationship between self to self	All participants believed that self-awareness was intrinsic to the supervision process to gain greater clarity to help clients. However there was a clear divide between therapy and supervision.	
Relationship between supervisee and client		Again, not specifically mentioned
Identifying theories, values & assumptions	As well as the underlying theory used, all participants had a variety of personal values and assumptions that interconnected with their work as counsellors and supervisees.	
Identifying self-concept and self-esteem	The need for affirmation was evident in all responses, although the specifics of this need varied from the desire to be supported, the fear of criticism to the desire for challenge.	
Relationship between supervisee and outside agencies	The individual counselling setting was referred to by all participants and informed the way they practiced and the type of supervision they undertook. Understanding legal and ethical parameters was also significant.	
Identifying choices and meaning	This was very personal to each participant but included their passion around counselling as well as their attitudes towards supervision.	

**Appendix 6:1**

**Promotional Flyer for Supervision Training  
(to be added)**

## DATA FROM ALL RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

“What Do You Think Is Important To Include In A Supervision Training Program?”

<b>Supervision topics</b>	
Knowledge of multiple theoretical frameworks	6
Knowledge of supervision models	3
To establish framework (including boundaries) and goals (contract)	6
Different ways of presenting a client	1
Informed on ethical dilemmas	10
Informed and updated on legal issues	5
To teach skills & share knowledge	6
To facilitate a relationship with supervisee including appropriate self-disclosure	5
To facilitate self-awareness through the dynamics of relationship including transference, counter-transference and parallel process	7
To explore blindspots with the supervisee	4
To understand the individual needs of the supervisee including reluctant supervisees	6
Differences between supervision and therapy	5
Understanding of individual, peer and group supervision and the different skills involved	4
To explore the practical aspects of counselling such as contracting, first sessions, fees, consent forms etc	5
To understand the strengths and deficits of supervision	1
To explore burnout and vicarious traumatisation	1

<b>Characteristics of a supervisor</b>	
Personal supervision	4
To be an experienced counsellor/therapist	3
To be supportive and caring (not judging)	4
To give critical appraisal – giving honest and constructive feedback	6
To be flexible and open to a range of options – an openness to be challenged	3

## OUTLINE OF SUPERVISION TRAINING

### WEEK ONE – SESSION 1 - WHAT IS SUPERVISION?

#### INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

- Aim of the program – to provide the skills and knowledge for everyone to develop their personal model of supervision

- Group contract

- What is supervision?

#### *Exercise*

*In pairs, discuss what supervision has meant for you? Spend some time over it because what emerges will be explored further over our time together. I suggest that one person talks and the other writes as well as asks questions for further elaboration.*

*List as:* 1) *The functions of supervision*

2) *The process*

3) *The roles of the supervisor*

4) *The qualities of the supervisor*

5) *What is supervision there for? The client or the counsellor?*

- What are the qualities of a good supervisor?
- What are the roles of a supervisor? (educator, manager, independent etc)
- What are the functions and tasks of supervision?

#### *Exercise*

*Think about the context in which you supervise*

- *What is your function?*
- *What is your role?*

*Discuss in group....*

*Then take each of the tasks and give a couple of specifics to each of them...*

- What are the differences in the role of counsellor and supervisor?
- Intro and discussion around the research process and the development of the wheel of supervision

### WEEK ONE – SESSION 2 - RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

- Qualities of an effective supervisor

#### *Exercise*

*Looking at your own experience of being a supervisee, what do you think are the positive and negative characteristics of your supervisor(s)?*

Findings of research (Carroll, Campbell)

#### *Exercise*

*In pairs, discuss each of the areas – which ones do you think you need to reflect more upon or learn more about – where do you need to focus your attentions.*

- Self awareness including preferred style of counselling/supervising, personal theories, personal assumptions
- Contracts and context including negotiation of individual learning needs, changing needs over time, overt and covert aspects, termination – handout of checklist (to be completed for the following session)



## Appendix 6:3

### *Exercise*

*In 3 groups – each group to take one of Private, Organisational, Training contexts and negotiate a contract. One person as supervisor, one person as supervisee and one person as observer.*

- **Supervision of Supervision**

- Exercise*

- *The issues that have come up for you today in your role as supervisor? Eg authority, teacher, counsellor, flexibility, evaluator etc*
  - *What do you feel confident about?*
  - *What areas do you feel you need to work on?*
  - *What aspects of yourself might come in the way of your supervisory relationships? You might find it easier to discuss one of your supervisees.*

Handout for the following week: Questions to reflect upon regarding personal theories of counselling – to link in with the models of supervision

### **WEEK TWO – SESSION 1 – MODELS OF SUPERVISION**

(delivered by Jan Grant)

What is our own counselling model? And how does this translate into supervision? What advantages and disadvantages are there in having a preferred counselling theory?

- Historical Overview
- Counselling and Psychotherapy models
- Developmental Models eg Stoltenberg and Delworth  
Advantages and Disadvantages
- Process Model eg Hawkins and Shohet
- Task and Function Models eg Kadushin, Carroll
- Integrated Models - The relationship model eg Evans and Gilbert

### **WEEK TWO – SESSION 2 – METHODS & TECHNIQUES MODES OF PRESENTING**

What skills do you think you need to learn as a supervisor?

### *Exercise*

*In pairs, think about a supervision sessions and look at:*

- 1. What do you think worked? And what was it about the way it worked*
- 2. What do you think didn't work? And what can you learn from this?*

*Come up with a list of what we think is important in supervision.*

- Research on the significance of The Relationship
- Modes of Presenting clients in Supervision  
Case consultation or verbal reports, Written notes, Audio and video tapes, Live supervision
- Questions to ask supervisee before presentation of client.

### *Exercise*

*In groups of 3 record a 15 minute counselling session. Then change groups so that the 'counsellor' is working with a different group. Each group to allocated a supervisor and observer.*

## Appendix 6:3

*Group 1 to use the videotape for supervision*

*Group 2 to use a verbal account*

*Group 3 to use written notes*

*Bring back to the group to discuss*

- Techniques used in supervision - Modelling and demonstration, Role playing, Empty chair, Family sculpting, Psychodrama, Art therapy of various forms, Interpersonal Process recall

### WEEK 3 – SESSION ONE – MODES OF SUPERVISION

- Group Supervision (Elana Leigh)  
Discussion of theory and skills used.

*Exercise*

*Supervisor leads a group session with the instructions to stop the process and discuss with others (and myself) at various points.*

*5 people on the outer circle who act as observers noting one particular aspect of the supervision:  
Or what do you think are the important areas to focus on?*

- 1. Focus on the general understanding/themes/content of the case presentation*
- 2. Focus on the self-awareness of the supervisee*
- 3. Focus on the educational/skills needs*
- 4. Focus on the group dynamics – whether conscious or unconscious*
- 5. Focus on giving feedback either to the individual or the group*

- Discussion around advantages and disadvantages of group vs individual supervision
- Other forms of supervision – consultation, peer, remote (email, telephone)

### WEEK 3 – SESSION TWO LIVE SUPERVISION NEGOTIATING THE PATH TO TROUBLE-FREE PRACTICE

- Live supervision (Simon Matthews)  
Use of one-way mirror and how to supervise.  
Demonstration with couple counselling and the rest of the group watching. Feedback given by a group of 3 supervisors.
- Boundaries  
Interfaces of training, supervision and counselling
- Dual relationships – which ones can you think of and what are the impacts?  
A. Handout of Attitudes about Dual Relationships with Supervisees (Barbara Herlihy)  
Management of Dual relationships
- Confidentiality  
Context driven confidentiality, dual relationships etc.

### WEEK 4 - SESSION 1 - CREATIVE SUPERVISION (delivered by Jackie Short)

- Drawing (from A Model of Visual Case Processing – F. Ishtu Ishiyama)  
*Exercise*  
*Identify client and think about the following questions:*
  - *Yourself as a counsellor and person*
  - *The client and his or her concern*
  - *Your relationship with the client*

## Appendix 6:3

- *How the session(s) went*
- *Where the case is going*

### *Exercise*

*Draw a picture and share the picture with partner*

*Think about the following questions:*

- *Which part of the picture represents me in this session?*
  - *And which the client – which qualities and characteristics are apparent?*
  - *Is there anything in the drawing which represents the unresolved stuckness?*
  - *Is there anything in the drawing which represents the potential energy or change in the situation?*
  - *What do these reflections suggest for my conceptualisation of and therapeutic action with my client?*
- Limits and Cautions of using drawings
  - Using fridge magnets to discuss case study in supervision

### *Exercise*

*One person to supervise as the supervisee uses the magnets to describe and understand more about the client/counsellor dynamics*

- Use of creative writing in supervision such as mind mapping, dialogue, free writing, poetry

## **WEEK 4 – SESSION 2 – DILEMMAS OF ETHICAL PRACTICE**

(as delivered by St James Ethics Centre)

- Two main issues addressed:
  1. How do you cope with a particular ethical dilemma in relation to a supervisee?
  2. How do you raise awareness of ethical and professional practice with your supervisee?
- Carroll talks about 5 main areas to be addressed in any training
  1. Supervisor's ethical responsibility to clients
  2. Supervisor's ethical responsibility to supervisees
  3. Supervisor's ethical responsibility to the supervisory relationship
  4. Supervisor's ethical responsibility to the training/agencies
  5. Supervisors's ethical responsibility to themselves.
- Ethical Codes and ethical decisions
- Accountability
- Link to contracts, dual relationships, boundaries etc

## **WEEK 5 – SESSION I – TRUTH VERSUS DECEPTION - THE POWER OF EVALUATION**

**Relationships – the role of outside agencies**

- Power/authority  
What are your own experiences in life of power/authority on
  - The receiving end
  - The giving end
- Power of the supervisor, agency and supervisee
- Raven and French – definitions of power bases  
Authoritative versus facilitative
- Abuse of power and research

## Appendix 6:3

### *Exercise*

*Think back to a 'bad' experience of power in a supervision session. What kind of power base was used?*

*Think back to when you used power inappropriately. What kind of power base was used? How might you have done this differently?*

- Self awareness and managing anxiety
- Evaluation – how does all this relate to evaluation?

### *Exercise in pairs*

1. *Has there been a time when you have been supervising when you have had your own judgements about the supervisee (in terms of knowledge, lack of awareness or whatever)?*
2. *Have you been aware of when your supervisee has felt judged?*
3. *What were the consequences?*

*Think about your own supervision and in how does assessing or evaluating come into the process? What effect does it have on you? What can you learn from this?*

- Context and different forms of evaluation

### *Exercise*

- *One group to work out criteria for evaluation in a training institution, one group to discuss evaluation in an agency setting, one group to discuss evaluation in terms of private supervision.*
- *Watch videotape of supervision session*
- *Back in small groups to discuss the evaluations and to revisit the original criteria*
- *In large group – discuss*
- *Role play so that one person take the counsellor position and the other, the supervisor (with an observer) to give feedback in the process of supervision.*

## **WEEK 5 – SESSION TWO – THE HIDDEN PROCESSES**

### **Relationships**

- Relationships and awareness
- Transference and counter-transference

### **Definitions**

**Are they concepts to use in supervision?**

**How do you become aware of transference? How would you work with it?**

### *Exercise*

*Handout in pairs: Questions adopted from J Campbell*

- Parallel Process – definitions and use of in supervision. Examples from group.

### *Exercise*

*Fishbowl role-play where one person is the supervisee and relates work with a client that has been difficult for them. The other three listen and see what they pick up within themselves in terms of feelings. Discuss these feelings with the supervisee and see what emerges.*

## **WEEK 6 – SESSION ONE – THE RESPONSIBLE SUPERVISOR**

## Appendix 6:3

- Legal Issues (David Croake – lawyer)  
Discussion and legal information on questions given to lawyer from participants during the week
- Administrative tasks

### **WEEK 6 – SESSION TWO – WHO AM I AS A SUPERVISOR?**

- How do I see myself as a supervisor?  
Pictorial synopsis of course pinned around room

Reflect upon:

- Your own personality
- Your counselling style
- Cultural background
- Life experience
- The supervisory tasks
- Authority and responsibility

Doodle, draw, write how you see yourself as a supervisor

In pairs discuss and bring back to the group

- Overall discuss and evaluation of course
- Future focus – what do you need to do for yourself? Supervision on supervision, peer group support etc.

## SUPERVISION TRAINING READINGS

### Term 1 2003

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## Personal Journal written during the Supervision Training

### JOURNAL Supervision Training

DAY 1 – 5<sup>th</sup> March  
What is Supervision?  
Relationship Building

#### Overall thoughts

- Very nervous about facing the group and beginning the process of learning about them and their expectations of me. May be this was reflected in the first exercise which was to look at their anxieties about their change from counsellor to supervisor. The parallel for me is my change from being a supervisor to teaching about the process.
- Still worried that I don't know, even though I know that I know a lot, but I am always aware that I often have a different perspective on the process. Brought back the incident when I questioned the facilitator at the Relationships Australia supervision training about the importance of the supervisee's self awareness of the relationship. It felt as if she put me down by saying that this was unimportant although maybe it might emerge with more experienced counsellors. In other words there was a sense that I did not know what I was talking about.
- In some way this relates back to power and her power over me in that situation. I don't want to use my power and want people to find their own model and to respect the model they use – although this is still hard for me to do. It's about letting go and respecting the other.
- Worried that I would give too much theory and not enough experiential learning. I know that it is more satisfying for me and I think for my students when I use a more inductive approach. This is hard to do when teaching a subject for the first time. I don't have the big picture and I was very aware of this when standing in front of the group. Where will I go if something goes wrong or where will I go if I feel that there is a better way of doing something?
- This nervousness stayed with me for the majority of the day and the parallels (I think) were that the group were overwhelmed by the afternoon so I changed the last hour to include supervision on supervision to process anything that had come up for them during the day. This seemed to alleviate their anxieties and probably mine too. Interesting parallel process emerging too.
- Writing this journal now (a week later) where I feel much more confident about next week makes me wonder what parallels will emerge in the group?
- Interesting that neither of my supervisees (or myself) mentioned that fact to the group. I suppose I was following their lead and maybe I was following theirs? What impact would this have on the group? What does it say about confidentiality and dual relationships? Maybe I could bring that up when we talk about dual relationships? That could be interesting!
- Group members are very diverse in their backgrounds and levels of experience. One of the men, I would say, is not really at the right level to become a supervisor. However all the others will bring a wonderful, rich experience to the group which I look forward to seeing.

#### What worked and what would I change?

- Although there was a sense of 'overwhelm' in the group as I unpacked the concept of supervision, I feel that the levels of anxiety were okay. It seemed to shatter the illusion of supervision being a one-dimensional process when they realised how many different aspects were involved.
- In the afternoon I had to stop myself from hurrying to get to contracts and let that go. Instead I gave a quick synopsis and with handouts, gave them homework, which was to write up a supervision contract from a particular context – eg agency, private practice and educational context.
- Already a feeling that there is too much to cover although this might change as the course unfolds.

Day 2 – 19<sup>th</sup> March  
Models of Supervision

- My back decided to give up on me on the Tuesday and I knew that I was incapable of being there the whole day. I gave over the morning to 'Joan' and asked her to videotape the session.
- On watching the tape, it was interesting to note that they felt overwhelmed by the amount of readings. As my original intention, it would have been beneficial to send out the first week's readings so they did not have to catch up on 2 whole weeks worth.

## Appendix 6:5

- On reflecting on the previous week, several of them commented on the possible triangulation of supervision within agency settings – although I think this awareness probably reflected their own supervision. Also how complex the roles of a supervisor were and the heavy burden of responsibility.
- One person reflected on how onerous it was to think about having to know more than one theory in order to be able to supervise from different orientations.
- Developmental, social roles and Clarkson's models were discussed and then a supervision session took place – although the tape was turned off then. This must have been a previous agreement – with a wave at the camera and a 'sorry Alison'.
- Found the class interesting and enjoyed the way 'Joan' worked inductively, getting all participants to create the models first on the whiteboard and then look at the theory.
- I didn't know that Rogers introduced the idea of taping supervision sessions because he realised that the disadvantage of using a client-centred approach in supervision was that the supervisor was unaware of the skills being used – or rather the lack of them. He then introduced the notion of education into the supervision process. However, Rogers never went to supervision himself believing that he did not want to be influenced by other modalities.

### Modes of Presenting – written/oral/tapes/IPR

#### Overall thoughts

- I struggled in for the afternoon but later on speaking to a colleague realised that I could have asked her to do the session. Finding it hard to relinquish control of my 'baby'. Yet if I am realistic then this module is only a pilot to see whether it should continue in this form or whatever emerges from the evaluation.
- A bit upset that they had not worked on their contracts. A sense may be that they are confused or finding it too hard. Probably need to process this next time – do some group evaluation of where we are going and what they want.
- I was confused too and in pain. Got muddled over the exercise I was giving them. In the end divided into three groups who videotaped supervision sessions and then 2 people wrote up process notes of a session they had with a client. Began with this so that had 2 fishbowls going around the 2 supervisees and their process notes. This was a first for everyone. It seems that most people (apart from one who was trained years ago in England) present their clients as it comes. One group seemed to get a lot out of the exercise and the supervisee was able to expand her thinking on the case she presented.
- We then used the videotapes to learn about IPR. Three groups and made sure that the original pairs were working with different people. Two observers for each group. Not sure that they understood about the purpose which was to increase the self-awareness of the supervisor. Found myself being quite challenging with one group to get them going. Realise that I do have a tendency to take over if I think they are pussy footing around. Not sure I like this side of me because I would rather be less pushy and more able to ask them questions. However, on talking with a colleague, realised that part of the role of the supervisor is to be challenging and therefore I am also modelling this aspect.
- One reflection at the end suggested that they should know the intention behind the videotaping before doing it. I agreed and admitted that I had been muddled about my intention.
- I think it is difficult for them to move from the role of counsellor to that of supervisor which has many and varied characteristics. Again, may need to discuss this next time.

#### What worked and what would I change?

- I think opening their minds up to different ways of presenting clients was good – although not sure there was enough time to really process all the material.
- General feeling from the morning was that they could intellectually understand the models but were still not sure how these would apply to their way of supervising. I think I will need to return to the models in the last session when we talk about the development of their own model.
- Would like to spend more time on skills development. I find this hard to write since as an existential therapist, the focus is not on skills but on process where the skills almost emerge as second nature. Need to think about this more. May be its about exploring what it is they are finding difficult to comprehend. What are the aspects of being a supervisor that they are finding hard and then work on these.

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- Definitely need to spend time on some processing. Will write another section to accommodate this.

### DAY 3 – 2<sup>ND</sup> APRIL

Modes of presenting – group & live supervision

Dilemmas around the interface between training & supervision and therapy and supervision

#### Overall Thoughts

- ‘Elaine’ came in the morning and spent an hour with the group talking about group supervision in term of her model which is influenced by Maria Gilbert/Ken Evans’ book as well as the developmental models with some of Patrick Casement’s work. For me, probably one of the most important aspects was the importance of setting up the group properly in order to create the group culture. ‘Elaine’ holds the group tightly to begin with by almost supervising on an individual basis and then opening the case up to the group for further discussion. As the group forms, she will let go and allow the group to take over more.
- The training group seemed to get a lot out of ‘Elaine’'s talk and when she went we discussed this further and then moved into an inner and outer group where the outer group acted as observers looking out for particular aspects of the supervision such as group dynamics, educational etc. At the beginning I suggested to ‘Kristine’ (the supervisor) to stop and ask if she needed to. She did this and I think this really added to everyone’s learning. Will try and do something similar again.
- One person said at the end that he realised for the first time how a good supervision group could be held.
- I had to squeeze in the elements of the ‘interfaces’ between this and the afternoon session – so did not really have time for any exercises. However we were able to discuss in quite a lot of detail the issues of dual relationships and I think they realised for the first time firstly, how often dual relationships occurred and secondly, other ones that they had never thought of.
- ‘Sam’ came and talked about live supervision in the afternoon. By putting it into both a personal and historical context, I think he really held the group. One person had experienced being in a couple having therapy and had not been impressed. Again, ‘Sam’ emphasised the important of working in a team and if this wasn’t there, then the whole idea could collapse. The team did not have to agree with each other but still respect and not be competitive with each other.
- We then had a couple in one room with a counsellor and we all piled into the other room with a one-way mirror.
- The feedback was generally that although most of the students would never use this approach, they got a lot out of the afternoon.
- In addition, we had also done a form of live supervision in the morning with the group so there was a link which I always like.
- I then tried to link dual relationships, confidentiality and the interface between therapy and supervision to their contracts. They did this in pairs.
- I asked for feedback at the end. Generally there was an appreciation of having guest speakers which opened up their minds to other ways of working. Secondly, they felt that the group was well formed which again paralleled with ‘Elaine’s’ talk in the morning about holding the group in the beginning which I obviously managed to do in that first day.
- I must say I am feeling pleased. I like it when the group is formed and there is a generally sense of cheekiness going around the room. People are putting themselves forward quite easily to be part of the role plays and seeming to get a lot out of it.

#### What worked and what would I change?

- I did think I would spend more time asking about their processes but decided to abandon this when I picked up that the group seemed to be functioning well and there was a lot less anxiety. This might have all been my own projection from the previous week with my not being well and my own anxieties.
- I don’t like squeezing ideas into a small amount of time and I really wanted more reflection on how they would deal with boundary breaks in their personal situations but also how to bring this awareness to their supervisees. Oh well, I will try and bring this in to the Ethics week.

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### DAY 4

#### Creative Supervision

##### Overall Thoughts

- I had high expectations of the morning because all feedback about 'Julia' has been excellent and she didn't let me down.
- We had discussed the group the week before and I had said that the group was well formed so she was able to move quickly into their creative side.
- She looked both at their self in relation to being creative and using their left brain and how this could be used with their supervisees. The group seemed to be totally immersed in the processes that she explained.
- Spent quite a lot of time (about an hour) with drawings in relation to a client they had recently seen and then slowly unveiled further questions for them to reflect on in groups of threes. A couple of them were obviously quite triggered by the process and one person said that she now wished to crawl under a rock for a while.
- Loved the fridge magnets. I now want to rush off and start collecting them.

##### What worked and what would I change?

- Thought the morning worked extremely well. Would change nothing! 'Julia' was a great facilitator and was unafraid of working as a supervisor with one person while the others watched. Great modelling.
- So it was more about my own learning both in terms of how to use different creative techniques in supervision as well as learning from 'Julia' as a presenter.
- Took notes and will add to my own teaching notes.
- Had an idea about the last week and using drawings either to represent their model of supervision (probably the best) or as part of the evaluation to represent what they gained from the course.

### Ethics

#### Overall Thoughts

- Confused, muddled – kept trying to bring the session back to the supervisor's role – my attempt to make the afternoon more concrete.
- Took the group to the St James Ethics Centre which is run by 'Sarah' who is totally passionate about ethics and ethical counselling. She is also a counsellor and has done a Masters in Supervision so when I spoke to her she seemed the ideal person. I had also had wonderful reports from other trainers who had taken their students there.
- One of the aims was to understand the overlap in ethical terms between supervision and counselling and what if anything was the difference. For me, personally, much of it came down to responsibility. However, I think Sarah knew where she was going, but I don't think I did and of course I wonder how everybody else thought. We shall see.
- I did gain greater clarity around codes of ethics and how so many of them turn out to be rules of behaviour rather than basic principles. Ethics is around conflictual dynamics which means that the outcome is not usually straightforward and often a compromise on personal values.
- Must look up the Canadian code of ethics which is apparently very simple.
- Read the notes again and the articles she gave us.

##### What worked and what would I change?

- Probably wouldn't go there again and design a program that was around debate and more experiential
- Probably would go back to the basics such as the ethical principles and the broad picture of counselling and supervision within Australia. Then bring it down to more specific issues that are common to the ethical debates within the supervision arena.

### DAY 5

30<sup>th</sup> April

#### The Hidden Processes

##### Overall Thoughts

- I first gave some space to reflections from the previous session. They seemed to love 'Julia' and the creative space. Some were doubtful they would use some of the methods but it opened up a

## Appendix 6:5

good discussion on the learning styles of the people in the class and what they would need to do to take the risk of doing something different

- They also loved the Ethics session so I am glad that I kept my mouth shut. One student who has been struggling with the whole notion of responsibility particularly moved me. She felt at the end that she could let it go, that she does not need to have all the answers. Wonderful. The rest commented on the passion that Sarah put forward and how she gave such a different perspective on ethics.
- At some point I decided to swap the morning and afternoon sessions around to look at the relationship in more detail before moving on to evaluation and anxiety.
- Spend a long time on transference and what it meant to each of them in terms of their personal experience in supervision as a supervisee and then how they might pick it up when working with a supervisee.
- Lots of stories were swapped and I just sat there listening most of the time wondering whether to move them on to parallel process and a role play but decided they were actually learning more by listening and discussing with each other.
- As we moved on to look at the whole relationship, there was a realisation, especially from one student that in supervision she did not only have to look within herself for an overall picture but that it was important to expand the picture to the client and the relationship as a whole.
- Parallel process just flowed on from this discussion
- Looked at the Spinelli tape that we had on supervision with the idea of looking for the parallel process and any of the relationship issues we had been discussing. There was quite a split in the discussion afterwards – half loved it and saw how Spinelli had been working and the other half thought he was being judgemental and critical. Of course this was part of the parallel process but also lead neatly into the afternoon's session on anxiety and evaluation – which had been partly my aim in showing the tape.

What worked and what would I change?

- I felt I was more in my flow today and not letting my agenda or my fear of not giving enough information get in the way of the process. To be honest, one particular student was not there and I felt a lot freer. This person is also a trainer that I have always admired for being truly experiential in her training and I have always wanted to incorporate more of her elements into my classroom. So I suppose when she is there, I feel inadequate.
- I asked the group about whether a role play would have added to their learning and they all agreed that the discussion had been beneficial and that role plays are useful but there are other ways of learning. In another group I might have done the role play.

### Truth Vs Deception – The Power Of Evaluation

Overall Thoughts

- Spent quite a lot of time examining power both in terms of being at the receiving end and at the giving end. I wanted them all to explore from a self awareness point of view and to move on to different types of power. Generally speaking, as a supervisor, we do have the power and we looked at this in terms of the context of the educational, agency and private practice setting.
- This flowed well into how as supervisors we are always evaluating and how this is important to be aware of and how not to be abusive.
- We did an exercise around anxiety and evaluation and then looked at a counselling tape where each supervisor had a different hat on related to their particular supervisory context. Again this was to bring out the importance of evaluation in our role and how we are continually making judgements and evaluations.

What worked and what would I change?

- If I had more time I would have continued the last exercise into a role play where the supervisor had to practice giving feedback, again from the different contexts and to examine the differences and similarities in our roles.
- However, I think it worked well. The group is stimulating and are able to generate their own thoughts and discussions.

## Appendix 6:5

DAY 6

12<sup>th</sup> May

Legal Issues

### Overall Thoughts

- A bit panicky because Duncan (the lawyer) had sent emails and phone messages indicating that he was unsure of what he should be doing and also implied that he was coming in the afternoon. Had sent him a list of questions the week before. Finally got hold of him and assured him that he did not have to have the answers but to see the process as a form of discussion AND would be come now!
- As usual, Duncan was very open to the discussion and looked at some of the legal terms that apply to the issue of 'being responsible' to the supervisee. The main points are around Duty of Care and negligence which is a breach of duty of care. The group seemed easier when we discussed the role of responsibility in relation to doing everything that one can reasonably do. Everyone was well aware that a supervisor couldn't be reasonable if the supervisee does not raise the situation.
- However, it was strongly suggested to 'cover our backsides' by even double checking on our supervisees if the situation warranted it, for instance if we asked the supervisee to ring DOCS, to then check that this has been done. Another suggestion was to check with our insurance company before doing anything that might be deemed as risky and get it in writing that we are covered.
- In terms of notes and confidentiality, it was discussed that the accused has to show why the notes should be produced and to be shown that it would do more good than harm if read.
- After Duncan left, we looked at some of the administrative aspects of a supervisor such as keeping our own notes and to follow up issues that were legally and ethically important.

What worked and what would I change?

- Felt everyone was in a good space.

### The Final Session

#### Overall Thoughts

- Had created a series of mind maps which I put up around the room which represented what the course had covered. Then asked everyone to think about themselves as supervisors, to be aware of their own personalities and what modality they worked from and to draw, doodle, write or whatever creative urge they had in order to answer the question "who am I as a supervisor?" I too, would do a drawing.
- I felt this was taken very seriously by everyone. People went and found their own space.
- We then discussed in pairs and spoke for our partner which was very moving. I realised how much people had learnt. Some had come in with anxiety and moved to being less anxious and others had got a much bigger picture of their role as a supervisor and had begun practising differently.
- We ended by looking into the future and what they wanted. Sense of a wanting a peer group whom they could contact for further discussions and reflections. What more could I ask for?

What worked and what would I change?

- A great afternoon. The only thing I would change would have been to ask them to do a drawing in their first week so that we could have compared their creations.

## INFORMAL EVALUATIONS OF SUPERVISION TRAINING

(Text taken from drawings completed in last session)

(Names have been changed)

### Bruce (drawing of a river)

- Change from being teacher, educator to counsellor to SUPERVISOR
- This has required a change in thinking, boundaries.
- I feel more confident, self-aware of who I am as a supervisor.
- I believe I am creative who has a deep, rich spirituality that permeates who I am and gives meaning to my beliefs, values and attitudes.
- I feel more eager, excited and challenged to be a supervisor.
- I started the course with a big Question mark, not knowing what supervision is all about, but after 12 weeks the future is only a small question mark; I am not worried or concerned about being a supervisor.
- Out of the chaos came creation. From my own chaos I feel and believe I have created my sense/being a supervisor.

### Caroline (drawing of various symbols as follows:)

- Spider Web represents complexity of supervision, counselling.
- Yin Yang – balance between self and others, moveable and flowing boundaries
- Trapeze artist with a safety net underneath – important to provide safety net for others and self
- Think, see, feel and join with others differently – awareness of self and unique contribution
- Growth from seeds to trees – possibilities of growth that needs to be sustained to make into a more solid stable 'tree-like' state
- Bridge between counsellor and client, counsellor – current and potential self, self and counsellor
- Gatekeeper role – industry/organisation asks us to do this
- Tug-o-war represents the pushes and pulls of the supervision process and demands that need to be kept in balance
- Sun represents the need to remain positive in the process – sometimes the least and most we can do is be a stable, breathing person in the process
- So as Rogers suggest "Can I Accept the Other in the Process of becoming?"
- My question is "Can I Accept Me in the Process of Becoming?" If I can, I can then attend more authentically to the others' growth process.

### Angela (drawing of various symbols)

- My understanding of supervision prior to this course is closely tied to my mixed experience of supervision – some good – some in between. Many questions.
- My expectation of myself as a supervisor is tied to my learnings – re self awareness, ethics, the variety of models, the quality of the relationship, power, the liberation of using art and symbols and music opens up wonderful possibilities but also considerable responsibilities and some legal risks as well..
- The 'me' as counsellor is much of who I will be as a supervisor.
- The symbol of 'Q' in the colours represents the different experience supervision is at each session – different and unique each time.

### Duncan (drawing of a spiritual symbol)

- I assist supervisees to grow in professional competence and confidence grounded in values, ethics and joy as facilitators of the liberation of the human spirit.
- As a supervisor I am a wise, perceptive, compassionate, solid mentor and example.
- I have a good understanding of legal issues and practice ethically as both a counsellor and supervisor
- Any power I might have is used to benefit and enhance the life of the supervisee and their clients.
- My supervisory practice is ethical, professional and informed by current legal and social debate.

### Elena (drawings of various symbols and people to represent)

- Supervisees (self)
- What I bring to the relationship

## Appendix 6:6

- Clients

And in the middle is:

- The pot of gold
- Further options and questions

Jason (drawing of tree and other symbols)

- Supervisor provides a place that is: safe, refreshing, challenging, affirming, encouraging, and brings the service of wisdom and knowledge

Sarah (symbols of hedgehog, face, circle and other)

- Intention, risks, nurturing, confrontation, sense of humour, honest and self-aware

Kylie (drawing of person with big ears eyes and heart, holding a mirror)

- Collective good brain = creative, self awareness, knowledge, experience, ethics, responsibility (legal)
- Contract = strength, safe hands
- Strong voice, wise words, listening ears, eyes to see in the dark
- Strong heart for client and supervisee
- Safe hands = mirror to encourage self reflexivity in supervisee
- Guts to use power appropriately

Alison

- Importance of self-awareness and relationship – both head and heart.
- Lots of questions and not always answers but lots of learning for both parties.
- Power, Responsibility, Educator crossed out. Realisation that these were very important to me before in terms of my role as a supervisor. But have let a lot of it go, realising that if the relationship of respect and care is there, then the others will follow in a different way.





Appendix 6:7

7. What were the most helpful or effective aspects of this module?
8. What were the least helpful or less effective aspects of this module?
9. What improvements would you suggest to the module?
10. Any other thoughts or comments about academic, administrative or ACAP facilities and services that you would like to express?

**QUESTIONNAIRE ON YOUR EVALUATION OF THE  
SUPERVISION TRAINING PROGRAM**

The aim of this questionnaire is to evaluate the Supervision Training Program held at ACAP over 12 weeks on a fortnightly basis from March 3<sup>rd</sup> 2003 to May 14<sup>th</sup> 2003. Your answers will help inform the development of future Supervision programs.

If you need additional space when writing your comments, please use a separate sheet of paper

**PERSONAL DETAILS**

**NAME:** \_\_\_\_\_

**1. How long have you been working as a counsellor/therapist?**

\_\_\_11\_\_\_ years

**2. How would you rate yourself as a supervisor in terms of experience?**

5      4      3      2      1      ✓ 0

Experienced

Beginning

**3. Have you done any previous Supervision Training?**

Yes      ✓  No

**4. What theoretical orientation informs your practice? (eg: CBT, psychodynamic, integrative, eclectic etc )**

Bowenian systemic

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## COMMENTS ON THE COURSE

5. What did you find most valuable in the course?

*Being in a group of experienced therapists – with a high level of trust developing in the group, enabling a high level of disclosure and authenticity*

6. What did you find the least valuable in the course?

*Nothing*

7. What did you find surprising in the course?

*That I came to a place of comfort about not knowing all the answers*

8. What else would you like to have covered?

*The coverage was good. I would like to attain accreditation through the course and would be happy to do an assignment in order to achieve this*

9. Was the length and content of the course suitable for your needs?

Yes

No

Any further comments?

10. How did you find the format of one day per fortnight?

*The format worked well for me*

11. Any comments on the balance of theory and practice?

*We could have usefully done a few more role plays and experiential exercises and slightly less large group discussion. But overall the balance was good.*

12. Any comments on the diversity of presenters?

*I enjoyed all the presents except for 'S' at the Ethics Centre who was too divergent in her thinking for me. The diversity was stimulating and increased the learning.*

13. Any comments on the Readings Package?

*The readings were very comprehensive. The only problem was that the readings for session 1-4 were very dense and we had to do them all in a fortnight. It was too intensive a start.*

14. How do you think you personally benefited from the course?

*I gained confidence in my ability to supervise and I calmed my anxiety around the responsibility (legal and ethical) of supervision.*

15. Did the course meet your needs in terms of:

a. Expectations

Yes

No

Any further comments?

*Although I think I developed my own style/model of supervision, I would actually find it useful to be obliged to formalise this learning through an assignment*

b. Your particular level of experience as a supervisor

Yes  No

Any further comments?

*It catered for beginners well*

c. Application to your supervision practice

Yes  No

Any further comments?

*It gave me the confidence to start a supervisor practice*

16. If there were a follow-up course, what would you want to be covered?

*Perhaps assessments of my performance through analysis of videotapes*

17. If assessments were to be included in the course, what are your thoughts?

*See Q11. I'd like to write an assignment (2000 words) on my own model of supervision and gain an accreditation as a result*

18. If you were offered further modules in supervision to upgrade to a Graduate Certificate, would you be interested?

Yes  No

Any further comments?

*I think an assignment or assessment task would be sufficient to add to this course*

19. How do you see your future as a supervisor?

*Working with established therapists, conducting peer group supervision, supervising students.*

20. If there are any other comments you would like to make about the course, please add them here.

*Thanks Alison. Good luck with your thesis.*

## Appendix 6:9

### Notes from Carla: Supervision Training Evaluation

Dear Alison

I read and reviewed the seven evaluation forms you provided me. The following is a summary of my brief analysis. Hope this is useful. I am happy to talk about it further.

Great work – you should be very pleased with yourself and have good confidence in your thesis.

Yours, Carla

#### **Overview**

The response from participants was overwhelmingly positive. No negative feedback was received. Expectations were clearly met and for most exceeded.

There was positive surprise at the diversity of the subject matter/perspectives, depth of the material and the collegiate nature of the group.

Overall the course built confidence and competence in participants who felt they would be able to implement the knowledge and skills gained into their current or future professional practice.

#### **Structure**

The format of six \* one day delivery (total 36 hours) was considered ideal by all but one participant (who would rather half-days).

It enabled:

- Reflection between sessions
- An ability to implement
- Time to read and review the significant and important readings
- Participants to balance work commitments.

#### **Status**

Most participants wanted acknowledgment for attendance and development. All, but one, were committed to gaining a Graduate Certificate of Supervision. Most acknowledged this increase in status of the course would require assessments and more time. They saw this formalisation of the program had the following benefits:

- There was little formal Supervision Training thus giving individuals and ACAP a professional/industry edge
- Formalisation of Supervision would come with increased PACFA standards
- It gave them an external sign of competence and confidence in supervision.

#### **Content**

The content of the course was valued and appreciated by participants. They particularly liked the range of guest speakers, diversity of approaches available and the surprising amount of creativity available to them.

Any opportunity for more experiential exercise, practice and discussions of the readings would be welcome.

The opportunity of creating two modules to equal to a Graduate Certificate may allow for the above and the covering of additional content (ie. Group Supervision, Legal Issues, Interventions, Pay, Peer Supervision, Performance Assessment).

Assessments - for those that commented thought that two assessment would be enough. One a video self-assessment, the second an essay/diary on professional development of a supervisor incorporating both theory and practice.

### **Additional Ideas**

#### **Ongoing group**

A suggestion to ACAP to form a professional practice group for supervisors to join to allow regular opportunities to share information, discuss issues and highlight resources in the are of Supervision.

#### **Entry criteria**

Personal comment: Many of the participants commented on the value of the group learning and interaction. It was clear that they respected each other professional capacity/experience as therapists/counsellors (regardless of their supervision experience). It would be important that future courses had entry criteria to ensure only experience practitioners are involved.

#### **Offer to organisations**

Marketing potential: Once a course is more formally developed ACAP could offer customised Supervision Training to organisations who build in supervision to their work situation (ie. DOCS, Salvos). This is an area that ACAP's Training Services Manager could do some research to find out what supervision levels are currently in practice, what training exists and what changes to industry/professional standards may mean for organisations employment psychologists/social workers/counsellors and other social welfare professionals.

Appendix 6:10

Evaluation of Learning Outcomes from the Supervisor Training

Learning Outcome	Sample comment – evidence for	Sample comment – Evidence against
1. Demonstrate skills to foster a safe supervisory relationship	I am more confident. Understanding the diversity of dual relationships and their impact	Would have liked more role-play practice
2. Demonstrate appropriate skills relevant to the diverse roles and responsibilities of a supervisor	That there is a 'spirituality of supervision' and that it fits extremely well with my beliefs, values and truths. Aware now of the tasks a supervisor has.	
3. Negotiate a suitable contract with a potential supervisee(s)	I have negotiated a new contract for supervision as a result of the course. I will get supervisees to set their goals.	
4. Understand the use of different theories and methodologies	The variety of presenters and their material and the way it was delivered	More time for reflection and discussion
5. Understand the range of supervision models and to articulate a personal model	The exposure to different modalities of supervision	Would like extra on group and peer supervision
6. Demonstrate the ability to use authority appropriately	Responsibility comes into every task of supervision	
7. Understand and apply the knowledge of ethical and legal frameworks	I am less anxious about the legal aspects.	Would like more on legal issues
8. Identify their scope and limitations as supervisors	I expected to complete with some answers and I came out with more questions	
9. Develop a strategy for continued professional development	Would like to form a peer group of supervisors	
10. Understand how supervision benefits the clients	Understanding responsibility in relation to clients	



## **Presentation Abstract for Psychotherapy in Australia conference**

### **Title of Presentation**

The Phenomenology of Supervision (Research in Process)

### **Presentation Abstract**

As the Counselling and Psychotherapy industry in Australia becomes more professionalised and with the introduction of a professional association (PACFA), there is now a requirement for all training organisations to provide supervision, and for all members to provide evidence of ongoing supervision with a qualified supervisor.

As a staff member of a counselling training organisation, this was the impetus for formulating my doctorate questions around “what is supervision?” and “what constitutes a supervisor?”

This paper will present the process of phenomenological research to explore and personally understand the intersubjective nature of supervision within a training environment.

It will also discuss the themes emerging from the research process, such as the impact of the supervisor’s belief systems on the supervisee, the power inherent within the social and evaluative context of a training environment, the significance of the interpersonal relationships, as well as reveal the subjective views of the trainee supervisees.

One of the products of this research is to create, conduct and evaluate a program for the training of supervisors.

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