

“You kind of pull back the layers”:  
The experience of inter-professional  
supervision with Educational Psychologists

M. Wedlock

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## ABSTRACT

Supervision is considered by the British Psychological Society to be an essential element of delivering high quality services. In a national online survey, it was found that 28.6% of Educational Psychologists (EPs) reported supervising other professionals who work with children and young people in a range of settings.

In the context of a large county council, Family Support Key Workers (FSKWs) work with pre-school aged children with significant and severe needs, their families and pre-school settings. EPs have been commissioned by the Local Authority as part of their core work to offer supervision to FSKWs for over 15 years. The aim of this study was to explore the lived experience of FSKWs engaging in inter-professional supervision with EPs and enhance the findings of previous studies through gaining a deeper insight into how FSKWs experience and make sense of supervision. Seven FSKWs who had engaged in supervision with EPs over a period of 10-15 years took part in the study. A semi-structured interview schedule was used to ask about experiences, and the transcriptions were analysed using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

Five overarching themes were identified and are discussed. Supervisees experienced a safe relationship with the EPs and the opportunity for the deeper exploration of the self. They also experienced supervision as a learning space and had the choice of whether to engage in supervision. The findings also describe movements in, and changes in these experiences over time. Each of the themes are considered in light of

existing literature. The importance of establishing a foundational relationship to create space for the deeper exploration of the self to support learning and development is emphasised. The implications these findings have on EP practice are considered in relation to existing theories and frameworks.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Supervision is considered by the British Psychological Society to be an essential element of delivering high quality services (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). In a national online survey, Dunsmuir, Lang & Leadbetter (2015) it was found that 28.6% of Educational Psychologists (EPs) reported supervising other professionals who work with children and young people in a range of settings. There is a need to explore the experiences of professionals who have engaged in inter-professional supervision with EPs over many years. In particular, insight into the experience of the relationship and the perceived role and impact supervision can have on their work with children and their families.

The researcher adopts a constructivist position where a pattern of meaning is inductively generated and co-constructed from individually constructed worlds. This deeper insight into their experiences extends beyond the findings in current literature and intends to be transferred to similar contexts and inform EPs who are engaging in supervision with other professionals.

The national and local context will be introduced first, followed by a literature review that leads to the rationale of this study. The method of data collection and analysis is described. The findings are discussed in relation to existing theoretical frameworks and limitations of the study are reviewed. Finally, implications to EP practice and concluding comments are reviewed.

## 1.1 The practice of supervision

Early versions of supervision known are thought to date from at least as far back as the Christian faith when desert monks, aware of relying on oneself in the isolation of the hermitage, ensured they had a trusted spiritual guide, to enable 'discernment', the ability to perceive and judge well (Carroll, 2007). The beginnings of informal supervision as we might recognise it in the Psychology profession today, became part of practice when Freud gathered small groups to discuss and review their work with clients (Carroll, 2007), acknowledging a need to think with others and not struggle in isolation and to develop one's own observational stance (Howard, 2007). More formal supervision emerged through the early development of social work in the latter part of the nineteenth century and then became a compulsory part of psychoanalytic training from the 1920s (Carroll, 2007; Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Page & Wosket, 2001). In the 1970s supervision established itself more clearly in counselling and psychotherapy and became more educational and developmental with an aim to improve practice (Carroll, 2007). The emphasis was on learning through experience, "reflection and thoughtfulness", a setting for reviewing and reflecting on practice, to returning to do things "better", "differently" and "more creatively", in the context of "a relationship of trust and transparency" (Carroll, 2007, p. 36). Much of the literature on supervision is focused around that of trainees entering a profession. It has been viewed as "a learning alliance designed to enhance the development of autonomy in clinical practitioners" (Page & Wosket, 2001, p. 9). More specifically, it is a place to acquire theoretical knowledge and practical skills, to enhance effectiveness and to help trainees understand themselves better through reflective learning (Davys &

Beddoe, 2010). Page & Wosket (2001, p. 14) write of a counselling student calling it “a luxurious necessity” but also recognise that the supervision of a training practitioner in comparison to that of an experienced practitioner is distinguished in that different matters become the focus (Page & Wosket, 2001).

Supervision has since been adopted as common practice in a variety of other professions for “better quality service” (Carroll, 2007, p. 36). In the late 1970s and early 1980s, supervision became increasingly embedded in the practice of Counselling Psychologists and Psychotherapists in Britain (Carroll, 2007). The practice of supervision amongst Educational Psychologists (EPs) begun establishing itself more clearly in the 1980s, primarily focusing on the earlier stages of an EP’s career, when in training or when newly qualified. By the 1990s it was not yet consistently established in EP practice with less than half of EPs reported to be receiving supervision (Lunt & Pomerantz, 1993). The British Psychological Society (BPS) published the first issue of Educational and Child Psychology dedicated to supervision in 1993, and practice has become increasingly consistent within the profession since then.

## **1.2 Supervision in Educational Psychology in the national context**

EPs are now required to register with the Health and Care Professionals Council (HCPC) in order to practice, and must adhere to the ‘Practitioner Psychologist: Standards of proficiency (HCPC, 2015). Within these standards, it states that practitioner psychologists must “understand the importance of participation in training, supervision and mentoring” (p.8), and “understand models of supervision

and their contribution to practice” (p.12). Supervision has taken on a variety of forms in different professional domains. The following key legislation and guidance documents published nationally attempt to define more clearly what supervision is and its functions for practicing EPs.

### **1.2.1 British Psychological Society guidelines**

The BPS’s (2008) generic professional practice guidelines outlines principles of supervision, the nature of the supervisory relationship, characteristics of supervision, roles within supervision, principles of confidentiality, responsibilities and competence. More specifically for EPs, there are guidelines produced by the Division of Educational and Child Psychology (DECP) by Dunsmuir & Leadbetter (2010). These guidelines promote the importance of good supervision for assuring competent practice, quality standards of service delivery, attending to outcomes and legal and ethical responsibilities towards service users. The document suggests that supervision ought to address the well-being and professional development of a practitioner as well as supporting service development. Supervision has become regular practice and the high value that is placed on it is emphasised:

The experience of good supervision is invaluable, yet is not always experienced. Of great concern is that in times of change, when support is most necessary, supervision may be regarded as a luxury and minimised due to economic and time demands (putting workers and clients at risk) (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 2).

The document also highlights the value of EPs supervising other professional groups, particularly through the use of EPs’ facilitation and problem-solving skills, with the

aim of encouraging other practitioners to work more reflectively. The guidelines recognise that there are a range of definitions of supervision and conclude that in the context of the EP role it can be seen as “a psychological process that enables a focus on personal and professional development and that offers a confidential and reflective space to consider one’s work and responses to it.” (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 7). This definition will be adopted for the purpose of this study.

The guidelines state that most supervision policy documents make reference to the aims, role and function of supervision, the models used, the ethical and professional issues, and the links to line management, performance management, continuing professional development (CPD) and training. The guidelines report that the two most common models used at the time of publishing, in EP services were the Hawkins and Shohet process model (2012) and Scaife’s General Supervisory Framework (GSF) (Scaife & Inskipp, 2001). These models are elaborated on in the next chapter. The guidance also addresses issues around practicalities, contracting and record keeping, and offers supervision contracting guidelines, including recommended considerations around roles and responsibilities.

In addition to the above guidelines, the BPS has established a Register of Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors (RAPPS) with the aim of recognising chartered psychologists who have certified supervisory skills. To join this register there is a charge for application and annual membership fee and the register offers society approved training courses and workshops.

There are many other definitions of supervision across a range of professions. The BPS Division of Counselling Psychology for example has guidance which includes an extended definition of supervision as an activity, a process, a relationship, and a practice, along with aims, objectives and forms of supervision. It is outside the scope of this study to discuss these in detail here, but it is useful to keep these in mind as they could enhance our understanding of the remit of EP supervision in the spirit of sharing good practice across the professions.

### **1.3 Current national trends in Educational Psychology supervision**

A national online survey conducted by Dunsmuir, Lang & Leadbetter (2015) identified that 28.6% of qualified EPs reported supervising professionals in settings outside of their workplace. These professionals included school teachers and teaching assistants (11.1%), as well as Portage (Early Years complex needs) workers and therapists (17.5%). Some of this supervision provided was in mainstream schools (7.3%) and in special school (2.2%) settings. Over half of the EPs who responded to the survey reported that they used the Hawkins & Shohet (2012) seven-eyed model for supervision. Other models that were also reported as being used included Scaife's General Supervision Framework (Scaife, 2010; Scaife & Inskipp, 2001; Scaife et al., 2008) and Page and Wosket's cyclical model (Page & Wosket, 2001). In addition, just over a fifth of those who responded to the survey, reported that they used no model for providing supervision.



#### 1.4 Supervision in the local context

The EPS in which this research took place recognises a clear separation of managerial and professional supervision in line with the DECP guidelines:

Where an Educational Psychologist supervises a person from another profession, it is vital that key lines of accountability in decision-making are clearly agreed and recorded. It is crucial that there is clarity with regard to liability, legal and case responsibility that normally remains within line management structures. (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 11).

The EPS has also evolved a comprehensive and holistic policy which recognises different functions and processes of supervision. A supervision strategy group oversees, monitors, evaluates and reviews supervision policy and practice in the service, delivers training, deals with issues arising and liaises with area teams. The group is thought to be key in developing supervision in the service and is overseen by a Deputy Principal Educational Psychologist (DPEP).

The EPs who offer supervision, complete a two-day induction course in the service that is offered every two years and is a formal part of the induction process, this ensures a common understanding of the service's approach to supervision. These supervisors are then required to attend a half-day refresher training course in the summer term in addition to meeting for a half-day in the autumn and spring terms. The use of a self-assessment questionnaire is encouraged. The service provides guidelines and training to EPs that combines the Hawkins and Shohet (2012) seven-eyed model together with some principles from Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapy (REBT) (Dryden & David, 2008), Personal Construct Psychology (PCP) (Kelly, 2002,

2003) and Solution Focused principles (Knight, 2004). These models are explained further in the literature review.

### **1.5 Family Support Key Workers**

The Family Support Key Workers (FSKW) at this Local Authority (LA), contribute to a programme that supports preschool children and their families with significant and severe needs in line with the government agenda and principles of early intervention and prevention. This local, multi-agency programme is designed to support preschool children who have social communication difficulties or autistic spectrum disorder, their families and practitioners who work with them. The offer involves parents from the start, as encouraged in the new SEND Code of Practice (2015) and there is no need for diagnosis for access to the offer. Parents of children with high levels of need are recognised to experience clinical levels of stress around parenting (e.g. Lundy, 2011). Preschool Specialist Teachers lead the home-based programme of support, which may also include the involvement of a FSKW. FSKWs in this context then, are para-professionals who work alongside the specialist teachers, they do not have particular qualification requirements or work under a professional body. Their work is supervised by the preschool specialist teacher allocated to the case and through weekly group meetings. Advice and support may be provided through a series of home visits, parent workshops or community activities. FSKWs may be working in the child's home and be providing advice to the child's preschool setting, the amount of support provided is negotiated with parents and within limits of capacity determined by their caseload.

## 1.6 Inter-professional supervision in the service

In the Educational Psychology Service (EPS) where this study took place, inter-professional supervision is regarded as an important way for EPs to be able to use their skills to promote positive outcomes for children (Ayres, Clarke, & Large, 2015). Inter-professional supervision in the LA was first established alongside this programme. The intensity of their work with families and the complex nature of the child's difficulties places particular demands on the FSKW and led to FSKWs being offered supervision every half term. Supervision offers FSKWs the opportunity to explore and reflect on some of the issues arising in their work and the impact of this. In conversations with EPs involved in overseeing this supervision, it became clear that the FSKWs are working with families under a lot of stress and at times feel as if they are 'drowning'. Examples include challenges of managing behaviour, boundaries, diagnosis and the grief of the 'lost child'. In addition, they deal with isolated families and with children with life threatening diseases. The intimate relationships FSKWs have with the families they work with, could raise many challenging issues that are brought to supervision.

The service conducts annual evaluations of the supervision EPs offer FSKWs using a survey. Positive feedback has been historically received and includes the following comments from supervisees reported in Ayres et al. (2015):

- The protected individual time allocated is valued
- The importance of the supervisor being 'detached' from the case, fostering a safe, confidential and non-judgemental environment

- An appreciation of being able to discuss a range of issues in depth at both a professional and personal level
- A perceived increase of skills and personal emotional awareness enabling more effective outcomes with families
- The psychological skills of the supervisor are valued.

## **2.0 LITERATURE REVIEW**

The first part of this chapter describes the supervision framework used in the service where this study was undertaken. Other commonly used supervision frameworks are then outlined to provide a wider context of understanding. In the second part of the chapter, the process of the systematic literature review is described, followed by the review and critique of identified studies. Finally recommendations for future research and implications of the findings will be detailed.

### **2.1 The supervision framework used in the service**

The core principles underlying the supervision offered in the EPS where this research took place are grounded in Hawkins and Shohet's (2012) book 'Supervision in the helping professions' and form the basis of the induction training EPs receive in the service. The key concepts in this book are outlined next as advocated by the authors through a relationship-based approach. They define supervision as:

A joint endeavour in which a practitioner with the help of a supervisor, attends to their clients, themselves as part of their client/practitioner relationships and the wider systemic context, and by so doing improves the quality of their work, transforms their client relationships, continuously develops themselves, their practice and their wider profession (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, pp. 5, 60).

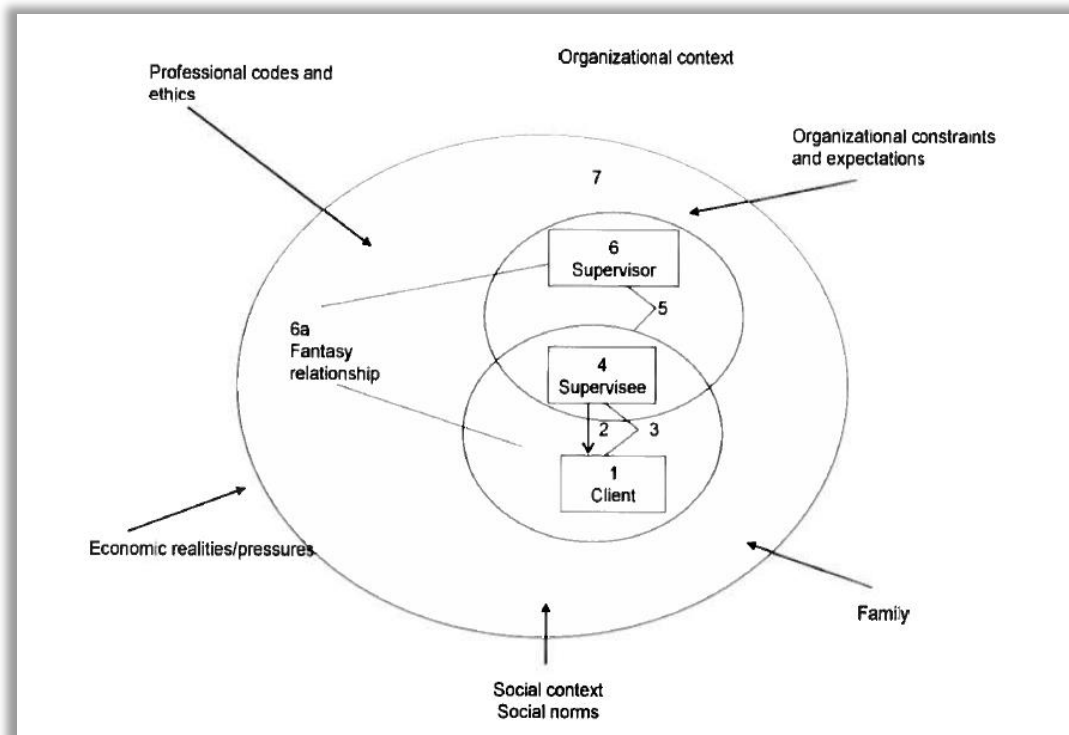
Hawkins first developed the CLEAR supervision model in the 1980s and has since developed it for coaching. It outlines a process of five typical stages (contract, listen, explore, action, review) of a supervision session summarised in Table 1 below:

Stage	Description
Contract	Establishing desired outcomes of what supervisee believes would be the most valuable use of that time. How will this end in mind be achieved?
Listen	Active listening to gain a personal insight and an understanding of the situation. By hearing themselves the supervisee makes new connections.
Explore	(1) Through questioning and reflection, the supervisee is supported in understanding the personal impact of the situation.
	(2) Through this awareness, new insight is generated and the supervisee is challenged to create new possibilities for ways to resolve the situation.
Action	Supervisee chooses and commits to first next steps.
Review	(1) Reviewing the agreed actions, the supervision process and how it will be reviewed in the future.
	(2) Debriefing actions taken at the next session.

**Table 1:** The CLEAR supervision model (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012)

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) also recommend the use of Heron's (1976) six categories of intervention (prescriptive, informative, confronting, cathartic, catalytic and supportive) to encourage a facilitating and enabling process (see Appendix A). They describe the levels operating in the process of supervision within two interlocking systems, the client-supervisee matrix and the supervisee-supervisor matrix. The 'client' here would typically be the service user e.g. a child or parent or pre-school professional, and the supervisee would be the FSKW. These two systems are each further divided in three modes depending on where the focus of attention is, plus a seventh mode that focuses on the wider context in which the work happens. The

seven modes and their corresponding areas of focus are summarised in Figure 1 and Table 2 below:



**Figure 1:** Hawkins and Shohet's (2012) seven-eyed model of supervision

The focus of each of the seven modes is outlined in Table 2 below:

Mode	Focus
1	Focus on the client and how they present
2	Exploration of the strategies and interventions used by the supervisee
3	Exploration of the relationship between the client and the supervisee
4	Focus on the supervisee
5	Focus on the supervisory relationship
6	The supervisor focusing on their own process
7	Focus on the wider context in which the work happens

**Table 2:** The seven modes of supervision (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012)

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) advocate that professionals take into consideration the developmental stages of both the supervisee and the supervisor (see Table 3 below).

Level	Supervisee's primary concern	Level	Supervisor characteristic behaviours
1	Self-centred - Can I make it work?	1	Anxious about whether I am doing the right thing. Over-doing expert role and advice.
2	Client centred - Can I help this client make it?	2	Awareness of complexity leading to 'go it alone' and not seeking support.
3	Process centred - How are we relating together?	3	Consistent motivation to improve performance.
4	Process in context centred - How do processes interpenetrate?	4	Can modify my style to supervisees of different levels of development and disciplines.

**Table 3:** Developmental stages of supervisee and supervisor as adapted from Hawkins and Shohet (2012)

They also identified three main functions of supervision that run parallel to those previously identified in the counselling and social work professions as summarised in Table 4 below:

Coaching	Counselling	Social work	Focus
Developmental	Formative	Educational	Developing skills, understanding and capacities of supervisee through reflection and exploration of their work.
Resourcing	Restorative	Supportive	Responding to how workers are allowing themselves to be affected by the distress, pain and fragmentation of the client and how this affects them and deal with any reactions. Not attending to these can lead to burnout.
Qualitative	Normative	Managerial	Quality control, to notice blind spots, areas of vulnerability and in keeping with ethical and professional standards.

**Table 4:** Functions of supervision as adapted from Hawkins & Shohet (2012)

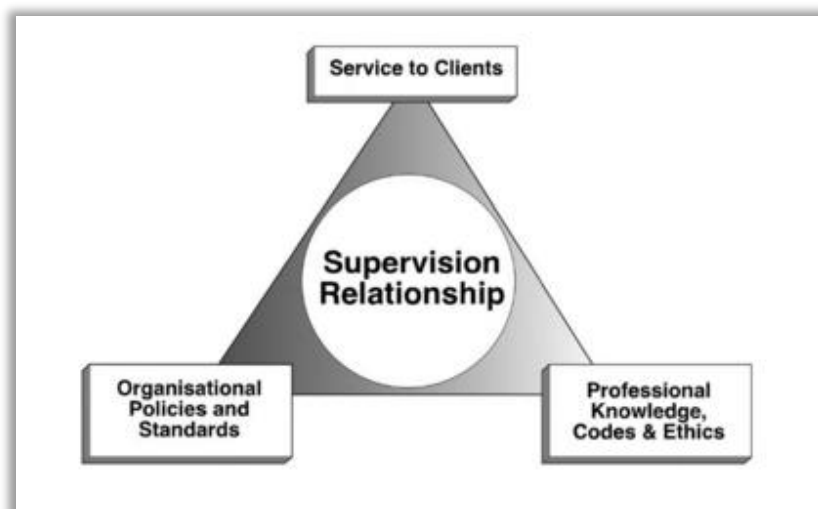


The authors emphasise the importance of careful contracting around the following key areas: practicalities, boundaries, working alliance, session format, organisational and professional context, taking notes, evaluation and review, supervisor and supervisee roles and responsibilities. Supervisors are also expected in any supervisory relationship to take ethical practice and decision making, cultural differences, as well as issues around potential power dynamics into account (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

The service also supplements the concepts from Hawkins and Shohet (2012) outlined above with some more principles from the solution focused approach (Knight, 2004), PCP (Kelly, 2002, 2003), and REBT (Dryden & David, 2008). Solution focused principles used include the assumption that the supervisees have the skills and resources within themselves, and tools such as scaling where the positive outcome becomes the focus of the conversation. PCP principles used include exploring core constructs to look for opportunities for development and change through questioning techniques such as laddering. REBT principles used include drawing on the idea that people might be disturbed by not things themselves, but the view they take on them and techniques such as Socratic questioning are used. This is where questioning is systematic, explores problems more deeply by exploring the plausibility of an issue and where the supervisee is guided to the knowledge they already have within (Elder & Paul, 1998).

Although, not explicitly named in the service, it seems fitting to add Davys and Beddoe's (2010) fourth function of supervision in addition to the three identified by Hawkins and Shohet (2012), that of cultural mediation. This is where the supervisor needs to mediate between the supervisee, the organisation they work for, and their

training body or a range of other stakeholders (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Davys and Beddoe (2010) present the functions of supervision against twelve evaluation criteria, suggesting a list of characteristics of supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010), one of many lists of characteristics and corresponding supervisor behaviours in the literature that will not be detailed here. The authors also viewed supervision as sitting in the framework pictured below, where the purpose of supervision is represented at the top of the diagram to improve a service to clients, and underpinned by the bottom two elements. The first being organisational policies and standards, and the second being professional knowledge, codes and ethics. The supervisory relationship is perceived as the medium through which the uppermost purpose of service to clients is achieved.



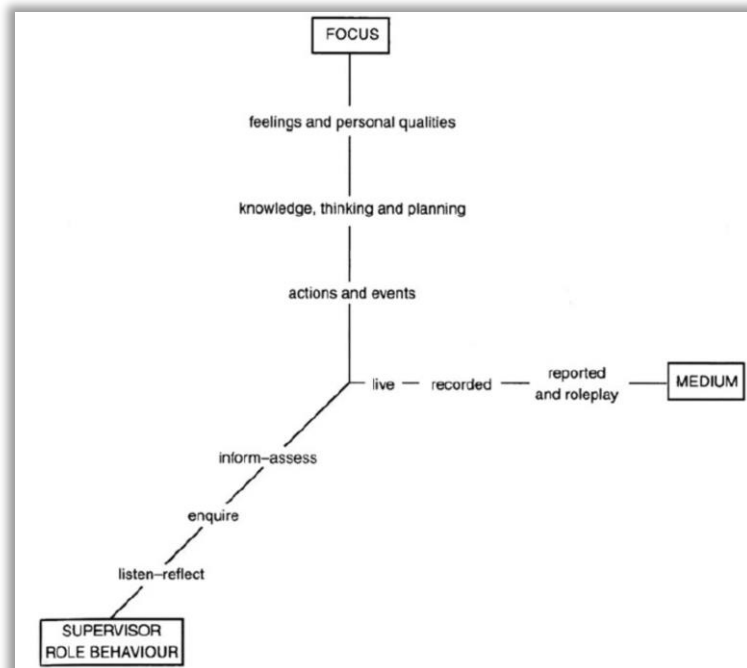
**Figure 2:** Overview of supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010, p. 49)

## 2.2 Other frameworks for supervision used in Educational Psychology

Three further models thought to be most used by EPs at the time of Dunsmuir et al.'s national survey (2015) will be considered next. One cannot fully rely on this study's identified models of supervision used due to the limitations of self-selected respondents to the survey, but it is believed this survey is the clearest available national representation available at this time.

### 2.2.1 The General Supervision Framework (GSF)

This is a model that addresses the process and content of supervision with a particular focus on the supervisor through three dimensions; supervisor role behaviour, supervisor focus and supervisory medium (see Figure 3 below).

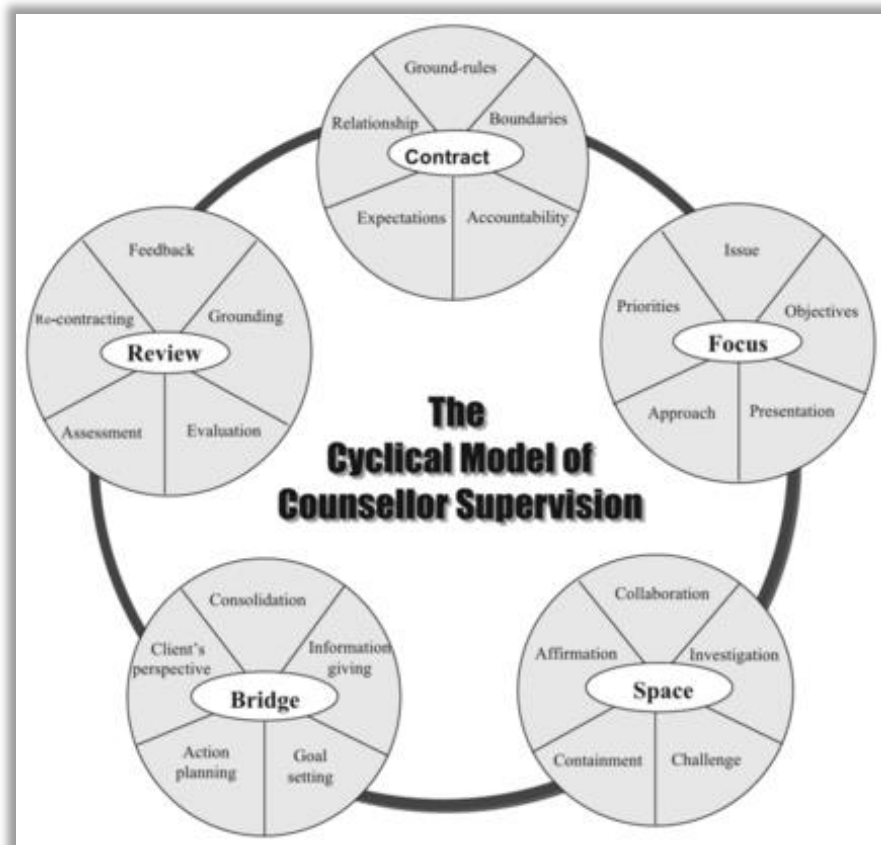


**Figure 3:** The General Supervision Framework (GSF) (Scaife, 2010; Scaife & Inskipp, 2001; Scaife et al., 2008)

Any of the three supervisor role behaviours (listen-reflect, enquire, inform-assess) used will vary and be preferable depending on the situation and might even be evoked by the supervisee (Scaife et al., 2008). The supervision focus dimension (feelings of personal qualities, knowledge, thinking and planning, actions and events) comprises of the planned and unplanned topics explored in supervision, and of which the choice of topic could come from a contribution of both supervisor and supervisees (Scaife et al., 2008). This might also be shaped by the model of therapy and the developmental stage of the supervisee (Scaife et al., 2008). The supervisory medium (reported and roleplay, recorded and live) is the information that underlies the content of what is discussed in supervision and is likely to be related to the theoretical model used by the supervisor and supervisee (Scaife et al., 2008). Scaife et al. (2008) suggest that if through reviewing, it is noticed that the role and focus of supervision is relatively fixed, more movement along the dimensions is encouraged.

### **2.2.2 The cyclical model of counsellor supervision**

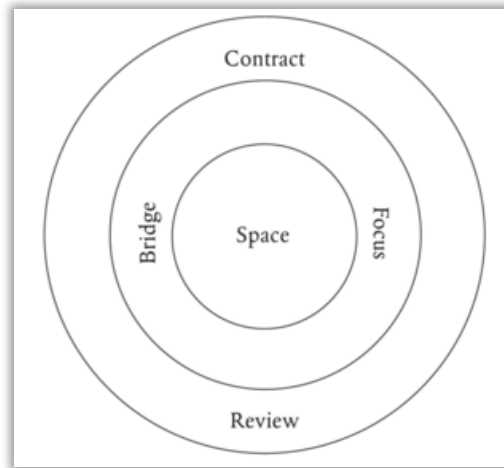
This model (see Figure 4 below) focuses on the structure of supervision that has been widely adopted in the fields of counselling, psychotherapy, clinical psychology and nursing (Page & Wosket, 2001). It proposes five stages and is quite similar to the CLEAR model discussed earlier in that it can support the movement through a session. It is not intended to be prescriptive, rigid or imply a seamless movement across stages, but by keeping the model in mind, it is intended that the aims and purpose of supervision remain intact and are addressed as best as possible.



**Figure 4:** The cyclical model of counsellor supervision (Page & Wosket, 2001)

The contracting stage addresses both the overall contracting of supervision, the relationship, the purpose and practicalities, as well as the more specific contracting that occurs at the beginning of each session, serving to offer clarity and agreement (Scaife et al., 2008). The focus stage refers to the issues brought for consideration and the prioritisation of these, and is expected to be determined by the supervisee (Page & Wosket, 2001). The space is where creative exploration takes place and is seen to be at the core of the process enabling new ideas and understandings to develop (Scaife et al., 2008). Using this understanding, the bridge is the transition to the consolidation of ideas to develop further and movement towards planning next steps (Scaife et al., 2008). The final reviewing stage involves feedback in relation to what was agreed at the contract stage and dynamically re-contracting if necessary (Scaife

et al., 2008). Page & Wosket (2001; Wosket & Page, 2001) also proposed the below (Figure 5) cyclical model as a container.



**Figure 5:** The cyclical model as a container (Page & Wosket, 2001; Wosket & Page, 2001)

They viewed the inner circle as the space where there is capacity for the most creativity, flexibility, spontaneity, and ambiguity (Page & Wosket, 2001; Wosket & Page, 2001). As you move towards the outer rings, more and more clarity and definition is necessary through the explicit contracting and reviewing, reflecting the ‘containing’ boundaries supervision works within (Page & Wosket, 2001; Wosket & Page, 2001).

### **2.3 A summary of the contribution of these frameworks**

In summary then, Hawkins and Shohet (2012) encourage professionals to consider the varying functions of supervision, to think in depth about stages and processes within supervision through the CLEAR model. They also encourage professionals to think about their intervention through questioning and recognise the developmental

journey both supervisees and supervisors are on. A key distinguishing feature of their framework is the seven-eyed model that brings to the fore the seven systems within which a supervisory dyad functions. On attending the service's supervision two-day training days, it was noticed how these ideas were new to some qualified EPs and that thinking about these systems introduced new ideas that they expressed were potentially applicable to their role not only as supervisors and supervisees, but also in other contexts of EP practice. Davys and Beddoe (2010) add to the functions of supervision by encouraging EPs to consider their role in mediating between relevant stakeholders, organisational policies and standards. The three dimensions in the GSF encourage fluidity in the focus, supervisor role behaviours and medium of supervision. Finally, the cyclical model looks more closely at the stages of supervision, but its distinctive feature is the model as container and the continuum between times when it is fitting to work more creatively and times when more clarity and definition is called for. These models will be considered in relation to the findings of this study and how supervisees say they experience supervision in the Discussion chapter.

#### **2.4 Systematic literature search**

The following question guided my review of the systematic literature search: What do we know about Educational Psychologists supervising other professionals?

In February 2016, I searched the following databases: 'PsycINFO', 'Education Source', 'Education Resource Information Centre (ERIC)', 'PsycArticles', 'Psychology' and 'Behavioral Sciences Collection', 'The PEP Archive' and 'SocINDEX with FullText'. The

following search terms: “Educational Psycholog\*”, “School Psycholog\*” and “School Counsel\*” were entered together with the Boolean ‘AND’, and the subject term ‘Supervis\*’. This allowed inclusion of variations of the terms with different endings and used for equivalent professionals internationally. Databases were searched individually, I used the field of ‘keyword’ for both terms. When this was not an option, I used the field ‘subject’, and when neither of the above were an option, I used the field ‘abstract’. The following limiters were also used: peer reviewed articles only and written in the English language. These searches using the above terms raised 328 articles in total, (181 of which were written post 2000). In addition to the above databases I searched the EThOS, Birmingham and Manchester repository for these but with more limited scope for search functions, I limited my search terms to “Educational Psychology” AND “supervision”. I also specifically looked at the publications of the journal of ‘Child and Educational Psychology’ that focused on supervision, namely the 1993 volume 10(2) and the 2015 volume 32(3). I also searched the term under field of subject ‘Supervis\*’ under the following three journals: Educational and Child Psychology, British Journal of Educational Psychology, and Educational Psychology in Practice. Finally, a ‘snowballing’ approach was used in order to search for further articles of relevance by looking through the references of the studies identified thus far.

I read the titles of all these results and applied inclusion and exclusion criteria (see Appendix B) to determine which were most relevant to my literature review question. When the title was ambiguous to what the focus of the study was, I read the abstract, and if the abstract was also ambiguous I perused through the article itself. In total,



seven relevant studies and four theses were found to make a contribution to my question of: What do we know about Educational Psychologists supervising other professionals? See the Table 5 below outlining the resulting studies. Three broad issues of what the results are, whether these results are valid and whether they will help locally are need to be considered when appraising the report of a qualitative research. The Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) (2014) proposes ten questions to help think about these issues systematically taking into account methodology, reliability and validity of the studies. These are then used to make a value judgement on the studies (see Appendix C for how this value weighting was reached). The most relevant findings are reviewed and limitations considered next.

Author(s) (year)	Title	Supervisee roles	Individual or Group	Amount of supervision accessed	Design	CASP rating (see Appendix C)
Soni (2010) thesis	Educational Psychology work in children's centres: a realistic evaluation of group supervision with Family Support Workers	Family support workers (FSWs) and their managers	Group	0 to 5 sessions	Realistic evaluation	***
Soni (2013) published article of above thesis	Group supervision: Supporting practitioners in their work with children and families in children centres.					
Garwood (2012) thesis	Becoming an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA): exploring the relationship between training, supervision and self-efficacy.	Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)	Group	Minimum of 6 2-hourly sessions (12 hours), twice termly	Questionnaires and interviews	***
Soni (2015)	A case study on the use of group supervision with learning mentors	Learning mentors	Group	Minimum of 9 sessions, termly i.e. 3 per year	Group case study	***

Madeley (2014) thesis	What do Early Years education and care staff value in professional supervision? A Q-methodological study	Early Years (EY) education and care staff	Not stated	Not reported	Focus group and Q methodology	***
Osborne & Burton (2014)	Emotional Literacy Support Assistants' views on supervision provided by Educational Psychologists (EPs): what EPs can learn from group supervision	Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs)	Group	2 hours every half term. Period of time not reported.	Questionnaires	***
Callicott (2011) thesis then published as Callicott & Leadbetter (2013)	An investigation of factors involved when Educational Psychologists supervise other professionals	Specialist early years (EY) teachers	Individual and group	Not reported	Individual semi-structured interviews	***
Dunsmuir, Lang & Leadbetter (2015)	Current trends in Educational Psychology supervision in the UK	Mixture e.g. Portage workers, therapists, teachers and teaching assistants.	Individual and group	Mixture	National online survey	***
Maxwell (2015)	A reflection on the work of an Educational Psychologist in providing supervision for a team of community based support Workers, Supporting Families with Vulnerable Adolescents at Risk of Exclusion from School	Community based support workers	Group	1 year, 2 hours monthly	A reflection	N/A
Bartle & Trevis (2015)	An evaluation of group supervision in a specialist provision supporting young people with mental health needs: A social constructionist perspective.	Key workers (non-teaching staff) with a pastoral role in a specialist provision.	Group	Fortnightly over one academic year (an estimate of 19 sessions)	Evaluation with focus group and thematic analysis	***
Hulusi & Maggs (2015)	Containing the containers: Work Discussion Group supervision for teachers – a psychodynamic approach.	Teachers in special secondary school for young people with autism.	Group	Weekly for a term (an estimate of 12 sessions)	Exploration using psychodynamic theory	N/A

**Table 5:** An outline of the studies identified in the systematic literature search

## 2.5 Review and critique of identified studies

**Soni (2010, 2013)** completed a doctoral thesis that was then published into an article involved a realistic evaluation alongside a single case study to explore mechanisms, context and outcomes of group supervision of Family Support Workers (FSWs). The article published does not name EPs as the professionals, but knowing that it was based on the Educational Psychology doctoral course of study and that the author is a Senior EP, this study was included in this review. A realistic interview schedule was used with twelve FSWs and three managers working at the same children's centres. Out of the twelve FSWs, seven had attended between two to five group supervision sessions, four had attended one session, and one had not attended any.

Soni coded the interviews in line with the three functions of supervision: educative, supportive and managerial. She identified an additional educative outcome beyond those found in the literature of gaining the perspectives and views of others. She also identified additional supportive outcomes beyond those found in the literature; that of supporting the development of team relationships as well as wanting to listen and help others in the group. Overall, Soni found positive outcomes of group supervision to outweigh the negative outcomes and concluded that group supervision can be an effective way of supporting FSWs working in children's centres.

Soni recommended that EPs consider the contractual arrangements and support of the managers, in particular around how confidentiality will be managed, the working agreement with participants and the approach of the supervisor. Soni also

recommended that the confidence level of participants, their experience, their time availability and their openness to new ideas be reflected on, as these could each be positive mechanisms or inhibiting factors. Contextual features that can also be determining of the uptake and benefit of supervision included the emotionally demanding profession, the need to share and talk, and a shared goal.

Soni focused on descriptive particulars of this context that can be considered and reflected on, and wanted to capture the views of both those who were and were not participating in supervision. It was valuable in recognising newly found supportive and educative functions, in identifying the importance of contextual features and appreciating the impact of both positive and inhibiting factors. A primary criticism of this study is that the author had both the role of group supervisor and that of researcher, enhancing the effect of a social desirability bias. In addition, the views of the participants are limited from the notably small number of sessions (0-5) they engaged in.

**Callicott (2011)** completed a doctoral thesis that led to the published article authored by **Callicott and Leadbetter (2013)**. This study considerably influenced the direction of this research. Semi-structured interviews were used with six EPs comprising of 19 questions formulated from existing literature. The EPs were supervising specialist Early Years teachers, an outreach worker, or were engaged in group supervision involving other professionals including Special Educational Needs Coordinators (SENCOs), Family Support Workers (FSWs) and an Educational Welfare Officer (EWO). They also interviewed four of the supervisees who were all specialist Early Years (EY)

teachers. Three of the participants were involved in group supervision, and seven in individual supervision. How long they were engaged in supervision for is not reported.

A thematic analysis generated four meta-themes:

- (1) Key contextual factors influencing the supervision process
- (2) The importance of the contract and the contracting process
- (3) Key elements of supervision (supervisory relationship, the skills the EP brought to their role as supervisor, models of supervision, group supervision)
- (4) The review process

It was concluded that inter-professional supervision is potentially both more beneficial and more challenging for supervisors and supervisees. Whilst there are increased opportunities for new perspectives and reflection, assumptions rooted in professional histories may create tensions. The use of a model to bring in consistency, supporting the contracting and reviewing processes is encouraged.

This study is valuable in being the first to address some of the fundamental issues that need to be taken into consideration for inter-professional supervision. It was also one of the first to include individual supervision. A limitation of this study is that it is not reported how long the participants had been engaged in supervision for and so how much supervision they accessed, although this question seemed to be in the interview transcript. A further weakness that was recognised is that whether the supervision was in a group or individual, this was not known before interview and therefore not considered during recruitment. It was also acknowledged that the research may be

prone to bias as EPs may have viewed some of the questions relating to the effectiveness of the EPs when acting as supervisors, as threatening.

**Garwood (2012)** explored the relationship between an Emotional Literacy Support Assistant (ELSA) training programme, supervision and self-efficacy of Support Assistants in an outer London borough. Twenty six participants attended a minimum of four group supervision sessions that lasted two hours and ran twice termly as part of the training, and then a minimum of two further group supervision sessions post training. The group size ranged from five to seven and was led by an EP. They completed two self-efficacy questionnaires, one self-esteem measure and also engaged in a semi-structured interview that was analysed using grounded theory.

Garwood was able to tentatively conclude that in this context, supervision increased participants' feelings of general self-efficacy and competency. These findings are tentative due to lack of ability to determine causal relationships and a lack of a control group. The means by which this happened is attributed to the following components: the experiential component and ongoing nature where experiences of working with students was brought to the group supervision sessions; the supportive nature that reassured and maintained realistic expectations that helped manage feelings of self-doubt and responsibility; the time and space to reflect on their work, questioning and thinking critically; the 'expert' input that helped bridge theory and practice; and the authentication and validation the access to training from an outside agency offered.

Garwood raises the interesting, and perhaps less explored issue of a power imbalance that this 'expert' input reflects. This is in parallel to the potential empowering effect that a training programme like this with a supervision component can have on promoting learning and professional development. Limitations of this study include the validity of the questionnaires used, the response bias that might have led to higher measures and the lack of follow-up. The generalisability of the findings is also recognised as the sample was not intended to be representative of the population but for the construction of theory.

**Maxwell (2013)** met monthly with four community based support workers of an Adolescent Support Team and their team leader for a two hour supervision session over a year. This set-up had consultative and peer supervision elements to it, with a collaborative and joint problem solving approach as Maxwell used several theoretical frameworks to inform the meetings.

Maxwell reported that the key workers valued the protected time and space for in depth analysis and the opportunity to share concerns. The professional development through explicit psychology and appreciation of context within cases was also valued. Maxwell also believed that a collaborative approach allowed for creative problem solving. Challenges included the building up of trust, the development of a common language and the key worker's adjustment to the EP role as that of consultant and facilitator rather than expert. Maxwell concludes with promoting EPs to work creatively in multi-agency settings to promote the psychological skills, knowledge and understanding of professionals.

**Osborne and Burton (2014)** studied the views of 270 Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) about the group supervision they were receiving from EPs. In particular, the authors were interested in their views about the quantity and the quality of supervision, i.e. the extent to which it met their needs. The authors were also interested in the ELSAs' perceptions of the impact they viewed it to have on the children who were receiving ELSA support and in the wider school community. In addition, the authors also sought to find out the views of ELSAs on the perceived additional benefits associated with group supervision. The supervision offered was in the form of two hours every half term in a group of up to eight ELSAs. The questionnaire had a 43% response rate and the results were analysed using thematic analysis. It is not reported what the range of hours of supervision experienced by the participants was and over what period of time.

The quantity of supervision was perceived as suitable and ELSAs viewed supervision as an opportunity to gain advice and new ideas, as well as emotional support. Most felt that their needs were being met. In considering the relationship between supervision and its impact on practice, the authors acknowledged the difficulty in making a firm link between support provided during supervision and any eventual change in practice. It was nevertheless concluded that supervision was perceived to have a beneficial impact on ELSAs' personal and professional development in relation to their knowledge, skills and awareness, confidence and increased status. Specifically, ELSAs felt supervision offered insight, learning of new resources and strategies, and confidence to directly apply these.



A strength of this study is the large number of participants' views that were gained where supervision was relatively established in the region. Although the dual-role of an EP as link EP to the school and supervising ELSAs is acknowledged, a limitation of this study is that one of the authors had personally invested in the set-up of the ELSA projects in the local authority encompassing this supervision. In addition, there are limitations of using a questionnaire that also need to be considered: the accuracy of responses, the difference between what people say they do and what they actually do, and the non-response bias i.e. what are the views of those who didn't respond and do they differ greatly from those who did?

**Madeley (2014)** used Q-methodology to elicit the co-constructed views of 30 early years and care staff about what aspects of professional supervision they value. Three factors expressing differing viewpoints were elicited:

- (1) I am autonomous, independent and skilled in my work. Reflection on emotions and personal issues or values is not appreciated as part of supervision. Who the supervisor is and what they do/how they do it, is critical.
- (2) Supervision is a time to build skills, increase my confidence and solve problems.
- (3) Supervision needs to be collaborative; respectful of my experience and capabilities. I know my job and do not want decisions to be made for me. (Madeley, 2014, p. 69).

This revealed a strong need for the autonomy and competency of a supervisee to be acknowledged.

A strength of this study is its attempt to include the views of those who both were and were not being supervised. A notable limitation to this study is that only 5 of the

30 of the participants taking part in the Q-sort stage of the research were engaging in supervision at the time of the study. Another significant flaw of this study is the lack of information and clarity about the nature and the quantity of supervision the participants had accessed, for example, was it a regular session or one-off arrangement? Was it individual or in a group? It is important to have a clearer picture of the contextual arrangements.

**Soni (2015)** published a case study around learning mentors being supervised in a group by the author who worked or had worked as an EP. These supervision sessions were once a term, with group attendance varying from between three and ten learning mentors from four schools and lasted the duration of three years. Therefore, each learning mentor would have attended a maximum of nine supervision sessions over the three years. The approach drew on three sources of information, a focus group with six learning mentors, analysis of records from sessions and questionnaires from five learning mentors in the first year.

Soni's findings confirmed that supervision was perceived as beneficial to participants, with outcomes primarily being around the educative functions of supervision, for example the sharing of materials as that had an increasing emphasis over time. The professional contract was considered key in enabling attendance and commitment to the supervision sessions.

This study highlights the educative functions of supervision and the contract as key. Soni's three roles as EP, facilitator of the groups and as researcher influence the

vested interest she might have in positive outcomes. The confidentiality and anonymity of the participants was also limited and is likely to have influenced the potential for bias. Soni also acknowledges limitations around the validity and reliability of this approach, in particular the coding of the data which may have benefitted from third party involvement. However, she used an interesting approach and triangulated three different types of data.

**Bartle and Trevis (2015)** evaluated the work of two EPs who met with a group of key workers in a specialist setting for young people with mental health needs, on a fortnightly basis over one academic year. Key workers were introduced to and offered a choice of four models that the problem-presenter could use: a solution circle (O'Brien, Forest, & Pearpoint, 1996), a process consultation (Farouk, 2004), a reflecting team (Chang, 2010) and Balint groups (Balint, Courtenay, Elder, Hull, & Julian, 1993). Although other studies that offered an insight into these models per se were included, this study was included because the author identified it as 'supervision'.

All key workers took part in the focus group in which five questions offered semi-structured prompts. These were thematically analysed using a six-stage process to reveal three super-ordinate themes: process, impact and practicalities.

Sub-ordinate themes included an honesty and openness that promoted acceptance, validation, exploration, an opportunity for communication and struggle. With struggle, supervision seemed to offer a "critical stance towards taken-for-granted

knowledge” (Bartle & Trevis, 2015, p. 85). Supervision offered an opportunity for shared explorations of constructions, suggesting potential for change through this increased self-awareness. With this there was also the identification of solutions and recognition of change. The shared understanding improved communication and cohesion within the team, promoting belonging and competence. The themes of protected time, a choice of models to use, bringing prepared cases, recording and the opportunity to review arose as considerations that are invited. Overall, the support was valued and perceived to have a positive impact.

A strength of his study is how it considered the process, impact and practicalities in more depth, in particular the more delicate but critical issues of acceptance, validation, self-awareness and the struggle that can contribute to change. The authors recognised the limitation that the focus group was conducted by the same EPs who led this small-scale project introducing a risk of bias and could be further supported with triangulation of evidence.

**Hulusi and Maggs (2015)** explored how Work Discussion Groups (WDGs) based on psychodynamic theory might be used with teachers in a special secondary school for young people with autism as a method of professional supervision. This WDG ran weekly for a term. The authors distinguish WDGs from other support groups due the consultant’s role in facilitating the group’s reflection on the psychodynamic (parallel or reflective) aspects of the group process rather than just focusing on reaching a solution. These observations are intended to improve the perceptions of the group, promoting better understanding of the interactions and emotional factors between

the child and adults. The authors note the importance of the facilitator making notes and being supervised to help process and make sense of what they were required to contain in the group, through attending to the parallel process. The authors conclude that the application of a psychodynamic framework through supervision groups is a valuable way to support teachers to make sense of experiences that they can struggle to make sense of. This in turn can improve their resilience to the emotional challenges and demands they face daily.

This paper makes a significant contribution to raising awareness of the ability for an EP to explicitly apply psychodynamic theory to their practice. This was witnessed in person in the EPS where a Senior EP used this paper to encourage the use of this potential way of working in the team. A limitation of this paper is its ability to address ways to overcome the challenges EPs experience in applying psychodynamic theory to their work more readily, some of which are political, cultural and historical.

**Dunsmuir, Lang and Leadbetter (2015)** used an online semi-structured survey comprised of both multiple choice and open questions to capture a snapshot of EP supervision practices nationally. They analysed the responses of 246 EPs using content analysis and found that 28.6% of EPs who responded were supervising professionals in settings outside of their workplace as discussed in the introduction. This reflects a widening of the EP role, remit and contribution to the education sector.

The response rate to this survey was one of the largest of the studies reviewed and provides valuable information about the types of models that are currently being used

in supervision, the contracting and purpose of supervision, as well as the various settings and practical arrangements that are currently in place. The authors recognise that the voluntary nature of the survey means that the self-selecting responses may have led to a positive bias and that some of the questions may have been restrictive and some of qualitative information lost in that.

## **2.6 Recommendations for future research identified from literature**

What might constitute a good-enough supervisory relationship has been identified as needing further investigation (Bartle, 2015; Veach, 2001). Dunsmuir et al. (2015) recommend that research could offer a clearer picture of how particular frameworks and models help and hinder supervision. Dunsmuir et al. (2015) and Ayres et al. (2015) both suggest that an important issue to address is determining the evidence of impact of professional supervision, which presents a similar challenge to measuring the impact of EP consultations.

The more complex practice of inter-professional supervision, its impact across two organisational and individual contexts and the different conceptualisations affecting the supervision process, also demands further research (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). In some cases, line-managers are also involved in commissioning supervision, adding a further dimension where the different expectations can create tension leading to the withholding of information, the desire to give 'the right answer' and a reduction in professional confidence (Callicott & Leadbetter, 2013). Callicott (2011) recommended further research that could address the challenges from the strain

placed on the supervisory relationship due to the different experiences and assumptions of stakeholders rooted in professional and individuals' histories. Callicott and Leadbetter (2013) also proposed that further research could explore elements of supervision such as contracting, that alleviate tensions and increase the feelings of safety, creating space for reflection. The authors also propose that research should be aimed at making localised improvements in supervision, bridging the gap between academic research and applied practice, as is the aim of this study.

## **2.7 Conclusions and implications of systematic literature review**

The question of the systematic literature review was 'What do we know about Educational Psychologists supervising other professionals?' Most published studies thus far have been based on group supervision arrangements. It is recognised in this literature (e.g. Osborne & Burton, 2014) and other literature outside this review that there are notable differences between group and individual supervision (e.g. Rawlings & Cowell, 2015). The studies conclude that even just very few sessions of group supervision is perceived to have a number of benefits outweighing negative outcomes. Examples include the value of the supportive reflective space, insight and learning supervision offered as well as the importance of contracting and reviewing. In the above studies, the exploration of the richness of the process and experience has been limited by the methods of data collection and analysis. In addition, the majority of the researchers have held a dual role as both researchers and the EPs offering supervision.

Inter-professional supervision over a long period of time, and in particular individual inter-professional supervision, has not been researched at a level of deep enough for robust conclusions to be made. A deeper exploration of the experiences of supervisees for whom both psychological theory and supervision is not usually embedded in their training and practice, is key to improving our understanding of the influence EPs can have on professionals with whom they can establish working relationships.

Direct causal outcomes of the impact of supervision on service users are historically recognised as being particularly hard to determine and measure due to a vast potential of intervening variables that need to be taken into account. The ambiguous definitions and the multiple hypotheses around the processes of supervision also make outcomes hard to attribute to specific elements of the process (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Perhaps this is why researchers continue to focus on the descriptive perceptions of supervisees using tools such as questionnaires and rating scales, rather than exploring experiences in greater depth. Smythe, MacCulloch and Charmley (2009, pp. 17, 18) remind us that the:

‘Lived experience’ is often overshadowed by theories, structures, models, knowledge and standards...Complex, intuitive, embodied ways of ‘being’ are reduced to something that can be pinned down, followed, and evaluated. Here then comes the risk of silencing the spirit that breathes soul into human-to-human experience (Smythe et al., 2009, pp. 17–18).

The aim of this study is to add depth and enhance our insight of the lived experience of the less explored area of inter-professional supervision with EPs that the studies reviewed above do not address, namely, individual supervision over an extended



period of time. By using the methodology chosen for this study, it is the intention to go beyond the descriptive, interpreting the descriptions of the participants' 'human-to-human' experiences in order to enrich our understanding and consider the process and experience of supervision in more depth in this context. Whilst no attempt will be made to find causal attributes or measure direct outcomes of those with whom the supervisees work with due to the complexities recognised above, gaining further insight into their lived experience is needed and is currently lacking in the literature. The impact of supervision on the supervisees themselves is of particular interest as this could potentially inform the future individual practice of EPs supervising other professionals, national and local guidelines, and future supervision training for EP supervisors. This in turn creates the potential to generate further research into processes and mechanisms.

### **3.0 METHODOLOGY**

The purpose of the study will be summarised next, as will the ontological and epistemological position of the researcher. This will justify the rationale for choosing a qualitative methodology and Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as guiding the methods of data collection and analysis that best fits the aims of this study. The method of collecting data will be detailed alongside the rationale behind each step, and how this information is then used to arrive at the findings. The underlying principles of IPA will be discussed and then how these principles are implemented through the use of IPA in the local context.

#### **3.1 Purpose**

The literature review has demonstrated that there is a need to further explore individual inter-professional supervision over an extended time with EPs as supervisors. The context in which this research took place provides a unique opportunity to access the insights of supervisees' experiences of individual inter-professional supervision over an extended time. Whilst the possibility of exploring supervision dyads was explored, there were contextual limitations to the duration of these supervisory relationships. As a way to exploit the access to the unique longevity of the experiences of individual supervision in this context, this study will focus on the supervisees and their experiences of supervision as a whole over this extended period time, rather than exploring individual supervisory relationships through both the EPs and supervisees.

The aim of this study therefore, is to explore the lived experience of FSKWs engaging in inter-professional supervision with EPs. It endeavours to complement the findings that have been reported in previous studies through the researcher's interpretation of participant's descriptions in order to deepen our understanding of how participants experience and make sense of it with the ultimate aim of informing EP practice.

### **3.2 Research questions**

The aim of the study is conveyed through the following primary research question: What are the experiences of FSKWs engaging in supervision with EPs? In addition, following four questions further narrow down the focus of this study:

1. How is this supervisory relationship experienced by FSKWs?
2. How is this perceived to differ from other types of supervision FSKWs receive within the team?
3. What influence is this perceived to have in relation to FSKWs' personal and professional development?
4. What impact do FSKWs perceive this to have on their practice?

### **3.3 The position of the researcher**

A researcher is required to take an ontological position about their belief of the nature of reality and being. This position can be broadly viewed to lie within a dichotomous continuum where at one end is the realist or objective view of one true world and reality that exists independent of human belief that is to be found (Fox, Martin, &

Green, 2007). At the other end is a relativist, or individually constructed world where reality can never truly be known as it is made up of the individual's unique experiences and how they make meaning or construct the world (Fox et al., 2007). Epistemology is modelled on ontology, and is concerned with the nature of knowledge and how knowledge can be acquired. Epistemology can be viewed to have a dichotomous continuum that runs parallel to the ontological continuum. At the realist end of the ontological continuum, the respective epistemological position is that of a positivist, which believes that knowledge is 'value-free' and states that the world is observable and measurable (Fox et al., 2007). At the relativist end of the ontological continuum, the respective epistemological position is that of social constructionism where meanings are constructed from interactions between people, emphasising the role of culture, society, discourse and language.

Constructivism falls between the realist and relativist positions, where the person's individual experience of reality and the individually constructed world is one that can be revealed through research, also recognised as a phenomenological approach (Fox et al., 2007). Creswell (2014) states that constructivist researchers inductively generate a pattern of meaning, rather than starting with a theory that shapes the interpretation of a study's findings. An implication of this position is that once the researcher becomes engaged in the process, it is no longer an individual construction, but researcher and participant together form a co-construction. The researcher therefore needs to be aware of how they construct the world and be transparent about this through reflexivity.

As inter-professional supervision in this context involves relationships between two people and multiple variables outside that relationship, the relativist ontological position and the epistemological position of constructivism is adopted. This position focuses on how individuals construct and make sense of the world and considers that there are as many realities as there are participants, including that of the researcher (Robson, 2011). In agreement with Callicott (2011), I perceive supervision as being primarily a personal experience involving two people constructing the experience in unique ways. I believe that the view and experiences of the supervisee can further contribute to our understanding of this phenomenon and the perceived impact of this supervisory relationship. I am therefore aiming to research the individually constructed worldview of the participants, but accept the position that as researcher I also become part of a co-construction with the participant, recognising my interactive and dynamic role as researcher (Brocki & Wearden, 2006).

Taking into account then my ontological and epistemological position as researcher, the aims and purpose of this study, as well and the phenomenon of supervision, I conclude that Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as adopted by Smith et al. (2009) is the method of analysis that is most suited to achieve these aims.

### **3.4 Rationale of method of analysis chosen**

IPA distinguishes itself from the following two alternative constructivist approaches that I considered to address my research questions: a pure phenomenological approach, and grounded theory. A key difference between IPA and Amadeo Giorgi's

(2010) phenomenological approach is that Giorgi's approach is primarily descriptive, embracing commonality in experience and generating an integrated picture or structure of the phenomenon (Smith et al., 2009). In contrast, IPA seeks to capture the richness of each participant's experience through interpretation (Smith et al., 2009). I considered grounded theory as an abductive approach to data collection and analysis where researchers aim to generate a theoretical account of a phenomenon and therefore require a larger sampling pool until saturation of the theory is reached. In comparison to IPA, grounded theory researchers are quicker to generalise, whereas IPA is committed to the texture and depth of the individual experience. Both aforementioned alternative approaches adopt a nomothetic approach with a focus on commonality of experiences and group averages, whereas IPA adopts a commitment to individuals and the particular, known as idiography. With all of the above alternate methodologies I considered, I believed that IPA would better answer my research questions as in line with my constructivist position, I am committed to the individuality and uniqueness of each person's meaning-making.

IPA endeavours to enable the experience to be expressed in its own terms, to 'go back to the things themselves' as Husserl wrote, rather than be limited to predefined ideas (Smith et al., 2009). It is designed to describe a rich and comprehensive understanding of the texture and quality of a phenomenon (Willig, 2013). IPA concerns itself with experiences of significant events, decisions or transitions and how people might come to make sense of these (Smith et al., 2009). In considering supervision and the significance of it, I reflected on the influence I felt it had in my own development and training. When initially asking the EPs and discovering that some FSKWs had

potentially been accessing, and continued to access, supervision with psychologists for fifteen years when it was first commissioned, I was more confident that the experience was likely to be accepted as both well-established, significant, and worth exploring further.

### **3.5 Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA)**

IPA has been informed by the following three key underpinning philosophical concepts: phenomenology, hermeneutics and idiography (Smith et al., 2009). The underlying principles and corresponding criticisms that require consideration during the implementation of this study are discussed next.

#### **3.5.1 Phenomenology**

Phenomenology has philosophical roots and is concerned with examining and understanding the lived experience in its own terms and in its own right. The philosopher Husserl encourages us to 'go back to' the essence of 'the things themselves' (Smith et al., 2009). Phenomenology as a lifeworld epistemology posits that each individual will respond to a stimulus differently, claiming the lived and experienced world is more than the world itself, and more than the subject itself (Dahlberg, Dahlberg, & Nyström, 2007).

Heidegger, initially a student of Husserl, viewed the person as always within a context or 'being-in-the-world' and so challenged the possibility of any knowledge or

meaning-making outside of an interpretative stance (Smith et al., 2009, pp. 17–18). Philosopher Merleau-Ponty added that our embodied nature is our means of communicating with and central to our experience of the world and so therefore we can never entirely share the experience of the other (Smith et al., 2009). Another philosopher, Sartre, extends this further to state that we are better able to make sense of our experiences when they are seen within an interpersonal context (Smith et al., 2009).

Smith et al. (2009) summarise that our ‘being-in-the-world’ is personal to each of us, but is simultaneously a property of our relationships to the world and others. Therefore our attempts to understand other people’s meaning-making is necessarily interpretative. This is in contrast to discourse analysts who look to find out about how participants construct accounts rather than how they make sense of their experiences (Smith, 2011a).

### **3.5.2 Hermeneutics**

“Hermeneutics is the theory of interpretation” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 21) originating from the interpretation of texts. The interpretative element of IPA distinguishes itself from other phenomenological approaches that maintain a descriptive focus (Shinebourne, 2011). A writer on hermeneutics, Schleiermacher, argues that interpretation involves intuition with an aim to understand the writer as well as the text that goes beyond the explicit claims made by the writer (or in this case the participants). Phenomenology is concerned with understanding the phenomenon as



it appears to show itself to us (Smith, 2011a). As we all have prior experiences that relate to a phenomenon, Smith et al. (2011a) propose that we can only partially bracket those pre-conceptions and must maintain an open and reflexive stance. They add to this that interpretation is determined by the moment in time at which it is made, so the past is seen in light of the present (Smith et al., 2009).

The hermeneutic circle is a dynamic relationship where “the part is interpreted in relation to the whole; the whole is interpreted in relation to the part” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). In IPA, a researcher moves backwards and forwards between the two offering a different perspective with each move, and calls for a cyclical approach to reflexivity (Smith et al., 2009).

IPA involves a double hermeneutic (Smith, 2004). This is where the researcher is using his own “experientially-informed lens” to make sense of the participant’s reporting of how they make sense of the phenomenon resulting in a “second-order” meaning-making (Smith et al., 2009, p. 36). IPA acknowledges that the researcher and the participants will view the phenomenon from different perspectives and that there is a tension within this (Wagstaff et al., 2014). In the findings section, I intend for the reader to be able to hear the voice of the participants and my interpretation to remain clear and distinct from this. By being explicit, this aids comprehensiveness and respectfulness to both perspectives (Wagstaff et al., 2014). I also recognise that an additional triple hermeneutic is created when researching lived experience, that of the reader’s interpretation of this study (van Manen, 1997).

As a final point on hermeneutics, IPA adopts both the hermeneutics of empathy and suspicion where the researcher tries to understand what it is like as best as possible, but also analyses, questions and puzzles over what is reported (Smith et al., 2009). As Smith et al. (2009, p. 37) conclude, “without the phenomenology, there would be nothing to interpret; without the hermeneutics, the phenomenon would not be seen”.

### **3.5.3 Idiography**

Idiography is concerned with attention to the particular, depth and detail of analysis (Smith et al., 2009). IPA’s idiographic focus distinguishes itself from other phenomenological approaches (Shinebourne, 2011). IPA differs from grounded theory approaches in its focus on personal experiences rather than social processes and is suited to complexity (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Whilst each experience is of a particular perspective, uniquely embodied and in a particular context, it is also related to the world and can simultaneously bring us closer to the general or the universal (Smith et al., 2009). Therefore IPA moves to look at similarities and differences across cases, looking at both divergence and convergence, maintaining the individuality of each voice, as Schleiermacher quotes, “everyone carries a minimum of everyone else within himself” (Schleiermacher, 1998 cited in Smith et al., 2009, p.38).

### 3.5.4 A critique of IPA

Having explained my rationale and the underlying principles of IPA, some criticisms of IPA as an approach need to be noted. Giorgi (2010) criticises Smith et al.'s (2009) proposed IPA approach around their contradiction in suggesting steps to follow yet allowing unlimited flexibility for a researcher to move away from these as they see appropriate. Giorgi also adds that scientific methods require consistency and intersubjectivity rather than the personal approach Smith et al. (2009) imply. Giorgi argues that a method personalised by each researcher leaves room for potential selectivity and bias that goes against the purpose of scientific procedures. For this reason, it is important to demonstrate reflexivity and offer transparency so a reader is able to then make their own judgements about any potential selectivity and biases. Giorgi goes further to suggest that the IPA Smith et al. (2009) propose would be more accurately named if it was called "Individualistic Experiential Analysis" (Giorgi, 2010, p. 10) due to the wide variability in the process and the descriptions between individual researchers. The dualistic tension between maintaining the idiographic focus and seeing connections between themes across participants is a prevalent dilemma in the literature around this approach (Wagstaff et al., 2014).

Smith et al. (2009) argue that IPA is an approach that is easy to do badly and difficult to do well. The value of any novice IPA researcher having supervision or close communication with other researchers that are familiar with the approach is emphasised. Finlay (2009) also encourages that given the adaptability of a

phenomenological researcher, researchers need to decide whether they are going to treat phenomenology as a science, or as an art, or as I would agree with, both.

### **3.6 Design**

In this section I will describe how I implemented IPA in the context of this study and my thought processes behind the decisions demonstrating the researcher reflexivity and transparency.

#### **3.6.1 Context of the study**

In the service within which I was conducting my research, FSKWs are currently offered one hour of supervision once every half term. This was historically variable across the service, and in some cases up to one and a half hours. The offer then became a consistent, one hour across the areas in 2012, and is an offer taken up on a voluntary basis. Other professionals have also been accessing individual supervision in the service such as Behaviour Support Workers, Autism Support Workers, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisors. FSKWs have had the longest established relationship of supervision with EPs since the year 2000. This was an important consideration in line with my purpose of this research of offering a deeper insight into the experience.

I sought to select the FSKWs who had the longest experiences of supervision as I believed they would be in the best position to offer a valuable insight into this particular experience and the research questions I intend to address. This is consistent

with IPA, which promotes the purposive and homogenous sampling of participants. It is anticipated that the participants will “represent a perspective” (Smith et al. 2009, p. 49) reflecting IPA’s commitment to the idiographic approach. In selecting a number of participants, for professional doctorates, Smith et al. (2009) recommend between four and ten interviews, in order not to limit the time needed to analyse the data and to maintain the richness and attention each interview warrants. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were therefore needed in order to support my selection of participants.

Initially I needed to consider the context and teams within which I was conducting my research. Following ethical approval (see Appendix D) I sought permission from each of the Deputy Principal EPs (DPEP) (area managers) and the pre-school area managers from the Specialist Teacher Teams (see Appendix F) by sending them an outline of the research (see Appendix E). All area managers gave consent to this research being conducted in their corresponding areas. I then communicated with the DPEP who at the time was overseeing the supervision in the county and confirmed with me who the Supervision Strategy Representatives (Reps) of each of the areas were. I contacted each of the Supervision Strategy Reps who then co-ordinated with the EPs and myself, to update the supervision ‘map’ on the EPS’s shared drive with information about which EPs were involved in supervision with FSKWs across the county. I confirmed at this point that eight EPs were supervising twenty-one FSKWs in total across three of the four areas of the county. In the fourth area, there were no FSKWs currently being supervised by EPs. Three of those EPs supervising were male, five were female and all the FSKWs were female.

### **3.6.2 Initial data capture forms**

I emailed the aforementioned EPs who were currently supervising FSKWs (see Appendix G) with information about this study and an initial data capture form (see Appendix H) to complete about each of the FSKWs they were supervising. In designing the questions for my data capture forms, I considered the context that the EPs and FSKWs were working in and the information that I had understood thus far about how this supervision arrangement had been set-up in the service. I also looked at questions that were asked by Dunsmuir and Leadbetter's (2015) national survey and applied what I had read in my preliminary literature review, in particular, adding a question around contracting. One EP was unable to complete the data capture form, and this may have reflected an anxiety that this research may have provoked for EPs. Nevertheless, they were able to estimate that the FSKWs they supervised had less than eight years of experience of being supervised and therefore the FSKWs they supervised were not considered for interview.

### **3.6.3 Selecting participants**

The information provided in these initial data capture forms offered me concrete information to the best of the EPs knowledge about the longevity and structure of the supervision with the FSKWs. Of particular interest to me, was how long they had been in supervision for and whether they knew about the length of time each FSKW had been in supervision for prior to their own supervision agreement. This fitted the aim of this study in gaining, not only as rich a picture as possible, but also increased the

chances of the 'significance' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 33) of this phenomenon and would be more likely to better be able to offer more in depth insight into this particular lived experience. As Smith et al. (2009, p. 49) suggest, one should look for a sample "for whom the research question will be meaningful". I recognise the limitation of this approach of accessing this information in comparison to asking the FSKWs directly, creating a risk of not reaching participants with the most experiences of supervision. I chose this method of communication, so as to offer the EP supervisors the opportunity to be informed about which FSKWs I might be likely to approach. I collated the information from the initial data capture form on a spreadsheet and used this information, yet remaining aware that this information was based on EP estimates. Once I interviewed the FSKWs, I could then clarify the length of time in which they had been engaging in supervision with EPs.

I then ordered the list of FSKWs in accordance to the quantity of time it was believed that they had been in supervision so in position 1, was the FSKW with the most estimated years of supervision. Those positioned at 5, 6 and 7 and were initially indistinguishable (by time) were further ordered with the help of their current EP supervisor. Although IPA does not intend to generalise, I felt it was important to avoid too many of the participants being currently supervised by the same person to prevent themes being limited to a particular recent EP supervisor. This was also intended to allow a fair spread of divergence across experiences across the county and therefore the participant positioned at 7 was not interviewed in order to avoid three of the seven participants having too similar experiences dependent on the same supervisor. In addition, there was a choice between two further participants who now

positioned at 7 (having excluded the original 7<sup>th</sup>) and were rated as having the same amount of time engaging in supervision. The decision therefore was made on logistical grounds and I interviewed the participant who was first available within the school term dates and declined the participant who was not available until the summer holidays.

The possibility remained that inaccuracies in lengths of time in supervision might be revealed at the later stage of interview, but with the estimations I had received with the initial data capture form, I was able to confirm that the lengths of time FSKWs had been engaging in supervision were substantial enough to be thought of as a significant life experience. I was then able to contact each of the FSKWs by email (see Appendix I) with information about my study (see Appendix J), inviting them to consent to be interviewed. On replying to my email, they gave provisional consent to being interviewed and arrangements were then made which was then confirmed in writing upon meeting in person for interview. I proposed that we met at the offices of the corresponding areas they worked in although they were offered the option suggesting alternative locations. This was proposed as somewhere thought to be convenient and familiar to them, and I also had access to booking rooms.

The FSKWs interviewed, had experienced supervision with a range of between two and four EP supervisors, each over a total period ranging between 10 to 15 years. These supervision sessions were half termly and the length of time of the sessions were variable across the county until in 2012 where they were consistently an hour. The estimated range of sessions of supervision each of the FSKWs engaged in, lies



between approximately 50 and 100 sessions. In total therefore, this study represents the experiences of approximately 500 sessions of inter-professional supervision with EPs.

#### **3.6.4 The development of the interview schedule**

The aim of this study was to adopt an accessible and flexible approach that is shaped by the participants (Brocki & Wearden, 2006). Being an exploratory study, I was interested in rich, detailed accounts of experiences and considered interviews to be the best means of accessing such accounts. With little verbal input from myself as interviewee, I planned to have open and expansive questions to encourage participants to speak at length, freely and reflectively (Smith et al., 2009). Interviews are suited to this complex subject of inter-professional supervision as it allows the researcher to probe and extend interesting responses for further exploration. I made use of skills developed as a trainee EP such as attentiveness, active listening, not using leading questions, being aware of the effect questions are having on the interviewee and allowing silences for answers to be extended. I also recognised the 'shape' that interviews might take where interviewees' responses may be more abstract in the beginning of the interview and slowly become more particular and detailed as the interview progresses and trust and rapport establishes itself.

In creating the questions for the interview schedule (see Appendix L) I used my key research questions to guide me and further amended these through peer reviewing them with fellow trainee EP colleagues and supervision. With the support of

supervision I was also encouraged to think about my experiences and understanding of what supervision is, and how this knowledge might contribute to the questions I might want to explore. This in particular helped me consider the question of FSKWs experiences of supervision between sessions. This is an example of how my involvement as a researcher contributed to the co-construction of meaning-making discussed earlier. In wanting to prepare myself for the interviews, I practised interviewing a fellow trainee and sought feedback on how it might feel for the interviewee being asked this questions. From this, I was aware there might be a risk that interviewees might feel in a difficult position or be concerned about critically reviewing their supervisors. I therefore ensured that before interview I emphasised that whilst they will have had different supervisors, I am interested in their experience of supervision as a whole. As I begun conducting my first interviews, I also adapted my introductory information, adding for example that they may feel that they have answered a question already or that they may experience some overlap, and should they think this they can say that and I would move on to the next question.

### **3.6.5 The interview process**

Researchers, like all other beings, are embedded a lifeworld and cannot be a blank canvas when interviewing. Whilst staying close to the participants words and keeping my responses as neutral as possible, I paid attention to the engagement with participants to facilitate the bracketing of prior concerns as emphasised by Smith et al (2009). The cyclical movement between the focus on the participant and then myself and researcher requires an intense attentiveness and engagement. I also

adopted Dahlberg et al.'s (2007) proposed motto of 'less is more' and the idea of 'bridling' during interviews to encapsulate the three following ideas:

- The 'bracketing' is an attempt to restrain your pre-understanding i.e. previous beliefs and assumptions;
- An effort to not assume you have understood too quickly and consequently care is necessary, and can be achieved by remaining open and alert for the phenomenon to display itself;
- Maintaining a forward facing direction of creating an opening for the phenomenon to present itself.

I recognised that the interview environment has some resemblance to the supervision environment of two people in a private room and that this could in some way feel replicative of the supervisory experience. I made some brief reflective notes immediately after the interviews of things that resonated with me and things that were discussed before and after recordings that I read at the initial stages of analysis to remind myself of my first impressions, such as things I felt resonated with me or any tension I noticed. This information was another means that could contribute to accessing the lived experience and was something that might not have been able to be articulated in words by the participant, but is potential information that I may have some capacity to be receptive to.

### **3.6.6 Final data capture forms**

After the interviews were completed, an email (see Appendix M) with a second and final data capture form (see Appendix N) was sent to all eight EPs who currently supervise FSKWs to ask for some contextual information around their supervision. This was intended to help “contextualise the interview material” (Smith et al., 2009, p. 73). I decided to ask for this information after completing my interviews so as to eliminate the risk of an unusual change in practice that might affect how the FSKWs responded in interview. It must be noted here that this contextual information was limited to the EPs currently supervising FSKWs and may not apply to EPs that had previously supervised FSKWs.

### **3.7 Ethical considerations**

Ethical approval was sought and given by the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust ethical committee (see Appendix D) and is in compliance with the British Psychological Society’s Code of Human Research Ethics (2014). This involved taking into account the risk of touching on potentially sensitive issues, and my responsibilities as researcher to have a brief conversation after interviews to check how participants are. This included the use of information and consent forms explicitly naming the limits of confidentiality and anonymity (see Appendices J and K). Through these forms participants were informed about the purpose and nature of the research upon request to be interviewed. They were then again informed at interview where they were given another opportunity to read the information and consent sheets

again and ask me any further questions before signing that they consented. As noted earlier, the process of using initial data capture forms was a way of seeking indirect consent from EPs who were also voluntary participants. FSKWs were informed that they could withdraw at any time without explanation or disadvantage up until the time I was expecting to begin my analysis. Participants were also informed about the limits of confidentiality and anonymity in line with the Data Protection Act (1998). Although I was asking about their supervision experiences as a whole, some experiences were associated with, or linked to, particular EPs that might be identifiable to an EP supervisor. It was important therefore to remind participants of the limits of this anonymity at the beginning of interviews, and as I considered how I reported any distinctly identifiable features in my findings, for example, the gender of a supervisor being spoken about. Recordings were saved and transcribed on to a secured LA laptop in line with the Data Protection Act (1998), and when transcribed, all names mentioned were omitted.

### **3.8 Findings from data capture forms**

All EPs who participated in this study had received a minimum of two days training and a refresher half day in supervision as provided by the service at the time, based around Hawkins and Shohet's book 'Supervision in the helping professions' (Hawkins & Shohet, 2007). It was reported that in addition to the annual refresher half day training the service provides, support for supervisors separate from their individual supervision arrangements is also offered through twice yearly group supervision for supervisors facilitated by a Senior Specialist EP (SSEP). In addition to this some EPs

had been experienced in supervision for several years previously through their role, through Doctoral training or through previous employment as a qualified adult psychotherapist. Other models and psychological underpinnings reported to be used by the EPs included the CLEAR model (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012), Person Centred Psychology (Rogers, 1957), Personal Construct Psychology (Kelly, 2002, 2003), Psychodynamic theory, Psychoanalytic theory, Solution Focused approaches (Knight, 2004), Solution Oriented approaches (Rees, 2008), consultative questioning techniques, active listening skills, accessible dialogue, positioning theory and systemic thinking. Whilst all the EPs had the same supervision training in the EPS, it is possible that the different psychological underpinnings used by the EPs as reported in the final data capture forms may have affected the homogeneity of the sample.

It is the service's expectation that a contract is drawn up at the beginning of a supervisory relationship and agreed together on when it will be periodically reviewed. The service provides a contract template (see Appendix O) to support this, addressing practical issues such as timings and contact arrangements. Issues addressed in contracting such as expectations and boundaries are also expected to be responded to as needed as they arise throughout the relationship. Dates and times of supervision meetings are kept by the EPs and two of the EPs also make aide-memoir notes after the sessions which the FSKWs consent to.

### 3.9 Data analysis

I used Smith et al. (2009) to guide my analysis, and in line with qualitative research approaches I adopted a flexible approach. As Smith et al. (2009) encourage, researchers are not to be bound by their suggested steps. As a novice researcher I welcomed the suggested steps to support me in feeling able to manage the data, yet I simultaneously encouraged myself to remain discerning, adapt it as I felt appropriate with the purpose of supporting my personal journey of analysis. This enabled me as researcher to maximise the use of my interpretations and psychological thinking that contributed to, and added value to the process and construction of the findings. I also held a piece of advice I was offered in mind to “trust in the process” and found this a useful reminder of the repeated hermeneutic circle in moving between the whole illuminating the parts and the parts illuminating the whole. I adopted the process of the recommended six steps below:

1. Reading and re-reading

I transcribed the interviews myself and found that doing this in addition to then reading through the transcriptions with the recording playing simultaneously, enabled me to suitably immerse myself in the data. I made notes of my initial responses, connections, associations and ideas as well as marking notes of sections that resonated strongly with me.

## 2. Initial noting of exploratory comments plus deconstruction.

This is a step that supports the expanding of the data and enabled a deeper level of familiarisation of the content of the data. An extract of this stage of analysis can be found in Appendix T. Guidance and examples from Smith et al. (2009) was used to support my understanding of, and determine the difference between the three types of exploratory comments, descriptive, linguistic and conceptual. Descriptive comments focused on the content and subject of what the participants said focusing on key words, explanation and understandings, taken at face value. Linguistic comments focused on the specific use of language by the participants such as metaphor, repetition, pauses, laughter. Conceptual comments are the most interpretative, taking a more interrogative stance and involved moving further away from the text, yet remaining inspired by the words of the participants. This process allowed room for noticing the way descriptions were verbalised and also offered an opportunity to inspire riskier leaps in interpretation and associations that came to mind, adding depth. The deconstruction was supported through de-contextualisation strategies such as finding that reading certain sections in reverse sequence supported my linguistic comments, in particular noticing repetitions of words and phrases.

## 3. Developing emergent themes

Following the expansion of the data, this step now has the purpose of reducing it. During my first attempt I related the experience to that of being in a “deep bowl of spaghetti” (Wagstaff et al., 2014), immersed in masses of data and consequently



generating too many descriptive emergent themes. This became apparent both by having a high number of emergent themes at the end of each interview and also at the next stage of searching for connections across themes where I noticed that the connections I was making were remaining at quite a descriptive level. I repeated this stage for a second time, taking more leaps in interpretations and reducing the data. An extract of this step of analysis can be found in Appendix Q. I found that keeping in mind the principle of staying 'experience-close' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 91) in interpreting what I thought the experience of the participants would have been, supported me in adding depth and richness to my interpretations. I also noticed that the second time round I had shorter and more 'pithy' (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92) emergent themes which I believed captured the essence better and were a reflection of my themes being less descriptive, with "enough particularity to be grounded and enough abstraction to be conceptual" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 92). Doing this stage twice, I believe enhanced my familiarity with the data and also created space for another hermeneutic circle of movement between the part and whole.

#### 4. Searching for connections across emergent themes

Smith et al. (2009, pp. 96–99) describe five ways one can search for connections across themes, through abstraction, subsumption, polarization, contextualisation, numeration and function. I first listed all the emergent themes of an interview chronologically, and then used an Excel spreadsheet in order to spatially arrange the themes as I saw them relating to each other. At this point, some themes that arose in the text but did not seem to reoccur or relate to a forming group with others, were

discarded. This process of grouping these spatially arranged themes, felt similar to that of an “accordion” (Wagstaff et al., 2014) where I felt that the expansion and reduction of the groups could occur infinitely. I repeatedly referred back to the part of the transcript where the theme was identified, checking the context of the theme and repeating the hermeneutic cycle. After grouping the emergent themes, I then identified the key words or quote that I felt best captured the theme, and listed them alongside the grouped emergent themes. When cross-referencing the corresponding key words or quotes that emergent themes were rooted in, some emergent themes were moved under a different subordinate theme from which they were originally placed. This process enabled me to feel more secure in validating my justification for each of these groupings, keeping in line with the principle of ‘thoroughness’ (Yardley, 2000, p. 221) discussed in more detail later. Please see Appendix R for an example grouped themes with quotes and emergent themes discarded at this stage.

##### 5. Moving to the next case

In moving to the next case Smith et al. (2009) encourage the researcher to try and bracket the ideas from the previous case in order to keep to IPA’s idiographic commitment. I found leaving a space of time between participants helped with this, but recognise that this bracketing is limited, and some ideas from the previous participant inevitably remain in mind.

## 6. Looking for patterns across cases

This is where I looked to see if there were recurrent or similar themes or ideas that were experience and shared by more than one participant and prevalent in more than half the participants (Smith et al., 2009, p. 107). For this stage, I cut out the headings of the grouped emergent themes (subordinate themes) on to coloured pieces of paper, where each participant was a different colour. I found a large table surface where I could move about the subordinate themes spatially as I felt they related to each other (a provisional grouped arrangement of sub-ordinate themes can be found in Appendix S). I found this step particularly exciting as I saw, for the first time commonalities across participants. I included grouped subordinate themes that appeared in at least three out of the seven the participants as deemed of acceptable quality by Smith (2011a). This arrangement took around two to three attempts before the final one, which then changed again as the analysis continued after I entered it into a table where I then developed the superordinate and overarching theme titles. Smith et al. (2009) encourage a novice researcher to use their guidelines to support the process of analysis and not view them as prescriptive. Having reached a point of getting to 13 super-ordinate themes, with this in mind, I was encouraged to add an extra step of organising these super-ordinate themes adding another level of reduction of the data. No themes were discarded at these stage, and all were included in the final groupings.

Finally, I drew out a diagram to reflect how I found them to relate to each other spatially. In writing up my findings, I continued to make connections that I had not

noticed during these six stages. This led me changing the name of one sub-ordinate theme for one participant and being more receptive to the pertinence of another subordinate theme for another participant adding it to the findings later in the process.

It is the above six-step process that supported me as researcher to: (a) Remain committed to the personal, subjective lived experience or 'experience close' and meaning-making of this; (b) Move cyclically between the part and the whole; (c) Maintain the double hermeneutic of me as researcher making sense of the participant making sense of the phenomenon of supervision; and (d) Emphasize both commonality and divergence within and across participants Smith et al. (2009). It is important to remember the subjectivity of these findings and that a different researcher would have likely made different interpretations, resulting in different themes.

### **3.10 Quality research and trustworthiness**

A reader will make their own judgement on the trustworthiness of a qualitative study such as this. Yardley (2000) recognises that every qualitative piece of research will have a particular purpose and hence relevance for a particular group of people within a particular context. Whilst appreciating diversity, Yardley (2000, 2015) proposes the following four characteristics of good quality qualitative research to be interpreted flexibly.

### 3.10.1 Sensitivity to context

Yardley (2000, 2015) writes about two types of context, the context of theory and the socio-cultural context. The context of theory links a particular piece of research to the existing understanding of other work and where any contradictions or conflicts are given due attention. The aim of the literature review is to address the context of theory, whilst the aim of the discussion and conclusion is to address the socio-cultural context. When writing of the socio-cultural context, Yardley (2000) recommends that the communication is recognised as meaningful communication (as in an interview situation) between participants where the listener or interviewer inevitably contribute to the shared understanding at that time, recognising the power imbalance that might be present. My position, characteristics and responses working as a trainee EP amongst the EPs who supervise, inevitably influenced what and how participants communicated. To try to overcome this, I emphasised my position as a trainee, my interest in improving services generally, in addition to offering that participants choose a different location for the interview if they so wished. I emphasised that there are no right or wrong answers in the interviews, and that I was interested in hearing their views and experiences, and attempted to emphasise my more inexperienced position, where I was there to learn from them. Yardley (2015) also reminded me during analysis of the importance that I remained open to alternative interpretations and to views that may not be easily or at all expressed as well as contradictions, inconsistencies and complexities in participants' responses.

### 3.10.2 Transparency, reflexivity and coherence

Yardley (2000) writes of transparency being through clear disclosing and detailing aspects of the research process so that a reader can then make their own judgement about the process. Yardley encourages this through reflexivity, where one openly considers one's experiences and motivations that have the potential to affect the process, interpretation and outcomes of the research. Finlay (2002b) distinguishes between reflection and reflexivity where reflection is more thinking about something from a distance after the event. Reflexivity on the other hand is a dynamic, immediate, continuous movement between awareness and experience. and can only be partial and tentative (Finlay, 2002b). Finlay (2002a) suggests that a researcher needs to be careful in navigating their way through the 'complicated landscape' or 'swamp' of reflexivity at the expense of the voice of participants and developing understanding. Reflexivity is a valuable tool that offers opportunities for rich insight, holds challenges in shifting attention away from the participants, yet is limited (Finlay, 2002a). It can empower both researcher and participants by voicing the unspoken (Finlay, 2002b). Accordingly then, a delicate and balanced approach to reflexivity is taken with this study in order for this reflexivity to remain purposeful.

Whilst I can attempt as best as possible to bracket my conscious preconceptions of supervision, I am aware that some unconscious preconceptions may influence the processes I undertook in this study and particularly during the analysis of the data. A conscious example, is my inclination towards presenting EPs in good light as a result of my increasing identification with the profession, and the subsequent risk of a

tendency to emphasise the unique skill set of EPs and underemphasise negative comments. All of the generated themes are grounded in, and have an audit trail tracing it back to the accounts of the participants. Nevertheless, experiences and understandings of supervision that I am less conscious of and that I have not been able to bracket, will have contributed to the outcomes. As a result, an opportunity for participants to feedback on the researcher's interpretations which would be different for every researcher would not be appropriate in this study. As Shinebourne (2011, p. 19) states, "every interpretation is already contextualised in previous experience and can never be presuppositionless". This may have been less prevalent if I was researching a topic I had no relation to, but I would assert that when a researcher takes in interest in a topic, there are bound to be preconceptions that may have long-standing roots.

The purpose of this study is exploratory and uses IPA's inductive procedures to elicit the participants' experience of the phenomenon as best as possible. Efforts to attempt to minimise the influence of my presuppositions during interviews using 'bridling' and attentive engagement with the participant were previously discussed. I aimed to ensure that I remained as close possible to the participants' accounts of their experiences of supervision and reduce the possibility that my interpretations were theory-driven. An example of this was at the stage of generating themes and I caught myself thinking of a concept, put that aside, and went back to the participant's words with the help of the hermeneutic circle and generated a theme that was closer to their experience. Therefore, aside from a preliminary literature review at the time of

proposing this research, I chose to conduct my thorough and systematic literature review after having analysed the data.

For coherence to be achieved, Yardley (2000) recommends a strong narrative that persuasively argues a newly created version of reality that fits the research questions and gives voice to the personal perspective of the participant through the interpretation of the researcher. Shinebourne (2011, p. 27) adds that this includes finding ways to include the “ambiguities and contradictions inherent in the data in a coherent way” that engages and doesn’t confuse the reader.

### **3.10.3 Commitment and rigour**

Yardley sees commitment to be demonstrated through ‘thoroughness’ by ‘prolonged engagement’ with the topic and ‘immersion’ in the data (Yardley, 2000, p. 221) as well as ‘thoughtfulness’ (Yardley, 2015, p. 267). Working on this research for a period of just under two years as well as planning and prioritising my longest block of continuous time for immersion in the analysis, I aimed to maximise my use of my available time this way. Yardley (2000) proposes that rigour is demonstrated through a sense of completeness that embraces depth through diversity and complexity, and where analysis or interpretation goes beyond the descriptive surface, using imaginative experience and new meanings. An example of this distinction could be reflected through my need to repeat one of the steps of analysis of creating emerging themes with more risk, imagination and creativity than my first, more tentative attempt. I would also add an example of commitment and rigour demonstrated



through my repeated return back to the data after creating theme titles and grouping themes. I viewed it as important to repeatedly check the thread between the original accounts of the participants through to the final arrangements of the themes, again engaging with the hermeneutic circle.

#### **3.10.4 Impact and importance**

Finally, Yardley (2000) recommends that a piece of qualitative research is judged by its potential to influence practice through the new perspective, insight, understanding and ideas it offers on a topic within the limits of its objectives and the socio-cultural community it aims to address, in this instance the practice of EPs. Yardley (2015) encourages researchers to ask the question 'so what?' in response to ones findings. Rather than expect the study to be directly generalizable in another context, I would expect these findings to be transferable and provide insight to other contexts which may have similar features (Yardley, 2015). The response to the findings presented next will be addressed in the Discussion chapter.

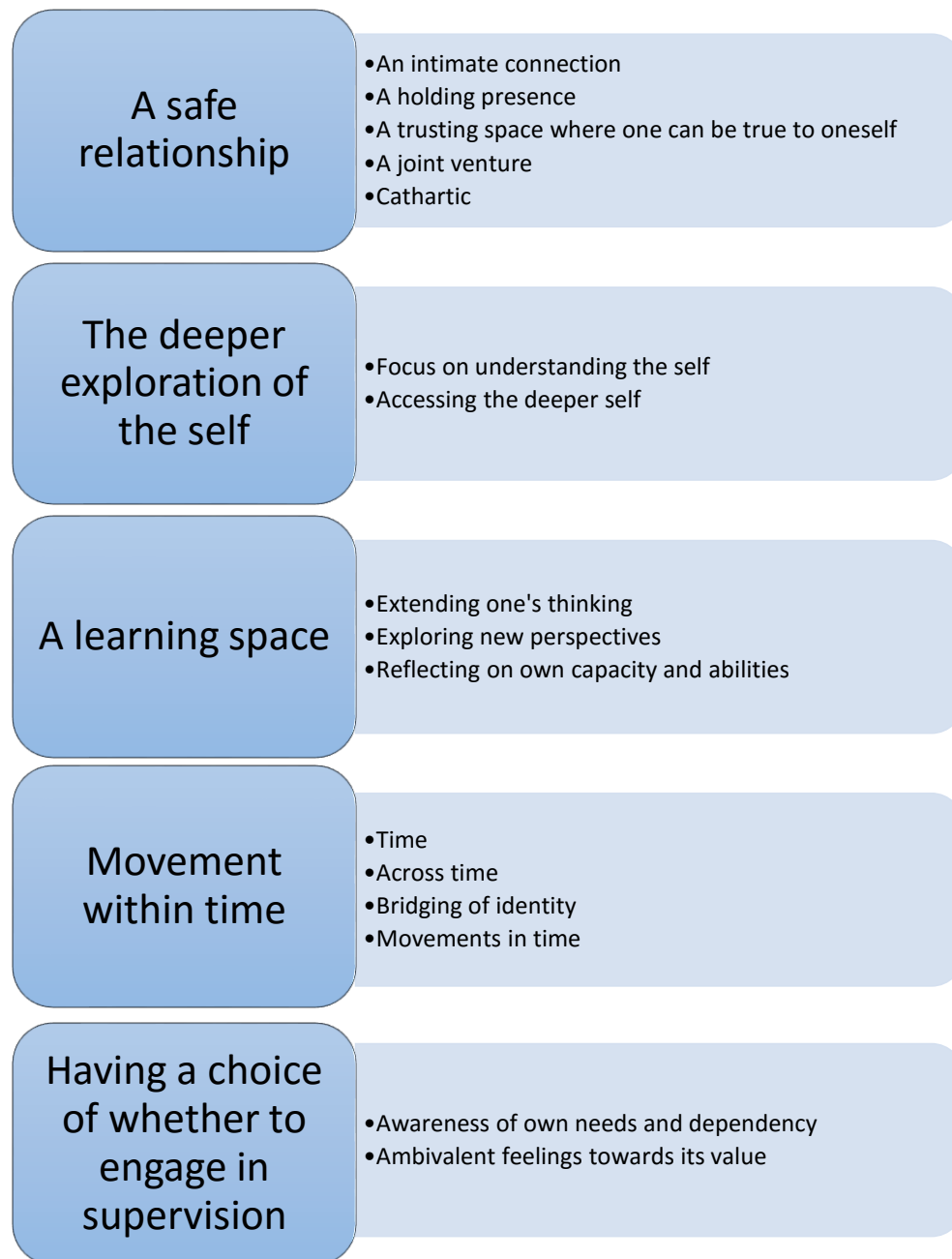
## **4.0 FINDINGS**

Five overarching themes were identified. These themes will be presented and each will then be discussed in turn using extracts from participants to illustrate how each of the overarching themes are manifested in, and are represented uniquely for each participant. This structure allows for a coherence in each participant's experiences of the phenomenon to be maintained, keeping to IPAs idiographic commitment, yet allowing the variety within the theme to be presented. An alternative way to present my findings would have been to write about each participant in turn, but this would have been at the cost of appreciating the commonality of experiences across participants. Another alternative would have been to write about each super-ordinate theme, but I believe this would have been too fragmenting of the individual experiences. By writing about participants within each overarching theme, I endeavour to maintain an appreciation of the "relationship between convergence and divergence, commonality and individuality" (Smith et al., 2009, p. 107).

### **4.1 Overview of themes**

The five overarching themes identified are: a safe relationship, the deeper exploration of the self, a learning space, movement within time and having a choice of whether to engage in supervision. These are presented in Figure 6 below. I interpret each of these to be prevalent in at least three of the seven participants in line with recommendations for IPA by Smith (2011a). These were generated from grouping the sub-ordinate themes that arose across participants into super-ordinate themes (on

the right hand side), and then further grouping these super-ordinate themes into the five over-arching themes (on the left hand side).



**Figure 6:** Overarching themes with corresponding super-ordinate themes and for 'movement within time', sub-ordinate themes

One exception to the procedural sequence described in the step of organising the super-ordinate themes into overarching themes, is that of 'movement in time'. I considered these grouped sub-ordinate themes, to form an overarching theme in themselves as I found them to relate to all of the other existing super-ordinate themes whilst simultaneously being its own overarching theme standing alone. This is not surprising as our 'being-in-the-world' is in the context of time, where death offers a temporal dimension to our existence (Heidegger, 1962), and the phenomenon I am researching here of supervision is one that had been experienced over a long period of time. Table 6 over the next two pages summarises how all the sub-ordinate themes and super-ordinate themes grouped into overarching themes by participant, using pseudonyms.

Participant	Sub-ordinate themes	Super-ordinate theme	Overarching theme
Angela	Feeling of closeness to supervisors	An intimate connection	<b>A safe relationship</b>
Barbara	Warmth		
Christine	Feeling understood by EP		
Eleni	Comfortable intimacy		
Georgia	Safety in relationship		
Georgia	Knowledge of supervisee		
Angela	Feeling of being cared for	A holding presence	
Angela	Being held		
Christine	Significance/power/presence of it		
Daphne	Protecting self in role		
Francesca	"That net is there"		
Georgia	Stable/secure presence of supervision		
Angela	It's ok to be as I am	A trusting space where one can be true to self	
Barbara	Protecting the self		
Christine	Trusting in the supervisor and the safety of the space enough to be true to oneself		
Daphne	Trusting the supervisor		
Francesca	The building up of trust		
Georgia	Authenticity to self		
Christine	Co-production together	A joint venture	
Daphne	Equal-ness		
Francesca	Sharing ideas		
Georgia	Negotiating an agreement and mutual understanding		
Angela	Expressing frustrations	Cathartic	
Barbara	Offloading		
Georgia	Removing a weight		
Angela	Increase in knowledge of oneself	Focus on understanding the self	
Barbara	Perception of self via other		
Christine	Getting to know/understand oneself		
Christine	It's all about me		
Eleni	"Genuinely interested in you"		
Georgia	Increased self-awareness		
Georgia	Focus on self		
Christine	Digging deeper	Accessing the deeper self	
Daphne	"You kind of pull back the layers"		
Eleni	A place for the hardest things		
Francesca	Risk of revealing self – "it just digs a deeper hole"		
Georgia	"The rest of it"		
			<b>The deeper exploration of the self</b>

Participant	Sub-ordinate themes	Super-ordinate theme	Overarching theme	
Barbara	"Food...for thought" – taking it further	Extending one's thinking	<b>A learning space</b>	
Daphne	Learning			
Eleni	Growth/development			
Francesca	Moving forward on the journey of discovery			
Georgia	Self-development and competence			
Barbara	Offers something new – "food...for thought"...	Exploring new perspectives		
Christine	Alternative perspectives			
Christine	Understanding of other			
Daphne	Changes in thinking			
Francesca	Reassurance from outsider's perspective			
Georgia	"completely flip how I was looking at something"			
Angela	Potential to do more	Reflecting on own capacity and abilities		
Angela	Recognition of own capacity			
Eleni	Building confidence in own abilities			
Georgia	Building resilience			
Barbara	Time	-	<b>Movement within time</b>	
Christine	Across time			
Eleni	Bridging of identity			
Georgia	Movements in time			
Angela	Need for supervision	Awareness of own needs and dependency	<b>Having a choice of whether to engage in supervision</b>	
Barbara	Recognising the need for supervision			
Christine	Meeting my needs			
Georgia	Fear of loss of supervision			
Angela	Response to change in supervisor	Ambivalent feelings towards its value		
Christine	It can only be as good as the supervisors			
Daphne	Opting out			
Daphne	Reviewing and questioning value of supervision			
Francesca	On the verge of withdrawal			
Georgia	Perceived value of supervision			

**Table 6:** Grouped sub-ordinate themes forming super-ordinate and overarching themes

Quotes from participants will be used to illustrate each of the overarching themes.

The following key is used to represent features of quotes taken from the transcripts:

**Key:**

[EP]	where a supervisors name or gender is identified
[...]	omission for ease of reading
,	short pause
...	long pause
(p. _)	page number of transcript

I endeavour to use quotes that Smith (2011b) terms 'shining gems', where these sections of transcriptions have a potency, an agency, a resonance that demands the reader's attention. These played an illuminative and key role in the dynamic, hermeneutic movement between the part and the whole during interpretation. I will use the present tense as this is reflective of the ongoing and live nature of participants' experience of supervision.

#### 4.2 A safe relationship

### A safe relationship

- An intimate connection
- A holding presence
- A trusting space where one can be true to oneself
- A joint venture
- Cathartic

All of the participants experience a sense of safety in their relationship with their EP supervisors. This overarching theme is expressed in variety of ways through five interrelated super-ordinate themes: an intimate connection, a holding presence, a trusting space where one can be true to self, a joint venture, and cathartic. For these

FSKWs, the supervisory relationship offers an intimate connection with an EP supervisor who is able to provide a trusting space where they can reveal their true selves. It can tolerate a catharsis and offers a protective holding presence that is gradually established through a joint endeavour. This safe relationship then becomes the pre-requisite for FSKWs to embark on a deeper exploration of themselves, discussed in the following overarching theme. I will elaborate on how this safe relationship was experienced by each of the participants.

Barbara suggests an experience of warmth towards her EP supervisors. This, with a sense of comfort seems to be established through rapport, feeling at ease, liking the supervisor, getting on well and a total trust in them. There is a sense of Barbara feeling understood, and establishing an almost friendship-like quality that contributes to increased proximity of herself and the EP supervisors over time, and even affection. This intimate and holding presence of a trusting space created through the trusting relationship draws Barbara to keep returning for more.

An important theme that arose from how Barbara spoke of supervision was the various ways she needs to protect herself and how supervision with an EP supports this need, and is not a threat to it. On the one hand Barbara needs to trust that the space is safe enough to reveal her genuine self and her vulnerabilities, for example her sense of helplessness in role without feeling judged. Barbara uses the space to offload, things that she views as “simmering away” (p. 19) in herself, and values feeling heard, enabling her to come out feeling a sense of release and relief. What she shares and reveals is on her terms. On the other hand, she also uses supervision with



an EP to ensure she is protecting herself in her role. For example, in removing blame from herself and seeking support to ensure she is prioritising herself and her needs. The time set aside for supervision and the extra time if needed, also supports this idea that she herself is a priority, for example on the following two occasions.

“...I emailed [EP] and said, [EP], I’m really struggling with this, blah blah blah blah, and [EP] was really good at finding the time to talk to me and talk it all through, so, and I think if I hadn’t have had supervision, ok yeah, I could have gone to my line manager, but I dunno, [EP]’s more, I dunno, I felt [EP] listened more and could support me in that more...” (Barbara, p. 15-16).

“...it just made it easier to know that actually I’d got that support, because [EP] was coming from the point of view like, I’ve aired and shared things in supervision that actually [EP] was concerned for me and the pressures on me, so because I felt like I couldn’t at the time say, (imitation) oh my God, no more children, I’m struggling with personal things, [EP] sorta came to support that I suppose and that worked quite well actually, you know...” (Barbara, p. 14-15).

The above two examples demonstrate that the supervisory relationship offers things that Barbara can’t get from within the team and that are important for meeting her needs.

Trust is an important aspect or “culture” (p. 4) in Christine’s experience of EP supervision following a break of her trust in a supervisory relationship in the past, in another work setting. It is essential that Christine feels the space is protected and there is no risk of “judgement or recrimination or it getting back to anybody” (p. 2). This is supported through this holding presence, the safety of the “framework” (p. 2, 3, 9, 13, 16) she perceives there to be, permitting her in a way to drop her guards, expose her vulnerabilities and give more of herself in EP supervision, enabling a cathartic experience.

“...you’d got to a point where you didn’t even have to think about how you shared something, or what you shared...” (Christine, p. 6).

Christine also really values the understanding EP supervisors can offer her, in particular through empathy within this intimate connection.

“...things can be left unsaid, and actually [EP] would know...intuitively because [EP] knew me, ...[...]...it was an incredible experience actually, to be in a situation where I could, I could just be, myself and say anything...” (Christine, p. 3).

Christine attributes much of this understanding to the longevity of their distinctly long supervisory relationship and where understanding, comfort and warmth gradually grew between them. This leads to a dynamic, mutual “flow” (p. 5, 13, 14) that is co-produced together and creates the impression of a joint venture, “that person is as involved as I am” (p. 14).

“...intuitively I did feel that [EP] would know, she would know when I was, um maybe holding something back, or where I was trying not to share something, or um, or could end my sentence because that was, you know, she kind of knew how I was, how I was feeling, or had a particular issue with a situation, and I would pick up how she sensed things too, you know, so it was that, very much a two-way process...” (Christine, p. 6).

A good fit or “gelling” (p. 7) is important for reaching a point where they are in tune with each other and Christine then is able to be aware of her supervisor’s availability. Through this close connection, the EP supervisor’s confidence encouraged Christine’s confidence to grow with that.

Christine also emphasises the holding presence of supervision with an EP for her:

“...I feel it’s very, um, live with me all the time, it’s not just an hour, that’s it, it’s in my diary, I come, I go, it’s very potent, actually for me, I can’t speak for anyone else but it is for me, yeah.” (Christine, p. 20-21).

Christine perceives the “entity” (p. 22) of supervision with an EP to have a powerful impact on her, to the extent that her eyes “welled up few times” (Christine, p. 23). She emphasises how much she values and is grateful for it, and sees it to play a major part in supporting her in her role.

Daphne uses the holding presence of supervision with an EP to support her self-preservation, protecting herself through learning how to manage her own boundaries. For example, in deciding about how much she might reveal about herself when working with a family through rehearsal, and in particular maintaining boundaries between work and home, divorcing her professional and personal self.

“...sometimes it can, kinda feel like you’re on a, on a merry go round, that you just never know how to jump off of, you know and it’s kind of all whirling in your head and it, one thing after the other, then you get caught in traffic, and then you get in the front door you know, and the person at home goes oh, hello, have you had a good day? And you go derderderderder (abruptly, then laughing), you know, and er, or you snap at someone actually not because, you know anything’s wrong, just because you’re, you’re carrying a lot and you’re holding on to it and you don’t quite know how to make sense of it and what to do with it, um, and for, yeah, for me having supervision, I have a bit more of an understanding about that, you know...” (Daphne, p. 28).

Daphne learns to manage her boundaries through the holding presence and catharsis of supervision with an EP through clarifying and drawing a line around what lies within her responsibility and what she needn’t take on, learning to “switch off and let it go” (p.34), “put it to one side” (p. 29) and not “take it home” (p. 2) with her.

“...it’s really important that you manage to do that so you can kind of, understand it and work on it and also kind of let it go and put it to one side, because otherwise you’re forever just you know, where does it go? If you don’t find somewhere for it to go, where does it go? And does it stay with you? If it stays with you, are you carrying it in?” (Daphne, p. 29)

Daphne believes she is better able to do this through an increased understanding and a “good sense of self” (p. 34), explored further in the next theme, ‘the deeper exploration of the self’. Daphne needs to feel that she can trust the EP supervisor and the privacy of the trusting space to be able to manage, facilitate and contain whatever was to come “flooding out” (p. 16) from the exploration that takes place. This trust is fragile initially and can take time to establish.

“...sometimes things that you can say, can then lead to other things, other more personal things or deep rooted thoughts and, um, things that have gone on, that maybe you’re not really conscious of, that when talking about something else can bring that about. And it’s knowing, do you feel confident enough that, if that comes out, that you can, that can be managed in that situation, so, it’s important for me anyway.” (Daphne, p. 6-7).

This is reflected in Daphne’s body language that demonstrates that she feels at ease and relaxed in the space to feel she can express her frustrations and be true to herself. She trusts that other people will not be “listening through the walls” (p. 32), and the space is private enough, characterised by the closed door in comparison to the open office space she works in. This is likely helped by the neutrality of the room she has supervision in, which it is not an office that belongs to someone. Daphne also uses the word “partnership” (p. 6) to describe a sense of mutual respect in the supervisory relationship. In contrast to ‘equal-ness’, Daphne also seems to be aware of the gender of the EP supervisor and how they might relate to each other differently as a result. For example, with females Daphne wonders if it is easier to relate to each other and

feel at ease, whereas when her supervisor is male, this difference is initially very prominent, reflected by her use of the expression “casting couch” (p. 13) where a marked inequality and discomfort is noted. Efforts to overcome this difference are made through humour and affectional statements such as “bless his heart” (p. 18).

Barbara, Daphne and Eleni all make reference to humour in their supervisory relationships. With Eleni, this reflects a dimension of an intimacy between them that is comfortable and allows for Eleni to reveal herself, speak freely and be less guarded over time. This playful teasing is inflicted on each other both ways, “You know [EP] would chuckle away, and then say something (laughs) back...” (Eleni, p. 21) and implies an equality in their relationship that is key to mutual respect and contributes to the experience of a joint venture.

Like Barbara, Angela feels a close intimate connection to her EP supervisors from the time she has spent with them to the extent that she expresses an emotionally moving, warm attachment to them, “I felt quite choked” and “I feel emotional” (Angela, p. 9). This closeness from being accompanied on her “journey” (p.18) is enhanced through Angela’s perceived commonality in the EP supervisor’s marriage status enabling her to feel more understood. Angela implies that if an EP supervisor is married, this in a way gives permission for Angela to bring more personal family-related items to supervision. It is unclear if the awareness of marriage status is related to the gender of the supervisor. There is a sense of being cared for and valued by her EP supervisors, encouraging a feeling that she matters. This is confirmed through being listened to, but also being held in mind and thought about outside of meetings whilst maintaining

confidentiality. Angela also feels held in a supportive way whilst she is being listened to, through the facilitation of the EP supervisors. Whilst Angela leads the conversations, she feels the holding presence of supervision with an EP to support her and be appropriately re-directed by the EP supervisors.

Angela feels accepted as a person and that the space is confidential and trusting enough to feel she can bring and express anything freely to supervision with an EP without being judged.

“I always felt it was very confidential, I felt I was very, I was able to, to be me, and to say, to be open (emphasis), and didn’t feel like, um, you know if I was unhappy about a situation at work, I...I’m still very much like that anyway, I felt I could talk freely, yeah...” (Angela, p. 8).

Angela is able to be true to herself, be open about difficult feelings such as those of powerlessness. In keeping to the appointments, Angela is able to hold on to these frustrations until she can use the space to express and truly reveal them. It is a place where Angela not only feels a cathartic release of these feelings, but the relationship is able to tolerate this. She feels understood, her feelings acknowledged and assured that the supervisors are looking out for her own wellbeing.

Similar to humour contributing to an ‘equal-ness’ in Barbara’s, Daphne’s and Eleni’s supervisory relationships, Francesca implies an equal relationship with her EP supervisors through the sharing and exchanging of ideas and resources that also plays both ways. Like Daphne, Francesca needs time to build up her trust and intimate connection with the EP supervisors. Things that help this process include time to

familiarise themselves with each other, a feeling that Francesca is welcomed and accepted without judgement. She doesn't feel pressured to share beyond what she feels comfortable. Even the body language of an EP supervisor contributes to how at ease, safe and comfortable Francesca feels. With Francesca, there is nervousness and delicacy around this trust that is shaken up with each change of EP supervisor. Once this trust is established, Francesca uses the metaphor of a "net" (p. 14) as the support that supervision with an EP offers and she can then rely on. This metaphor is interesting as it implies a holding presence but also the risk that the net may not be strong enough to 'catch' her. She sees her need for supervision with an EP as variable, and so the flexibility of the EP supervisor's availability fits well with this. Francesca considers the consequences of not having the cathartic space of supervision with an EP as leading to "illness" (p. 16), and consequently sees it worthwhile the effort and time it takes to build up that level of trust.

"...I mean it, it would be easy to walk away, but you do, you do need something and I think you know, you, as time passes you do come to realise that, that it's, it's imperative really, mm." (Francesca, p. 16).

Georgia also needs to build up her trust in the safety and intimacy of the relationship over time. This means for Georgia that she knows that what is shared in supervision with an EP remains confidential, and can trust that it stays in the "room" (p. 14, 20). Georgia can then be authentic to her true self, and at times, vulnerable self. This space is one where Georgia feels accepted and not judged. Over time the EP supervisor gains increasing intimate knowledge of Georgia where more previous examples of things discussed magnifies their intimate and personal connection. Within this safe relationship, Georgia then feels able to cathartically unload issues and get support

with removing a sense of responsibility of things that aren't for her to carry, leaving her "lightened" (p. 2), as if a weight is removed from her shoulders.

In order to get to the place where Georgia feels she can do this, a mutual understanding needs to be negotiated between the EP supervisor and herself as supervisee. Georgia experiences this as an ongoing negotiation achieved through partnership and joint exploration, where a joint vision and understanding of what they hope to achieve in terms of reaching that more comfortable place and how the space is used. This requires explicit communication, contemplation and agreement of what does and doesn't work for her.

"...it was just laid out in the very beginning that we, so we both had a clear understanding of, one what supervision was, but actually...what ours was going, going to, to look like, and that actually, we could negotiate that at any point, if either of us needed to..." (Georgia, p. 18).

Something Georgia emphasises is the stability and security she feels in the holding presence and impact of supervision with an EP. This is experienced both through the continuous presence of supervision with an EP and having the same EP supervisor over those years. A reliability in knowing there is a regular hour to use and in particular amidst a time of perceived significant organisational change and instability. This provokes an image in me similar to the "net" (Francesca, p. 14) Francesca experiences.



### 4.3 The deeper exploration of the self

#### The deeper exploration of the self

- Focus on understanding the self
- Accessing the deeper self

All participants experience supervision with an EP to offer a space for the deeper exploration of the self. This was expressed in two main ways, through the opportunity to focus on understanding themselves and through accessing the deeper self. Supervision with an EP offers the unique opportunity for a supervisee to be the centre of attention and the focus of the relationship. As the supervisee is a person in context, it is through this relationship and through the relationships that supervisees will bring to supervision, that supervisees develop their understanding of themselves and are able to think about what lies below the surface, behind the layers, and sometimes the most difficult things.

Barbara seems to experience supervision with an EP as a place where she can focus on and see herself through the other. Barbara often makes references to the EP's point of view and when I was naming her sub-ordinate theme, it reminded me of the reflected or looking-glass self (Cooley, 1902), or the related expression, 'I am not who I think I am, I am not who you think I am, I am who I think you think I am' (anon.). Barbara sees and better understands herself through the other by seeking reassurance and feedback, perceiving the EP supervisor as "someone to check out

things with". In order for her to be able to do this, it is important that she feels understood by the EP supervisor:

"...[EP] just gets me, I think somehow scarily we're probably on the same wavelength (laughs)." (Barbara, p. 21).

The way Barbara expressed this suggests that an EP may at times be perceived to be at a higher status to the FSKW, demonstrated by Barbara's laughter and use of the word "scarily" (p. 21) as if it is unexpected. Barbara later makes reference to the "importance that I feel supervision gives me in my role" (p. 24) which leads me to suspect that the EP's status also contributes to the way Barbara chooses to use the supervisory space, to reaffirm her own status and perception of herself. Barbara values the space which supervision with an EP provides where the focus is on herself:

"...that full on one-to-one time where I know that's about, haha, sounds like, it's about me and what I can share and what I can talk about..." (Barbara, p. 14).

Like Barbara, Christine also emphasises the uninterrupted and personalised space where she feels heard and is able to focus on, understand and explore her deeper self and what is important to her, as she sums up "it is all about me" (p. 14), and

"...it was very much, um, me discovering about...[...]...what was important to me as a practitioner" (Christine, p. 2-3).

Christine experiences and values the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of herself through reflection, greater self-awareness, acceptance and self-control. Essentially, for the fundamental aim of "wanting to be a better person" (p. 21). Christine uses the term "illumination" (p. 18) for describing how supervision allows

for her to more deeply explore and see connections between “heavy” (p. 5, 9) personal situations and how this might impact her work.

Christine also experiences gaining a deeper insight into situations through unpicking and exploring them for herself. This discovery deepens with time as this particularly long supervisory relationship deepens. Christine attributes this depth to that long lasting relationship where she was able to comfortably have her thinking questioned and challenged through conversations leading to “unearthing” (p. 14) her perceptions and “this real, um, awakening” (p. 9) in her understanding. Christine also alludes to the sensitivity and delicacy of this deeper exploration near the end of the interview:

“...so, when you start to go into anything on a deeper level, it, it, it touches, it touches different buttons...” (Christine, p. 23).

Angela experiences the EP supervisors to “tease things out” (p. 7, 21) that lie more deeply, enabling her to focus and increase her understanding of herself. Daphne experiences supervision with an EP as an opportunity to “pull back the layers” (p. 21), to go beneath the surface, and access and explore what she calls “the nitty gritty” (p. 13). Daphne experiences the “depth of kind of conversations you might have” (p. 21) to develop over time where reflectivity and questioning enhance the richness and deepness of the processing that occurs in the space over the sessions or years. This provokes in me the image of an onion, where as you remove the layers you get closer and closer to the core. As discussed in the earlier theme of ‘a safe relationship’, this space is where Daphne can be true to herself for honest exploration. Daphne goes further to add:

“...that was kind of a different way of, of, kind of, of being...” (Daphne, p. 16).

This compelling statement reflects the delicacy of reaching that deeper and potentially vulnerable core of your being. The later theme of ‘having a choice of whether to engage in supervision’ and the importance of engaging in supervision being voluntary, may be a prerequisite to permitting this deeper exploration. Daphne, as I will discuss in more detail under the theme of ‘having a choice of whether to engage in supervision’ would opt out if she felt that she didn’t want to do this or if the supervisory space had not proved itself safe enough to do this. In understanding herself more, Daphne also adds that:

“...you kind of learn about being supervised as you’re being supervised, and the more you know about it, the more you know about yourself, the more you know what you do and don’t want...” (Daphne, p. 18).

So it is through knowing herself and her needs better that Daphne experiences being more enabled to think about things for herself and find her own solutions. This is an empowering and sustainable way of working. This deeper self-knowledge, self-awareness and self-understanding also contributes to Daphne’s decision-making in the last theme of ‘having a choice of whether to engage in supervision’.

In contrast to Christine and Daphne, Francesca represents the alternative perspective of a resistance to dig deeper and reveal or ‘unearth’ herself and difficulties she might be facing. Whilst both Christine and Francesca provoke an image of unearthing, they hold a contrasting stance towards this risky venture that may be embarked on in supervision with an EP. Despite opting to engage in supervision with an EP for over

ten years, revealing her deeper self is experienced as a risk she is averse to. Francesca holds the position of being the only supervisee who feels that there are some things she would not raise and finds knowing whether there is an expectation for her to bring certain things “a bit fuzzy” (Francesca, p. 5):

“...for me again, it’s that sharing, um, I don’t share everything that’s possibly worrying me, and I don’t really know if we’re supposed to or not, d’you know, it’s a bit fuzzy, whether um...does it matter if we really haven’t got anything that we need to bring, or do we actually need to bring something...” (Francesca, p. 5).

“...I just feel that if you start talking about certain things it just digs a deeper hole and you’re probably gonna need a whole day and months of...(laughs)...do you know, that’s yeah, yeah, and I suppose maybe it is a fear of being judged or, um, yeah, yeah.” (Francesca, p. 11-12).

She experiences it as a “hole”, reminding us of the idiom of ‘digging yourself a hole’ indicating that accessing her deeper self involves getting into an awkward situation that is a lot of work to trawl through. Francesca later questions whether the EP supervisor wants to even be in supervision either, suggesting that she may feel that there are some things EP supervisors would prefer not to explore and perhaps she also questions their capacity to tolerate what she might bring to share. A saying made more popular by actor Will Rogers suggests that ‘if you find yourself in a hole, stop digging’, and this appears quite similar to what Francesca chooses to do. This discomfort with the potential of where deeper exploration of an aspect of herself or something shared might lead to, is enhanced when a change of EP supervisors is enforced as she emphasises how averse she is to this “stranger” (p. 6) initially, and her consideration of “pulling out” (p. 7). This consideration is elaborated on further

with other participants in the final overarching theme discussed, 'having a choice of whether to engage in supervision'.

Eleni experiences and appreciates the genuine interest and passion an EP supervisor gives her alongside a genuine concern about what's "best" (p. 20) for her and where her interests lie. Eleni values the experience of EP supervisors, only sharing a theory or approach in a way that is "relevant and to do with" (p. 20) what is being spoken about. This authenticity, personal attention and focus on what matters to her, encourages a sense of feeling valued. Eleni experiences it to work best when EP supervisors are intuitive to what it is she is needing at that time. As a result, she experiences being understood and that what she brings is processed at a deeper level through clarification and summarising, therefore experiencing that her needs are being responded to.

"I would say that a facilitator needs to be maybe intuitive to, to bring that out of you, but to not be, um, talking as much as if it's about them, it's there to facilitate you, to bring you out." (Eleni, p. 2)

The issues Eleni explores within supervision with an EP explore deeper issues that reach beyond the capacity of her team. These are particularly hard to talk about such as, tolerance of the difficult feelings that arise from confrontational or challenging situations, children with life limiting illnesses, and in particular the death of a child she was working with. Eleni emphasises the importance of having the space within the context of her work to explore these issues. Eleni also values the ability of the EP supervisor to "round that off" (p. 11) and end those particularly difficult supervision sessions.

Similar to Eleni, Georgia experiences supervision with an EP to offer something deeper and beyond the team's capacity. She says, "It makes you sit and really think about, about things..." (Georgia, p. 5) and then later in the interview goes on to refer to "the rest of it" (p. 19). This statement evokes in me the image of an iceberg, where what lies above the surface is discussed with others in the team, but the larger proportion that lies beneath the surface and is the part that is brought to supervision with the EP:

"...you might say, oh, have you got, have you got supervision coming up, because it might be something you wanna talk about, there, because we can help deal with the practical sides of things, but actually, they're there to help support you with the, the rest of it..." (Georgia, p. 19).

Georgia also speaks of how personalised she experiences supervision with an EP to be and the EP's "ability to make it not about" themselves (p. 17). In particular, Georgia recognises how her increased self-awareness through reflection helps her to realise if there is a problem that was bothering or worrying her that she was previously unaware of.

"...you don't think you've got anything to talk about, until you get in the room, and then you start talking about caseload, and then you, find you've spoken for ages about something that you didn't even realise what even, even there, bothering you, um, yeah." (Georgia, p. 14).

It is through reflection and the opportunity to explore these things further through drawing back on them "again and again and again and again" (p. 21) that enables her to move on. Georgia also implies that some sort of repetitiveness is needed in order to increase her self-awareness and process an incremental understanding of things, digging deeper each time.

#### 4.4 A learning space

### A learning space

- Extending one's thinking
- Exploring new perspectives
- Reflecting on own capacity and abilities

All participants experience supervision with an EP as a place for learning, and I interpret this to occur in three main ways, through extending thinking, exploring new perspectives i.e. the 'vision' part of supervision, and reflecting on their own capacity and abilities. Supervision with an EP offers a space where new ideas and perspectives were introduced and considered in relation to what was being brought to supervision. This involved the opportunity for discovering, extending and changing thinking by revisiting things both inside and outside of sessions. Supervision with an EP also offers an increased awareness and confidence in supervisees' strengths and capacities already held and a recognition of areas of potential they could build on.

Angela experiences supervision with an EP as a place where she is able to recognise her skills, successes and contributions, fostering a sense of competency in herself. Yet it is also a humbling experience, as it is also a place where she will reflect on and come to terms with the limits of her capacity of what is in her control. She feels that her passion for her role is acknowledged, she feels appreciated that she has skills to offer, and she is empowered and encouraged to aim higher and consider her ambitions, looking forwards into the future. Angela expresses being supported in her endeavours to do this, through the intimate connection of a safe relationship described in the first overarching theme.



Barbara's expression "food for thought" (p. 4, 22) encapsulates two aspects of learning that supervision with an EP offered for her. 'Food' encompasses the new ideas and new perspectives that supervision with an EP offers, as she expressed that she would "pick" the EPs "brains" (p. 12, 22) and that the EP was a "fountain of knowledge" (p. 12) she was accessing. These new ideas were not only introduced in supervision, but sought after by Barbara, experimented with, held on to, and further processed later through replaying conversations Barbara had in supervision, all of this enabled her to consider alternative actions in her role. This learning over time is revisited in the next overarching theme of 'movement in time'.

"So, you know, I might come out of supervision and think, ah ok, I hadn't thought about that and, you know, I'll be playing things over in my mind and might think when I go back in to see that family, ok I'm gonna take a different, dunno, turn on this, or I'm gonna try this, or I'm gonna step back a bit or, you know..." (Barbara, p. 20).

This leads on to the "for thought" part of the expression where Barbara's thinking is extended, taken further through the facilitation or "pointers" (p. 4) offered from the EPs. Barbara uses supervision with an EP to search for explanations and would further contemplate on these after supervision. She therefore experiences a deeper understanding of herself and the emotional impact her work has on her, recognising her own developmental journey and nurturing her own competence and confidence.

Christine also values the new and alternative perspective supervision with an EP offers her, as she experiences making new connections and interpretations of work situations:

“...it’s that kind of opens you up to questioning your own, your thinking um, and, I know I’ve had many a light bulb moment when I haven’t, when I haven’t seen what they see, you know, so it, um, and that’s, that’s what, what really helps you to then understand the situation and why it’s troubling you or impacting so much on your kind of work, because so much of our job is about relationships, you know, we’re in relationships with families...” (Christine, p. 8-9).

Christine uses many words that reflect she learns to see aspects of her work differently and that remind us of the ‘vision’ part of the word supervision, such as “seen”, “view”, “perceiving”, and “perspective”. This contributes to her increased understanding of the other person, for example, a mother she works with, changing how she relates to and empathises with her.

“I think I understand her better...[...]...I can’t speak for her, but for me, I’m seeing her differently, I’m, I’m viewing her differently...” (Christine, p. 10).

Daphne experiences and appreciates the learning space and opportunities supervision with an EP provides, for example about theories around autism, and feels that the learning is pitched at and extends her thinking at just the right level for her. Opportunities are also offered to extend this after the sessions with further reading. A reflection of this engaging learning relationship is realised through her interest, enjoyment and fascination of it, creating an appetite for more. This is experienced as directly relevant and applicable to her work at the time, and optimal integration of theory and practice. This is also demonstrated through returning to things over time, as I referred to with Georgia in the overarching theme of ‘the deeper exploration of the self’. Daphne sees supervision with an EP contributing to her personal development and growth, in turn extending her capacity to think about, and understand others:

“...I think you know the, the more you kind of know about yourself, the more you know about other people, um, and why you know, people do what they do and that kind of thing and how they respond to you, the easier it is to form a relationship and to get a kind of working partnership and things going...” (Daphne, p. 25).

Daphne also experiences supervision with an EP to create a unique thinking space where she was able to have her thinking challenged. Daphne finds herself being opened up to new ideas, making new connections, and rethinking through questioning and hypothesising. This realisation of the impact of having her thinking questioned can have, encourages Daphne to adopt these questioning skills with others, both colleagues, parents and even family members.

Eleni experiences the EP supervisors to take on a nurturing role where their facilitation is pitched at the right level for her where theories and approaches are incorporated and integrated into what she raises:

“...they don’t do a lot of speaking, but yet somehow can...kind of drip-feed-come-guide you to sort of draw out what it is you’re wanting to say, trying to say, um whether it is you want to brainstorm that idea...” (Eleni, p. 2).

Eleni experiences supervision with an EP as an opportunity to extend her ideas and challenge her thinking, yet perceives what she gains from it to be dependent on her own contribution.

“I think it’s based on what you yourself offer, and what you give...[...]...you only get out of it what you put in” (Eleni, p. 4).

Eleni experiences a learning space to improve her communication, or become “in tune with” (p. 12) those she works with, and has her strengths recognised. Her self-

awareness increases in learning to deal with and manage confrontational situations and she is left to “work on those areas of grey” (p. 14). Eleni finds supervision with an EP to build her confidence and self-belief in her abilities and the transferable skills she can apply to her role, thus empowering her. Eleni used the expressions of being “tooled up” (p. 17), “geared up” (p. 17) and “armed” (p. 12), provoking a sense of strengthening and feeling equipped to face her day-to-day challenges.

Francesca experiences using supervision with an EP and the EP’s knowledge to move forward in her journey of learning and discovery, extending her thinking, and taking it “to the next level” (p.8). Francesca is able to pursue her interests further after a session with the encouragement and direction of an EP supervisor. Francesca experiences the EP supervisor as someone who might take more of a lead in the direction of the session, guiding it through their questioning. This is in contrast to other participants’ views where it is felt that the content is shaped by what the supervisees themselves bring. This may contribute to Francesca’s difficulty in opening up as I identified in the earlier theme of ‘deeper exploration of the self’. However, Francesca views the perspective of the EP supervisors to be one that helps her overcome barriers in her role. Francesca uses the expression of being “up against a brick wall” (p. 12-13) implying that the EP supervisor’s view is ‘higher’ in some way:

“...if you’re working with a child with a certain need and you’re up against a brick wall, and nobody on the team, sometimes you know, we all try to brainstorm, and we try, but it’s getting, I think somebody, outside with a different perspective and probably more qualified at, at that role, mm.” (Francesca, p. 12-13).

This is a reflection of a feeling of inferiority or a perceived inequality in the perception of herself in relation to the EP supervisor, that is contrary to the 'equal-ness' mentioned earlier in the theme 'a safe relationship'. Perhaps it is not surprising then, that Francesca uses this different angle, or new perspective that is removed from the team or "circle" (p. 8) to seek feedback, reassurance, validation and normalising.

Georgia also experiences seeking a reframe from supervision with an EP that enables her to see things from a new and different perspective or as she puts it, "completely flip how I was looking at something" (Georgia, p. 6). She believes that it is the way the questions are put to her, that enables her to break out from a cycle of thinking.

Georgia experiences making use of supervision with an EP in supporting the development of her independence and ability to carry out her role. It appears that over time, supervision with an EP contributes to her personal maturity and growth. Through reflecting on her achievements in supervision, her confidence grows in her ability to manage situations, supporting both herself and others. Supervision with an EP seems to also contribute significantly to Georgia's resilience in managing feelings, and strength in tolerating situations such as those of not knowing.

"...having that chance, to, really reflect, helps you, over time, it has really helped me, kind of...yeah, learn from past mistakes, or ways of dealing with things, or, or managing, managing those feelings when, a similar situation that's caused me issues before has come up, I kind of feel much more prepared to deal with it because you reflect back on how you've dealt with it before..." (Georgia, p. 22).

This overarching theme of 'a learning space' was considered in three ways, that of extending one's thinking beyond that which occurs within the team, through

accessing new and different perspectives, and finally through the reflection and consequently acknowledgement of one's own capacity and abilities. This learning and growth occurs gradually, and over a long period of time, leading on to the next overarching theme of how participants experienced movement within time.

#### 4.5 Movement within time

### Movement within time

- Time
- Across time
- Bridging of identity
- Movements in time

This overarching theme was prevalent in four out of the seven participants and seems in part relevant to length of time that the FSKWs have been engaging supervision with an EP for, adding to the uniqueness of these findings. This theme is notably intertwined with the previous themes already discussed, in that the experience of 'a safe relationship' is built upon and reinforced over time, creating the space for the deeper exploration of the changing self over time, and that learning is also a process that ensues over time.

Supervision with an EP over an extended period takes on a significant role in the bridging of Eleni's identity over time. Eleni speaks of a particular EP supervisor when she first started having supervision and after having supervision with other EP supervisors, she was now being supervised by this same EP supervisor again. In the time in between, Eleni spoke of having a major illness and how the EP supervisor was aware of that time she was off work and how she was during her recovery where she

had to re-learn some fundamental skills. Supervision with this current EP plays an important role in bridging the person she was who the EP knew before this event, with the person she is now:

“...because of how long I’ve known [EP] is that [EP], reminds me of different things that I knew, and because part of what I had, you do, you do forget certain things, but, [EP]’s done that during our supervision, reminded me, well you used to do that, and remember this and remember that, and that’s allowed me to go over a lot of things...” (Eleni, p. 15).

This bridging of her identity over time was also apparent when Eleni was asked about whether she viewed this relationship to change over time, and she saw herself as both consistent over time and as someone who has changed:

“I don’t think I’ve changed that (emphasis) much in how I come to the meeting, actually...I still talk about things in the same way, I just think if anything, my own experience has grown, in a lot of ways, so I can talk about things very differently now at meetings and understand things differently, um, sorry what was the question again?” (Eleni, p. 7).

Forgetting the question seemed to parallel what she had said earlier about forgetting her skills following this illness and then later, she adds that the EP supervisor would also have changed, but taken to a more extreme level, of being another person.

“...I just think, you’ve changed as well, I’ve, I’ve changed, you develop over time, you develop new skills, um that would be the same for [EP], you know, [EP]’s another person...” (Eleni, p. 19).

The fluctuation between being fairly consistent in her own identity yet projecting on to the EP supervisor that they might be another person, seems to reflect how this significant life event still challenges her own identity. The role of the supervisory

relationship then, through continuity, is in part, that of bridging her past and present identity.

Georgia experiences movement within an academic year, that of a cyclical annual pattern:

“...it’s usually the middle one...[...]...which is usually offloading around...[...]...and then, the next one next term’s usually, quite clunky cos you got all new caseload, new families...[...]...and it’s the one in the middle that’s kind of generally a bit more, reflective about the things that have, that were worrying you before ...[...]...cos our job goes in a cycle, I suppose, supervision tends to go in that, that cycle as well...[...]...there’s, there’s two where I’ve got things where I go with a list, and there’s probably one in the middle, where I’m reflecting on what’s happened (laughing) and planning what’s coming, um, yeah.” (Georgia, p. 15-16).

Within this cycle, Georgia seems to experience supervision with an EP as a punctuation point in time where she often uses the opportunity to look back, revisit things, as well as looking ahead and planning for the future. She speaks about this occurring across the year, but also about doing this between supervision sessions:

“...I keep (laughs), I do keep thinking back to actually the conversations that we’d had around it, um, and then, you start as you get nearer to the next one, you start thinking about actually what you’re gonna, what you, you’ve got to feedback on how things have changed and, and how you’re gonna move forward again.” (Georgia, p. 12).

Supervision with an EP therefore provides a space for reflection and processing of the past as well as preparation for the future. This continual alternation between looking back and looking forward may be related to her variable anticipation of supervision distorting her sense of time lapsing since the last supervision session. This momentum might be disrupted, should the appointments change too often.



For Christine, supervision with an EP has a role in providing continuity through remembering things said, reflecting back and thinking what to bring next time:

“...I like to review things with [EP], to kind of talk about, well this is what happened with that, so we kind of follow a thread through sometimes about a particular situation so that, um, it, it, it brings it to a close, or a conclusion, so that you can move on from it and then there’s something else...” (Christine, p. 20).

This continuity also provides a role in being able to mark the movement from closure of one issue towards opening up the next priority, or as Barbara named them, “burning issues” (p. 4).

For Barbara, time makes a significant contribution in changing how she views both supervision with an EP and herself:

“...I suppose, I don’t see it as criticism, I see it as support and help now, whereas I think maybe in the very early days I might have felt, oh ok, hm, do you know what I mean, but I think maybe that’s about me and my role, I’ve grown and understood and I’m...[...]...years older now and huh (laughs) do you know what I mean?” (Barbara, p. 13).

Barbara’s reference to changing her view of supervision from a more critical stance to a more supportive stance follows on from a description around supervision with an EP helping her think about where a child was developmentally. Similarly, Barbara views herself in age, as well as her perceptions, to also be on a developmental journey. A comment shortly after this of “I wish sometimes it was a bit longer” (p. 18) may well reflect a wish to spend more time for supporting herself on this developmental journey. Supervision with an EP therefore has a role in supporting her on her own developmental journey and concurrently changing her perceptions over time. This

demonstrates how her personal development over time relates to the previous super-ordinate theme of 'exploring new perspectives' under the overarching theme, 'a learning space'.

#### 4.6 Having a choice of whether to engage in supervision

Having a choice of whether to engage in supervision

- Awareness of own needs and dependency
- Ambivalent feelings towards its value

This overarching theme is noted in six out of the seven participants where there is a tension experienced around the perceived value of supervision with an EP that lies alongside an awareness of one's own needs and dependency towards it. This arises over time, both within a session-to-session basis but is particularly enhanced during times of a change in EP supervisor. Eleni seems to hold the position of someone who did not appear to question the offer of supervision with an EP. This is not very surprising considering the crucial role it played in bridging her identity over time for her as discussed in the last overarching theme.

Angela seemed to fluctuate in her awareness of her perceived need for supervision with an EP. On one hand she shows appreciation that they are available and accessible or "just close by" (p. 16). She ensures that she keeps to the appointments if things are not going so well as if this is a way of ensuring her survival. This provokes an image of staying afloat, where she looks ahead to it, to the extent of becoming fearful of

becoming dependent on it. On the other hand, she experiences an ambivalence and questions this dependency and recognises she has other support systems she could make use of:

“Um, well sometimes with supervision, I think, um, ah, do I need to do this, because it’s like um (hands gesture in circular motion), not Groundhog Day thing, but do you know what I mean? And sometimes, I let it, if everything is going fine and smooth, I might, um, and I’m really, really busy, I may postpone it...” (Angela, p.21).

Angela’s experiences a response to having a change in EP supervisor as one of powerlessness, as something that was “done for us” (p. 15). She sees it as a loss she has to accept which she does through attempting to rationalise it. She implies a sense of resilience to that loss and perhaps an element of self-preservation, “you can’t get attached” (p. 15). She denies the closeness that she spoke of earlier in the interview and as discussed in the first theme of ‘a safe relationship’ after the loss she experiences. It is interesting to note that resilience was a theme she had spoken of earlier that she finds herself needing to apply at these times of changing EP supervisor. An element of having a choice remains in place though, as Angela feels she can ask to change EP supervisor if she wants to.

Barbara also experiences and acknowledges a need for supervision with an EP, a sense of being reliant on it, especially at more difficult times, and also a wish for it to be more frequent. Christine also expresses a strong dependency on using the space in supervision as she needs to, to meet her needs:

“...I really didn’t think I would know how to function without that...[...]...I don’t think it would be safe in the context of my role...” (Christine, p. 15).

Christine ensures she is communicating what she feels she needs to get from it and the boundaries of the space. Christine emphasises the importance of the EP's skill set, abilities and knowledge, and it is these qualities she sees in the EPs that enable her to value their perspective that she seeks during supervision. In particular, she believes they need to be more experienced than her. She fears that a supervisory relationship is at risk, as she has experienced in the past in a different working context. This then results in Christine's confidence in being able to make a very quick judgement, "right from the word go" (p. 7) of whether this relationship might "work" (p. 7) or not, and within that, accepting a difference in styles of supervision after changing EP supervisors.

Like Christine, Daphne also seems to remember a negative experience of supervision, but with an EP in this context. This involved her not looking forward to supervision with an EP and instances where an EP supervisor sometimes didn't keep to arranged meetings and a sense of regret for taking the risk. This seems to play a big part in rocking the boat of whether she can trust the supervisory relationship again and she consequently ensures to defend herself from this 'rejection', noting that there is other support within the team she could turn to.

"...I just thought, ooh, I don't know, if I can be bothered with it, I don't, I don't need (emphasises 'need') that, I didn't want something that was going to be like that, and so I think I became a bit kind of, ambivalent towards it, or, I'm not actually sure I can be bothered with this" (Daphne, p. 11).

Daphne experienced a tension between not wanting to take the risk to enter a supervisory relationship with an EP she was unsure would be suitable for her, yet remained tempted by the potential value she recognised it had:

“...I ummed and ahed and thought, mmm...would this be useful again? Would I like this? Have I missed it? Would this be good?” (Daphne, p. 10).

She recognises that she perceives it to be valuable, “I’d kind of got such a lot from having supervision” (p. 17) and recognises the impact her work might have on her and her need to offload but experience an ambivalence in this as a tension remains after an experience of an unsuccessful supervisory relationship. There is a sense of regret for not following her gut feeling based on impressions from brief encounters that this particular supervisory relationship or match wasn’t suitable or wouldn’t “gel” (p. 4, 18). At that time Daphne chose to have a break from and withdraw from supervision with an EP but still questions her decision to take that risk at that time:

“...maybe I didn’t give it enough of a shot, but I just thought no no no, I can’t be bothered with all of this, it just seemed like a waste of my time to be honest...” (Daphne, p. 12)

“...it didn’t occur to me, not to, I’d, looking back now, I wonder whether or not if I’d been better off just to say actually...Can I have a break for a little while? Can I just think about this?” (Daphne, p. 17).

It is as if Daphne needs to be enticed back into trusting a supervisor and into supervision with an EP in itself. Through an informal and negotiated trial with her next EP supervisor, the all-important match of what the supervisor could offer and what Daphne sought after was spoken about explicitly and her trust repaired.

Francesca also experiences ambivalent feelings towards the value of supervision with an EP and considers “pulling” out of supervision with her first change of EP supervisor. Whilst recognising her own need for it, Francesca becomes averse to it particularly at times of changing EP supervisor, taking time to adjust and settle to the change, and trust a new person. This is emphasised if Francesca meets her EP supervisor for the first time without having seen them before.

“...I think sometimes meeting a stranger, um...yeah, it’s a bit diff...when I feel I would probably be quiet and say, no, everything’s fine, just to get, get away (laughs)...” (Francesca, p. 6-7).

Despite this, over time Francesca, feels she has a better understanding of the purpose of supervision with an EP, is more prepared for what to bring and continues to hold it as a positive experience.

Georgia experiences a certainty in her value of supervision with an EP and its significant contribution to her role, “it is, a massive part in actually, in what we do” (p. 23). She also experiences her EP supervisors to value it as much as she does, and feels the whole service that commission it, values it too. On the other hand, there is some inconsistency and new doubt in how much she values it following a recent change of EP supervisor after having the same EP supervisor for many years.

“...it’s very different at the moment, it’s not quite holding the same value as it did, but I’m persevering with it, because obviously, you’ve got to build that relationship before, before you can make those judgements really...” (Georgia, p. 4-5).

“...I think, I, it’s, it always holds value, even though now it’s not quite as it was before, it still holds a lot of value, for me, because it’s, it’s still an opportunity to ex, to talk about those things with somebody else...” (Georgia, p. 10).

This change leads to Georgia wanting to value the diversity between EP supervisors, yet still feeling the loss of her previous EP supervisor and the benefits that long relationship brought, inevitably affecting how she perceives supervision with an EP now, and as it was at the time. Despite the change, Georgia experiences more of a dependency on supervision with an EP when her stress increases in her role. She believes that her role would be “extremely challenging” (p. 3) and experiences it to protect the relationships of those she works with. With an awareness of her dependency comes a fear of losing supervision with an EP, to the point that the idea becomes unbearable:

“...I would be absolutely devastated (laughs) if they ever, pulled it from us...” (Georgia, p. 11).

“...I can’t imagine, there’d be uproar here (laughs) if it disappeared for us, as a, as a team (laughs), it wouldn’t, it wouldn’t happen...” (Georgia, p. 23).

The language Georgia uses above, “they” (p. 11), “from us” (p. 23) implies that this is something outside of her control, in addition to her use of the word “lucky” twice earlier in the interview. This describes how fortunate she feels for having the same EP supervisor for such a long time, knowing that this hasn’t occurred anywhere else in the service. She also feels fortunate for having access to supervision with an EP in the first place, knowing that one of the areas doesn’t have it at all.

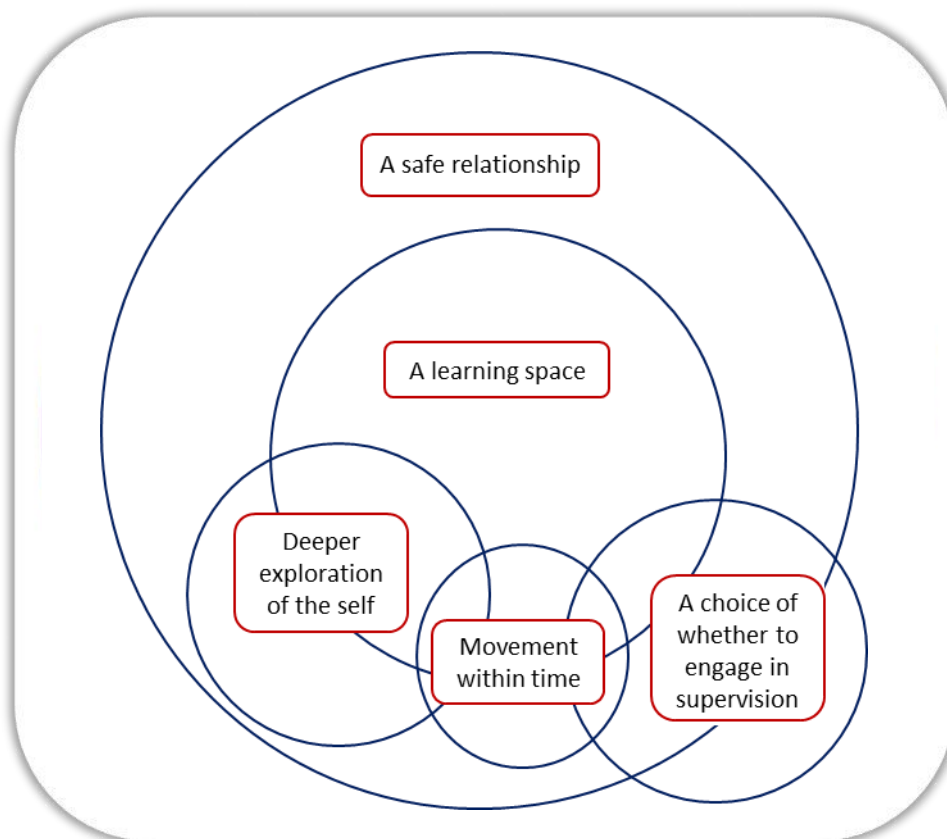
## **5.0 DISCUSSION**

In this chapter I will first demonstrate how I interpret the above overarching themes to relate to each other. I will then explain how each of the themes and more specifically, how each of the super-ordinate themes relate to existing literature. This chapter is loosely structured around the super-ordinate themes in order to reflect the texture of experiences captured in the findings. The findings are then considered alongside the frameworks introduced in the literature review before proposing areas for potential future research, reviewing the implications and limitations of this study and ending with concluding comments.

### **5.1 Bringing the themes together**

Having elaborated on each of the overarching themes in turn and illustrated how each theme manifests itself in each of the participant's experiences. The figure below represents how I spatially related the overarching themes to each other. The proportions of the circles approximately correspond to the number of super-ordinate themes within the overarching themes and are not mutually exclusive.





**Figure 7:** A spatial-relational diagram of overarching themes

The above representation summarises some of the following key overarching findings I interpreted supervisees to experience in supervision with EPs. ‘Movement in time’ is a theme that overlaps with and relates to all the other themes because the experience of supervision with EPs is ongoing over time and therefore not a static one. The supervisory space offers opportunities to reflect back and think ahead. ‘A safe relationship’ is a fundamental element of supervision with EPs that encompasses and is a prerequisite for enabling the other themes to ensue. The establishment of this relationship evolves over time. ‘A learning space’ is applicable to both the role and the person in role, and is dependent on the context of ‘a safe relationship’. This relationship provides the space to facilitate learning. Learning occurs over time

through re-visiting ideas repeatedly. Part of learning includes learning about the self, a self that is not static in its nature, but changes over time and is a continuous ongoing discovery. An individual's needs influences the choice of whether to engage in supervision and may fluctuate over time and between sessions. The decision can be largely determined by the experience of that supervisory relationship and whether that creates a safe space for learning and the deeper exploration of the self.

## **5.2 The research questions**

The primary research question this study set out to explore was: What are the experiences of FSKWs engaging in supervision with EPs? The key findings within each of the themes will be discussed in light of the research questions using each of the super-ordinate themes as the insight gained at this level of the analysis was observed across more than half the participants, are both present and particularly insightful in the context of our understanding of inter-professional supervision.

## **5.3 Research questions 1 and 2**

1. How is this supervisory relationship experienced by FSKWs?
2. How is this perceived to differ from other types of supervision FSKWs receive within the team?

The first research question was primarily addressed by the first overarching theme, 'a safe relationship'. Supervisees experienced their relationship with the EP supervisors to have this distinguishing features, and these to be distinct from the relationships

they have with others in their team. The second research question was also addressed by the first overarching theme, 'a safe relationship', but also with the overarching theme of a 'deeper exploration of the self'. In addition, two of the super-ordinate themes of 'extending one's thinking' and 'exploring new perspectives' capture what supervisees experienced supervision with EPs to offer that was different from, or extended their experiences from within the team. Both the first two research questions were also considered and further addressed in the super-ordinate theme of 'ambivalent feelings towards its value' where supervisees' experience of this relationship largely contributes to their value-judgement of it and the decision of whether to continue and persevere with it. The themes that address the first two research questions are elaborated on first.

### **5.3.1 A safe relationship**

This overarching theme was the largest and is the element that seemed to dominate the experience of supervision for the participants. This is in line with Davys & Beddoe's (2010) overview of supervision where the supervisory relationship is perceived as the medium through which any function of supervision is achieved. It is the consensus in the clinical supervision literature that the supervisory relationship is key to any consequential process and outcome (Scaife et al., 2008). The complexity of the processes in which the relationship sits, mean that linear causality cannot be assumed about what specific aspects of this relationship are effective (Scaife et al., 2008). The findings of this study contribute to an illumination of the perceived experiences of

these supervisory relationships in this context and can inform our hypotheses for what aspects are key.

Participants of this study experienced a safe relationship through an intimate connection, a holding presence, a trusting space where one can be true to oneself, a joint venture, and the ability to tolerate catharsis. Literature on supervision has frequently identified qualities in a supervisor such as authenticity, respect, humility and humour that are believed to promote a positive supervisory relationship and encourage a supervisee to share (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Shoet, 2012). It is the process of sharing that is thought to define the space within which transformational learning can take place for both parties (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

### **5.3.2 An intimate connection**

An intimate connection was experienced by participants that appears to have parallels to the intimacy described in attachment theory (Bowlby, 1988, 1999; Tizard, 2009). The warmth, closeness, safety and understanding participants describe is emphasised further as the longevity of the supervisory relationship increases. The extent of this was reflected by two of the participants being tearful during the interviews demonstrating how touched they are by this experience. This relates closely to a key underpinning concept of the person centred approach (Rogers, 1957) that of unconditional positive regard. Rogers (1957) describes a warm, caring and empathic understanding and an equal acceptance of both positive and negative aspects of the other's experience, without a passing of judgement. This is crucially an accurate

understanding, sensing the other's world as if it was your own, without being entangled in it and where one's remarks fit in precisely with the tone and mood (Rogers, 1957). Wilkins (2000) extends the possibility that this concept of unconditional positive regard is similar to or the same as 'agape' (the charity form of love), and it being one of the most challenging attributes to hold as it is dependent on the attitude the person holds for themselves. Similarly, van Deurzen & Young (2009) view the supervisor's willingness to be present in listening and attending to concerns sensitively, being available to the way a supervisee experiences 'being-in-the-world' an attitude towards another and a way of relating that is inspired and guided by love, yet whilst maintaining a delicate balance between detachment and involvement.

### **5.3.3 Other features of a supervisor**

It is important to recognise that all participants in this study were females who had engaged in supervision with both female and male EP supervisors. Gender and marriage status were named by two of the participants and although they did not form a theme, they are aspects that could easily be overlooked. Gender is one amongst other social GRRAAACCEESS (Gender, Race, Religion, Age, Ability, Appearance, Class, Culture, Ethnicity, Education, Employment, Sexuality and Spirituality) (Burnham, 1992) that will inevitably be present within any supervisory relationship, and can have an impact on the experience. These social GRRAAACCEESS may influence how understood a supervisee feels and how these might impact the boundaries that are agreed on how the space is used. Daphne's use of the term 'casting couch' reminds us of the potential awareness of gender difference and even

inequality that might be experienced by supervisees. These call for complex conversations and therefore might easily be left unnamed. Humour might enable it to be named in some cases, and it is possible that supervisees would benefit from EP supervisors more explicitly discussing any differences and the potential implications that might arise resulting from this.

#### **5.3.4 A holding presence**

Participants experienced the safety of the supervisory relationship as different from what is experienced within the team, offering support beyond the team's capacity. The finding that participants experience supervision with EPs as a safe and trusting space suggests that there is some overlap in how participants experience supervision with experiences of therapy. The key overlapping feature being the safe relationship and the holding presence. Participants experienced supervision with an EP to have a holding presence that was protective, stable, and powerful, or as Christine articulated "very potent" (p. 21). This was achieved through the security of the regular, consistent agreed time boundaries, "it was very very consistent" (Georgia, p. 4), and the flexibility of being prioritised at times of need, "just knowing that it's there" (Georgia, p. 11). This holding presence was also achieved as the supervisees' wellbeing is prioritised and brought to the forefront, "makes me think of my own wellbeing" (Angela, p. 14) supporting supervisees in "how to put boundaries in" (Daphne, p. 4) for themselves. Howard (2007, p. 25) describes the similarity of supervision to working therapeutically, where clear boundaries through the "regularity, privacy and

reliability of supervision” reinforce the essential sense of safety that permits the exploration of the self, the more sensitive and anxiety provoking personal material.

Experiences of participants ranged from being unsure of the difference, “supervision is the same as therapy, counselling, or is different?” (Angela, p. 24) to “well very clearly, it, the boundaries are clearly that it’s about work, work practice and reflecting on my role” (Christine, p. 18). Scaife et al. (2008) and Carroll (2007) distinguish supervision from therapy or counselling through its focus on work and practice rather than life. Page & Wosket (2001) also recognised the ambiguity, overlap and intertwining nature between counselling and supervision and believed it can only be distinguished through the practice of the supervisor. The findings extend this distinction with the element of learning and skill development in relation to supervisees’ work with families. The personal and professional overlap raised by some participants also reflects some ambiguity between therapy and supervision, however the personal material is brought for a different purpose in supervision with EPs.

The personal material or “deeper hole” (Francesca, p. 11) brought to supervision that you might “need a whole day and months” (Francesca, p. 11-12) can be perceived as very anxiety provoking. This feeling of anxiety Francesca describes relates to Melanie Klein’s shifting between the paranoid-schizoid and depressive positions or mental states. A paranoid-schizoid position is that of an earlier one of predominant anxiety and fear of persecution with a focus on self-preservation, and the depressive (or object-related) position is that of a more thoughtful prevailing attitude with concern for the other (Waddell, 2002). Moving from the depressive state to the paranoid-

schizoid state is often as a result of intensified anxiety (Waddell, 2002). Building on Klein's work, Donald Winnicott distinguished between the true self and the false self, where the false self is set up to protect the true self and ranging from pathological to healthy degrees (Abram, 2008). The extent of this degree of the use of false self and whether growth of an individual will be promoted will depend on repeated experiences of quality interaction by another, underpinned by emotional authenticity and enabling a one to feel they have a source of goodness within and a good relationship to a good 'object' (Waddell, 2002). Using these aforementioned frameworks enables us to consider the role supervision can have in serving the primary aim of containing, bearing and metabolising a supervisee's anxiety in relation to their work in order for the supervisee to contain the client's anxieties (Howard, 2007). Containment being when the emotional experiences are processed and made understandable (Bion, 1962; Music, 2010).

The challenge for supervisors and supervisees is to create a supervision space where there is sufficient mutual trust and respect to withstand an examination of the multi-layered emotional work of human service practice...[...]...In order for this to happen both participants require a clear understanding of the boundaries of supervision, the courage to face the fears of exposing feelings and the willingness to value moments of uncertainty (Davys & Beddoe, 2010, p. 160).

The holding presence participants experienced appears to be one that contains, prioritises their wellbeing beyond what other relationships in the team have the capacity to do.



### 5.3.5 A trusting space where one can be true to self

The trust the participants experienced, seems to relate to Rogers' (1957) unconditional positive regard introduced in 'an intimate connection', and the implications of this extend to as far as that as one accepts themselves, they then become more accepting of the world (Wilkins, 2000). This could have a profound impact on FSKWs empathy and relatedness to the families they work with. The participants experienced a confidentiality that was re-affirmed through the process of contracting, clarifying boundaries, the framework they work within. What is shared, stays in the 'room' as Georgia put it, "you know when you're in here and that door shuts...[...]...you know that it is, safe, and in this room" (p. 20). This need for this private space may parallel what the families they work with might seek from the FSKWs.

This trusting space participants experienced where they could be authentic to their true selves was of paramount importance, as Christine captured, "I could just be, myself and say anything" (p. 3) and "you didn't even have to think about how you shared something, or what you shared" (p. 6). Trust is the firm belief in the truth that the other is reliable and authentic and can be perceived as the foundation on which supervision is built upon and creates the conditions for supervisee empowerment (McBride & Skau, 1995; Oxford University Press, 2004). Smythe et al. (2009, p. 19) believe that "deep and reverend trust in oneself, the other and the process enables both to be moved and changed". Trusting that a worthwhile experience will emerge,

creates the freedom to 'play' which then reveals unexpected but valuable insights (Smythe et al., 2009).

The findings demonstrated that it can take time for supervisees to build up their trust, to the point where it feels like there is a 'net'. The establishment of trust is an essential, yet complex process as it requires a willingness to take risks and be open and reveal one's core values (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Pack, 2012). "I couldn't cope with someone who was strange or threatening who I didn't feel comfortable with, and felt intimidated by...challenging my views and my thoughts and wanting to probe why and that kind of thing" (Daphne, p. 6). With this quote Daphne illustrates that with the more sensitive and personal material about work that is brought to supervision with an EP, comes the risk of feelings of "incompetence, inadequacy, ignorance, guilt, and shame" (Howard, 2007, p. 25). During the process of negotiating expectations and sharing information the supervisee will be making assessments as to how safe they feel in the relationship, and as the supervisor assesses how much support the supervisee needs and how they might respond to challenge, respect is demonstrated and trust is established (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). "Trust creates a safe enough space for joint reflection" (van Deurzen & Young, 2009, p. 65) but this risks being shaken up with each change of supervisor. As Bartle (2015, p. 45) reminds us, "relational aspects of supervision...[...]...is most pertinent at the beginning of a supervisory relationship". There was an example in the findings of trust not being established from early on, and also notice that Francesca who perceived that, "there hasn't been any real boundaries" (Francesca, p. 1) found it harder to trust the EP supervisors.

Repeated experiences of learning and deep exploration builds up and re-affirms the trust established between supervisee and EP supervisor. McBride & Skau (1995) believe trust is closely related to confidentiality, consistency, dependability, supportiveness, honesty, sincerity and the assumption of the positive intention of others. Pack's (2012) explorative phenomenological study of clinical supervision with social workers also suggests it could be the suspended judgement, the balance between positive comments and constructive critique, the experience of supervisors and their knowledge base that contributes to supervisors being a safe person to talk to and facilitate your learning. The findings suggest that unconditional positive regard and repeated experiences of being understood by a person who helps make meaning of difficult experiences also make an invaluable contribution to this.

### **5.3.6 A joint venture**

Participants experienced the relationship to be that of a joint venture, where there is an experience of equal-ness, mutual respect and a journey that both parties embark on together. This co-production reflects and perhaps even models the collaborative way FSKWs might work with their clients and increases the capacity for reflective practice. Hawkins & Shohet's (2012) definition of supervision involves "a joint endeavour" and they encourage joint responsibility through contracting and the revisiting of the supervision agreement/contract.

In contrast to this, there were also indications of a sense of unequal-ness in the relationships where the supervisee experienced themselves as inferior to the

supervisor, for example when Francesca spoke of the EP supervisor helping her overcome a brick wall and when Barbara expressed surprise at being on the 'same wavelength'. Davys & Beddoe (2010) propose that 'power' can be at different levels, legitimate power of policies and protocols, personal power and charismatic power. Charismatic power takes into account the cultural status of the supervisor in the context of the organisation, possibly making it harder for critical feedback to be voiced by the supervisee (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Davys & Beddoe (2010) promote the importance that both are clear about any power relations in the relationship and have a frank discussion about this, rather than continuing a mistaken belief that the supervision relationship is equal. This enables the boundaries and parameters to be more clearly defined (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

The findings indicate that in this context, there is a mutuality that is more genuine as the line management dimension of supervision is removed, but there nevertheless remains an imbalance stemming from the focus on the supervisee and from the respective status and hierarchy of roles within the organisation of the LA, reinforced by aspects such as qualifications that the supervisees are well aware of and named. This is captured in the Education branch of the social GRRAACCEESS introduced earlier. Despite this, the participants still experience a joint venture in a number of other ways, for example in the co-production and negotiation of the supervisory space, the boundaries of confidentiality and through the sharing of practice.

The HCPC (2015, sec. 2.9, 2.10) standards of proficiency require practitioner psychologists to "understand the power imbalance between practitioners and service

users and how this can be managed appropriately” and “be able to recognise appropriate boundaries and understand the dynamics of power relationships”. Dunsmuir & Leadbetter’s (2010, p. 20) professional supervision guidelines for practice define aspects of ‘reflective communication’ as “listening attentively, avoiding the use of power”. The DECP (2002) professional practice guidelines state that:

An essential underpinning for supervision is equality of respect between supervisor and supervisee. This does not imply equality of experience or power or knowledge but, rather, recognises how any imbalances in these areas could jeopardise equality of respect and prejudice the process of negotiation through which mutual respect is maintained. (Division of Educational and Child Psychology, 2002, para. 5.2.3).

The imbalance of power inherent in supervision needs to be recognised...In all circumstances, supervisors need to be particularly sensitive to ways in which race, culture or gender influences may affect the supervisory process (Division of Educational and Child Psychology, 2002, para. 5.2.4).

Whilst attempts may have been made to address these guidelines, there still remain some more subtle aspects of the power dynamics in a supervisory relationship that need to be deliberated by EP supervisors.

### **5.3.7 The catharsis the relationship can tolerate**

Participants used the supervisory space with an EP to express their frustrations and offload things that are prone to “simmer away” (Barbara, p. 19) without this cathartic experience. It has been recognised that supervision provides the space for ventilation of emotion (Davys & Beddoe, 2010, p. 190). In Hawkins and Shohet’s (2012) framework of supervision, as used by the EPS, encourage supervisors to use a variety of the six categories of intervention, one of which is ‘cathartic’, described as the

release of tension or of painful emotion that can at times be disabling. Heron (2001) writes of this distress being at surface and deeper levels and a role of a practitioner being that of helping one work through their defences. Heron (2001) distinguishes between interventions that work with content (what is being named) and process (what is not being named). Heron (2001) writes of catharsis releasing disorganised or alternatively transforming distressful energy and leads to spontaneous re-evaluation, offering a new perspective of meaning as the findings demonstrated in the super-ordinate theme of 'exploring new perspectives'. This suggests that this catharsis may be a prerequisite to being able to see those new perspectives.

With Winnicott's concept of the mother who is supported by another adult in a 'nursing triad' and who can bear the child's inability to cope with the external world; the supervisor enables the emotional disturbance to be felt, survived, reflected upon and learnt from (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). "Supervision thus provides a container that holds the helping relationship within the 'therapeutic triad'" (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p. 4). A supervisee in Bartle's (2015, p. 44) paper describes choosing what to bring to supervision "like laundry that's in a mess and needs to be sorted" reflecting a "positive working alliance, underpinned by a container-contained relationship". Using this analogy, to bring one's laundry, it is exposing, takes time and demands non-judgemental attention. I would consider a trusting relationship with unconditional positive regard as a necessary foundation to tolerating these frustrations. In addition, as EP supervisors need to see themselves as separate from the supervisee to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the emotional material brought to supervision and so they

need to access their own containment through their own supervision for supervisors (Bartle, 2015; Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

### **5.3.8 Good-enough supervision**

The safe relationship has been key to these participants' experiences of EP supervision. It cannot be assumed that any person, supervisor, or relationship is perfect. In shifting from ideal perfection to 'good-enough' (Bibby, 2010; Winnicott, 1971), or from a paranoid-schizoid position, a fragmentation of good and bad, to a depressive position of coherence and thinking (Bibby, 2010; Klein, 1997), one needs to tolerate that there will be good and bad elements as both supervisors and supervisees strive with this joint venture.

A supervisor must hold the position of simultaneously being the one who knows and does not know, who has their own understanding, but does not know what connections the supervisee will form (Bibby, 2010). Learning is undertaken together and the work needed to develop a communicating relationship will be difficult and time consuming, but can be endured (Bibby, 2010). Given the option of choosing whether to continue engaging in supervision (the overarching theme discussed further later), could be a reflection that the relationship is good-enough for that supervisee at that time.

### **5.3.9 Reflections on a safe relationship**

I have discussed how the supervisory relationship is experienced by FSKWs and described some distinguishing features of the EP supervisory relationship that go above and beyond other supervisory experiences FSKWs access within their team. The intimacy and warmth and non-judgemental understanding; the protective, the holding and caring presence that is there to support; the level of trust that means they can be true and authentic to themselves; the capacity of the relationship to tolerate a cathartic offloading of difficult emotions; and the experience of this being a somewhat mutual co-produced joint venture. These all contribute to a safety that is experienced and is unique to this supervisory relationship. This relationship models ways of working that can be mirrored in the FSKWs' relationships with the service users, through empathy understanding and the capacity to tolerate difficult emotions. These findings are fitting with theories of unconditional positive regard, and containment, which creates the conditions, and lays the foundation for the capacity to be open to learning and a deeper exploration of the self. The next overarching themes of a learning space and the deeper exploration of the self, address the third and fourth research questions of what influence and impact is this supervision with an EP perceived to have on their personal and professional development and practice.

### **5.3.10 How a safe relationship enables learning**

As with therapeutic relationships, it is recognised in the literature that the quality of the supervisor-supervisee relationship and alliance is key in determining the influence



and learning that takes place in this space (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Osborne & Burton, 2014; Scaife et al., 2008). If there is no containment through this relationship for individuals, they become susceptible to processes that prevent them from connecting to the primary task, and consequently, they will not be able to engage effectively in learning (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015).

Participants demonstrated how they experienced supervision with an EP to have this capacity to tolerate their frustrations, illustrated by the quote, “it’s knowing, do you feel confident enough that, if that comes out, that you can, that can be managed in that situation” (Daphne, p. 7). Winnicott believed that it is the relationship itself that acts as a container, the capacity to hold and tolerate tension, anxiety and frustration, rather than expelling it, allowing the supervisee to trust in the world and security in themselves (Bibby, 2010). This could be paralleled to when a mother is in a state of ‘reverie’ where her and her child are ‘as one’, and she is able to mentally digest and process the baby’s experiences, sort out the nature of them, give it meaning and to be the thinker (Bibby, 2010; Bion, 1962; Salzberger-Wittenberg, Williams, & Osborne, 1999). She then returns them in a bearable form alongside the reassurance that it will survive (Bibby, 2010). If painful emotions can be accepted by another and understood without becoming overwhelmed, that person becomes a container, which then allowed for growth and development, which in time they would learn to cope with this anxiety themselves (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1999).

Eleni (pp. 16-17) speaks of situations where she has grown in her comfort and ability to “deal with” and “live with the awkwardness” and tolerate those difficult feelings.

She experiences getting “better at doing that” and that she has “the skills to be able to do it”, even when she doubts herself. This demonstrates a time where through the supervisory relationship, Eleni’s own anxiety is reduced as she realises that someone is capable of living with these painful anxious emotions. This container-figure of feelings, one of a mind that can hold thoughts (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1999) is one which she then in turn internalises herself. “Repeated experiences of this distress being understood and detoxified by another” results in an individual that is less overwhelmed by emotional pain and then has the capacity to be able to think about their experience, be reflective and thoughtful (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1999, p. 60). As Georgia also illustrates, she learns to then “manage those feelings when, a similar situation that’s caused me issues before has come up” and “feel much more prepared to deal with it” (Georgia, p. 22). When not overwhelmed, this in turn produces new combinations of thoughts and meaning (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1999). This notion of containment is not a passive experience, but one that embraces a task, “enables us to grow intellectually and emotionally, and is at the heart of learning and growing” (Bibby, 2010, p. 120).

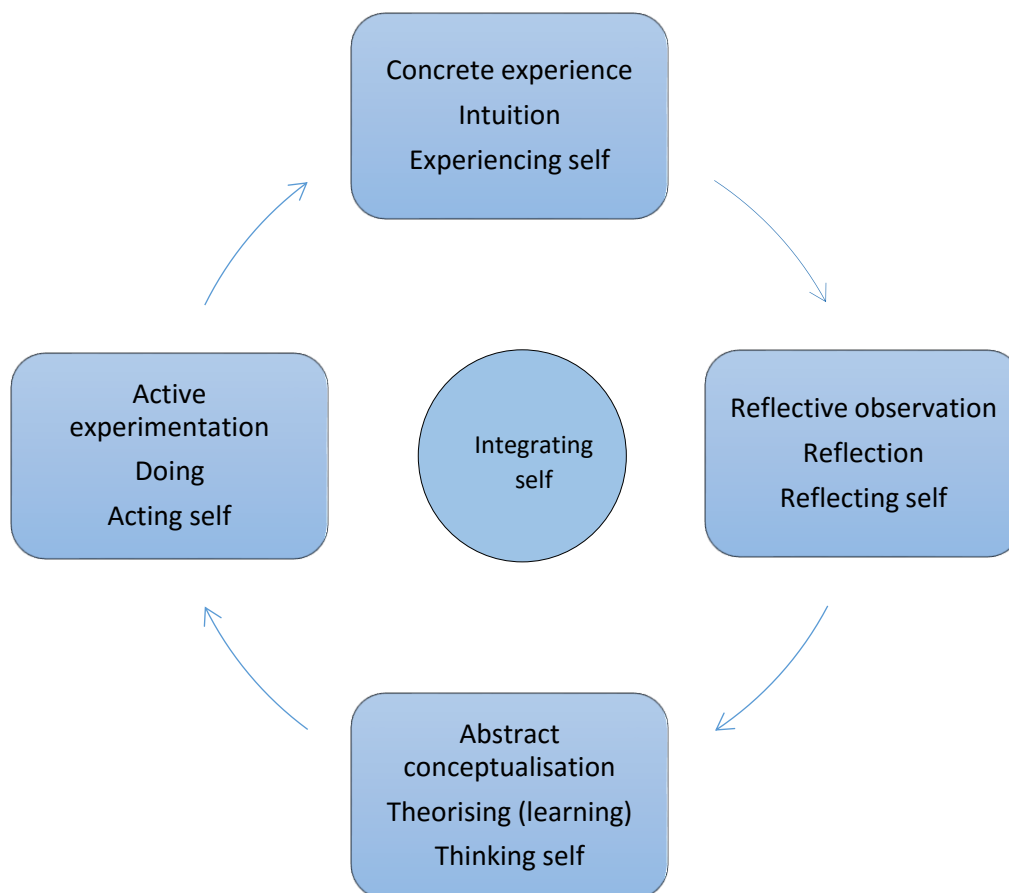
EPs need to be aware of finding themselves as recipients of the unbearable experience of the other through projections and projective identifications (Klein, 1997) and to an extent losing their own objective position, instead being persuaded into a role they have not consciously adopted (Hulusi & Maggs, 2015). By connecting with this learning experience, the supervisor can “set an example of maintaining curiosity in the face of chaos, love of truth in the face of terror of the unknown, and hope in the face of despair” (Salzberger-Wittenberg et al., 1999, p. 60).

### 5.3.11 A learning space

All participants experienced supervision with an EP as a space for learning and the concept of unconditional positive regard is thought to be a foundation to promoting growth in an individual (Wilkins, 2000). The expression “food for thought” (Barbara, p.4) encapsulates well how this learning might take place. The “food” captures the new ideas that are introduced in supervision, be it theory or perspective or understanding and the “for thought” is how this food, be it insight, information or discovery, is taken further. This leads to a change in practice, the supervisee might try something different and contributes to the personal and professional development and growth of the supervisee. Bion (1962) wrote that learning from experience occurs within the framework of an emotional experience and is dependent on the influence, communication and relationship with another and it affects the entire personality of the learner (Nagell, Steinmetzer, Fissabre, & Spilski, 2014). Experiential learning as conceived by David Kolb (2014) is a lifelong process that involves relating to an experience and transforming this experience into learning. The participants experienced a ‘journey’ of growth and development over the years and felt accompanied by the EP supervisors in this.

Kolb (2014) identified a cycle of four ways and stages of learning in adults: the concrete experience, through involvement with the tangible; reflective observation and contemplation; abstract conceptualisation; and active experimentation through application and taking an active role. Kolb’s experiential learning cycle has been incorporated into supervision to make the reflective learning cycle and identified the

following learning styles that match on to the above stages respectively: intuition, reflection, theorising and doing (Wood, 2007) (see Figure 8 below).

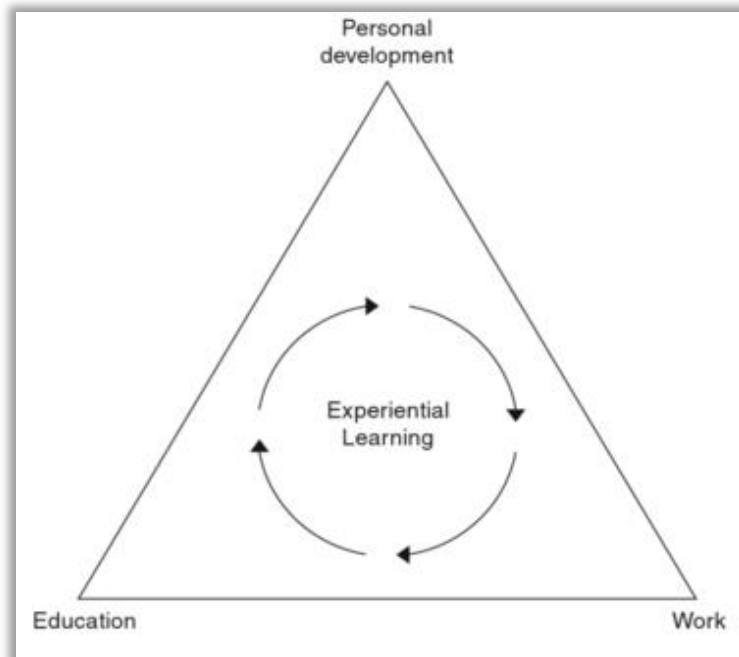


**Figure 8:** An adaptation of Kolb's 'reflective learning cycle' and the 'self in experiential learning' theory (Kolb, 2014)

Christine uses the expression of having “many a light bulb moment” illustrating how experiential supervision is for her. Rock (1997) suggests that when both parties are receptive and willing to question their assumptions, this can stimulate curiosity and self-awareness to the point that the supervisee may realise a change in themselves as a result of this experiential learning. The EP supervisors seemed to play a role in integrating these stages of learning together where supervisees integrated their learning on both a personal and professional level, recognising that “the more you

kind of know about yourself, the more you know about other people” (Daphne, p. 25).

In sum, Kolb (2014) proposed that experiential learning is the process that links work, education and personal development (see Figure 9 below).



**Figure 9:** The process of experiential learning linking work, education and personal development (Kolb, 2014, p. 4).

### 5.3.12 Extending thinking

Supervisees experienced an optimal integration of theory and practice that is personalised, relevant, immediately applicable, and pitched just right for them. This ideal learning relationship moves supervisees from what they know through what Vygotsky (1978) coined the ‘Zone of Proximal Development’, towards what is possible to be known (Boston, 2010). Barbara experiences her thinking being taken further through questioning, talking things through in depth, being listened to, and enabling her to further process events to a depth beyond her day-to-day capacity. With the

security of a safe relationship, supervisees then have the space to be more creative, risky and extend their learning further. Kolb encouraged this curiosity that enabled active experimentation that pushed learning and practice further beyond one's current 'comfort zone' whilst maintaining a careful balance of the extent of this challenge (Boston, 2010; van Deurzen & Young, 2009). Scaife et al. (2008) suggest that supervisors challenge a supervisee's strengths rather than their weaknesses and also believe that a supervisor can model and invite an openness to learning and being challenged themselves.

Carroll (2010) writes about transformational learning being the deepest form of learning that is both personal and professional and creates shifts in mentality. It involves critically reflecting on how one constructs their experience, developing new and possible more complex meanings leading to reconstruction (Scaife et al., 2008). As Christine said it "opens you up to questioning your own, your thinking" resulting in, "I'm seeing her [service user] differently, I'm, I'm viewing her differently". Bartle and Trevis (2015) recognise that professionals are required to understand the meaning of behaviours, and believe that by applying a social constructionist perspective, this creates an opportunity to develop their understanding of their own constructions of behaviour. It is in the context of social relations where frustrations fuel thinking and where this "critical stance towards taken for granted knowledge" (Bartle & Trevis, 2015, p. 85) creates an internal struggle, that in turn offers a potential to change (Bartle & Trevis, 2015; Bibby, 2010). It is the perceived incongruence between the self and an experience that is in contrast to one's self-concept, in the context of a relationship, that will lead to significant positive change (Rogers, 1957).

Supervisees spoke of enjoying the process of having their thinking challenged, extended, hearing new perspectives. Eleni's expression, "drip-feed-come-guide-you" (p. 2) encapsulates how she experiences the role of the supervisee in introducing new ideas. In order to be a supervisee that can tolerate being in the 'juvenile' position of learner, one needs to be fully able to recognise time and death and trust that they will grow and develop over time (Howard, 2007). Object-relations theory suggests that a supervisee needs to also have accepted the existence of the breast as a good object in order not to need to denigrate what is offered through this feeding relationship (Howard, 2007). If a supervisee has not worked through the above, these unconscious struggles may impact how they take up supervision, if at all (Howard, 2007).

### **5.3.13 Exploring new perspectives**

This theme in particular relates to the 'vision' part of the word supervision. Participants spoke of experiencing supervision with EPs as an opportunity to explore new perspectives and new possibilities. Not only those of the EP supervisor for example in seeking re-assurance, but supervision would also open them up to viewing things from another person's perspective, such as the parents they worked with. This insight increases the supervisees' empathy which then supports a clarity, or as Rogers (1957) wrote are like 'sunbeams', that enables one to move on. Scaife et al. (2008) believes that where more perspectives are considered, this extends ones awareness of their own values and beliefs. The triangular reflective space a paternal figure creates that is essential for the mother-infant dyad and for psychological growth is similar to that of the supervisory space according to need and disposition (Howard,

2007). Insights such as these have the potential to change their understanding of others, and would contribute to overcoming their challenges in role or a particular “brick wall” (Christine p. 11; Francesca p. 13) or as Georgia experienced, in helping her “completely flip” (p. 6) how she was looking at something.

#### **5.3.14 The deeper exploration of the self**

All participants experienced supervision to offer a space to focus on, access and understand the deeper self. Through reflection, participants were able to increasingly understand themselves and a thinking space is created where the hardest things can be brought that reach the core of their being. Eleni parallels the supervisor’s role to that of a facilitator who supports this process of reflection to this extent. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) believe that an essential prerequisite to entering a supervisory relationship is to start by becoming a reflective practitioner as it is through this reflection that the ‘rich soil’ (p.16) of supervision is developed. It is also through the growth of an internal supervisor that prevents a practitioner from becoming reactive under pressure and various forces at play in their professional role (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012).

#### **5.3.15 Focus on understanding the self**

As participants reflected on themselves, they experienced EPs paying attention to their needs, and in turn this is the same way FSKWs might pay attention to the needs of the families they work with. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) recognise this as something



everyone working in the helping professions chooses to do. Hawkins describes four aspects of reflection (Hawkins & Shoet, 2012):

- external reflection - focus on client
- introspective reflection - oneself engaging with the client
- relational reflection - the relationship and interplay between oneself and client
- systemic reflection - the wider system, context, history and culture the relationship is embedded in.

Participants spoke of reflecting in all the above four aspects, but it is the introspective reflection that seems to lie closest to what this overarching theme reveals about the experience of participants, “it’s about me” (Barbara, p. 14), “to bring you out” (Eleni, p.2). The focus is also determined by the supervisees themselves, “what was important to me as a practitioner” (Christine, p. 2-3).

Emotional well-being is increased when one is felt understood by colleagues (Bartle & Trevis, 2015; Partridge, 2012). A person-centred approach encourages an exclusive focus on the needs, deep understanding of the supervisee through active listening result in true and genuine empathy (Scaife et al., 2008). It would require a supervisor to be genuinely, authentically, freely and deeply interested (Rogers, 1957) as Eleni articulates, “genuinely interested in you” (Eleni, p. 20). This full attention creates the space for supervisees to access their deeper selves.

### 5.3.16 Accessing the deeper self

Within this theme there were a variety of descriptors that captured what this accessing the deeper self was experienced as for each supervisee, ranging from “pulling back the layers” (Daphne, p. 21), to “it digs a deeper hole” (Francesca, p. 11) to “the rest of it” (Georgia, p. 19). These expressions imply that this core of being is delicate, vulnerable, and only dare be accessed in the context of a safe relationship which becomes a prerequisite. Whilst most participants felt able to reveal this deeper self, Francesca reminds us of how risky this experience can feel, as it could take “months” (Francesca, p. 12) to plough through, process, digest and make sense of. Davys & Beddoe (2010) identified possible barriers that could prevent this exploration of feeling in supervision to stem from three fears: a fear of being overwhelmed by feelings, a fear of judgement of others and a fear of distortion in the professional encounter. The first two fears seem to lie most closely to Francesca’s experience. As Scaife et al. (2008) suggest, the stronger the emotion you might experience, the more associated affective meaning that lies behind one’s unaware state of mind. Participants experienced not realising that there was something affecting them or bothering them and discovering this through supervision. If there is enough trust in the containment, this enables one to move beyond support and to challenge and explore those feelings further in search of meaning and understanding (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

Supervision was experienced as a space for the hardest things, for example for dealing with confrontation and even the prospect and reality of death. A couple of

participants experienced supervision as a place to process some of the difficult feelings that arose within their personal lives, such as family illness or the death of a beloved pet. Through supervision, an understanding grew of how significant events may impact on their work with families, despite efforts to keep the personal and professional issues separate. This worked both ways, so participants came to realise how a personal event might impact their work, but also how events at work might impact them very personally. A prominent example of this is when a child they work with dies. This reality of death of children on FSKWs caseload is reported to have increased in occurrence over the years in the service. In an example Eleni brought, she emphasised the importance of having the space to process this event at work. This was an example of something that was beyond her team's capacity to support her with, as it struck a core element of her being, the deeper self. Eleni's experience of the supervisor's ability to round sessions off at the end seemed to support Eleni in processing the difficult feelings at the end of this child's life, but also helped manage the risk of other potential future endings she may face, both personally and with other children with life limiting illnesses.

This is a reminder of what EP supervision offers outside the capacity of the team. There is space to explore parts of the self that are not usually readily accessible. This has an impact on one's personal development that is inextricably intertwined with professional development. By being able to access these parts of themselves, supervisees then extend their capacity to empathise and relate to these difficult feelings when they come across them in their work with families.

### 5.3.17 Reflections on a learning space

Supervision with EPs offers supervisees a space for reflection that promotes growth, personal and professional development, learning, changes in perspectives and consequently changes in their approach and further potential for change. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) similarly see the developmental function of supervision as a place to:

...collaborate and relate in order to reflect on the relating between the practitioner and their client(s), in order to create new learning and unlearning, that both transforms the work and increases the capacity of the supervisee to sustain themselves in the work (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p. 26).

The developmental function of supervision could be viewed through the concept of maturity, living and feeling as opposed to simply acquiring knowledge (Waddell, 2002). For example, Freud viewed maturity in one's ability to work and to love (Waddell, 2002). The learning experienced by supervisees, is not only supporting the development of the skills they use in their work, but also encouraging greater empathy and understanding of the people they work with, arguably encouraging more positive regard and striving closer to what might be viewed as love. Bion viewed maturity as being able to go on developing (Waddell, 2002). This supervision space allowed for reflecting, thinking and exploring that enables, encourages and empowers supervisees. Klein viewed maturity as the increased capacity to live in the depressive position i.e. be aware of, accept and integrate the undeveloped and potentially destructive aspects of themselves without needing to disown and rid themselves of them by projecting them elsewhere; to be able to reflect and bear emotional states

of psychic pain rather than avoid them (Waddell, 2002). The ability for someone to be able to do this is dependent on them having had sustained relationship with others who have been able to do so repeatedly, enough for these figures to have been internalised (Waddell, 2002).

Learning involves supervisees confronting their not-knowing selves, their thoughts, fantasies, doubts and self-reflection of their unique personalities (Nagell et al., 2014). Supervision sessions with “good beginnings create the space for learning and good endings enable the learning to be retained and integrated for future use” (Davys & Beddoe, 2010, p. 104). The findings illustrate that the learning journeys supervisees embark on are similar to that of a spiral curriculum (Bruner, 1960) where learning is revisited repeatedly over time. The content is determined by the supervisees and is intertwined with increased self-awareness and deeper exploration.

### **5.3.18 Ambivalent feelings towards the value of supervision**

Participants demonstrated an awareness of their own needs and sometimes a dependency on supervision. As a result, they find themselves in a real tension between trying to meet those needs as they repeatedly review their judgement about the value of supervision. They then consider whether to opt in, take the risk of trusting the supervisor and opening up in the relationship, and even persevere with a supervisory relationship; or alternatively protect themselves and opt out from this risk and not take up of the offer of supervision at all. Falender and Shafranske (2012) argue for the adoption of greater accountability through use of a competency-based

framework for supervision practice. They believe the benefits include a more collaborative alliance and working relationship that supports and encourages lifelong learning through assessment and reduces ambiguity. This may make it easier for supervisees to make a value judgement and consequently a choice. Davys and Beddoe (2010) believe that in all supervisory relationships there will be times of being stuck, of avoidance or difficult feelings, but by recognising this, it can be survived and overcome. They also suggest that ambivalence and possible blocks can be recognised, acknowledged and if disclosed honestly, an exploration of this can pre-empt possible future difficulties (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

### **5.3.19 Contracting**

Participants experienced communicating their needs and negotiating or contracting an agreement as a joint process with the EP supervisors. With one participant, if this doesn't happen early on, there is more of a risk and a potential loss of opportunity. By the supervisees taking a proactive role in contracting, a sense of mutuality, agency and joint responsibility is encouraged. When a practitioner knows what they want from supervision then they are in the best position to negotiate a contract, agreement or alliance which delivers what is needed (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Davys and Beddoe (2010) argue that this process is just as important as the content itself and suggest working through the following three key questions for when the individuals are from different professions: Who are we? Where do we want to go? And how do we get there? They believe that communication and expression of ideas and clarity of thought between practitioners from different professions can be better due to

avoidance of jargon. Howard (2007) warns that although a contracting process can helpfully draw attention to boundaries, both parties need to be aware that it can create a false illusion that boundary issues have been dealt with.

#### **5.4 Research questions 3 and 4**

3. What influence is this supervision perceived to have in relation to FSKWs' personal and professional development?
4. What impact do FSKWs perceive this supervision to have on their practice?

The third research question begun to be addressed in the super-ordinate theme 'extending one's thinking' where supervisees experience this to contribute to their learning, growth and development both on a personal and professional level. It is more specifically addressed through the super-ordinate theme of 'reflecting on own capacity and abilities'. Supervisees use the space to identify where they are developmentally and where they might want to develop further. These experiences both occur through an experience of 'movement within time', looking backwards and forwards on one's own personal and professional development within both shorter and longer times scales. The fourth research question begun to be addressed under the super-ordinate theme of 'exploring new perspectives' demonstrating an immediate impact of supervision perceived by supervisees. The supervisees also seem use supervision in the context of their role as elaborated on in the super-ordinate theme 'awareness of own needs and dependency'. To an extent, the impact of supervision is experienced as being integral to their role enabling them to continue to

cope with the demands of their role. The themes that address the final two research questions are elaborated on next.

#### **5.4.1 Reflecting on own capacity and abilities**

Some of the participants experienced the opportunity to recognise and reflect on their capacity and abilities, and also build their own confidence and resilience. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) support the notion that those in the helping professions need to develop their personal capacity, as their being is the “most important resource they all use in their work” (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012, p. 3). With the trust of the supervisory relationship in place, an emotionally safe environment advocates decision making and risk-taking and consequently the empowerment of supervisees is encouraged (McBride & Skau, 1995). Georgia for example uses her previous learning to enable her to feel she can manage future situations and a change in her approach towards her practice, “I kind of feel much more prepared to deal with it because you reflect back on how you’ve dealt with it before” (Georgia, p. 22).

Eleni experienced being left “remembering those good bits” (p. 14). Strengths-based and solution focused supervision is co-constructive, future focused, hopeful, illuminates skills and achievements, promotes confidence, and self-efficacy, assumes success and a potential to build on successes whilst encouraging comfort with uncertainty (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). Knight (2004) proposes that a solution focused approach complements the more traditional problem-oriented approaches and can be incorporated into any other supervisory framework.



### 5.4.3 Movement within time

Participants ruminated on ideas after supervision and thought about what they might bring leading up to it. Supervision was experienced to have a presence between sessions, “I feel it’s very, um, live with me all the time” (Christine, p. 20) and “imagine it like different speech bubbles above your head” (Eleni, p. 18). Reviewing issues shaped part of Georgia’s experience of an annual cycle and this reviewing and revisiting of issues raised across sessions also encouraged a sense of continuity. Experiential and transformational learning involves reflecting on past difficult and painful experiences in supervision. By giving rise to new meaning by means of the new context the passage of time provides, there is an opportunity for this to then be integrated into the future through changes in action and behaviour (Burck & Daniel, 2010; Carroll, 2009, 2010).

The majority of participants experienced supervision to have a role in the continuity over time. Heidegger (1962) writes that only in being, is time experienced and that the temporal movement through the world, and in being with others in the present, is what unites the past (having been) with the future (coming towards). For two participants, supervision continued on their return following their long term absence from work and for Daphne the offer continued to be there despite her not always taking it up. For Eleni in particular it played a role in bridging her personal and professional identity over time before and after her period of absence and illness. The formation of identity is a continuous task that involves conflict, tension, involves dismantling and reconstructing, and doesn’t rest (Nagell et al., 2014). The continuity

of this supervision and in some cases the relationship, creates the space to review, revisit, reflect, process and plan ahead. This is an essential element that contributes to supervisees' personal and professional development over time and that is unique to this space.

#### **5.4.4 Having a choice of whether to engage in supervision**

FSKWs are offered a choice of engaging in supervision with EPs and participants interviewed have continued to take up this offer. This voluntary entering into the supervisory relationship may be a prerequisite to many of the above experiences. FSKWs experience the allocation and changing of supervisors to be something outside of their control, but an element of choice remains where they can end a supervisory relationship that they feel is not working for them. There is a possibility that what is deemed as 'good' supervision by a supervisee may be what is comfortable, reinforcing what is known (Davys & Beddoe, 2010) rather than the challenge and the struggle discussed earlier that could promote change. Within this sample of FSKWs, only one example of this was shared. It is possible that this might occur more often with the FSKWs who were not included in this sample. The choice or lack of choice of supervisor can contribute to the quality of the relationship, the working alliance and includes the choice of entering, leaving and continuing the relationship (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

#### **5.4.5 Awareness of own needs and dependency**

Participants experienced an awareness of what needs EP supervision was meeting for them. They became aware of their dependency on EP supervision during more stressful times or when a change in supervisor risked a change in how their needs might or might not be met. Scaife et al. (2008) believe practitioners seem to be increasingly welcoming supervision as a process that enables them to cope with an emotionally demanding workplace but questions if this is dependent on fulfilment of expectations. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) believe that the 'habit' (p. 4) of good supervision becomes integral to work life and continuing development of a helping professional in order to cope with the demands of being able to emotionally relate to service users with wide-ranging needs. At the time of establishing what a supervisee wants from supervision, Hawkins and Shohet (2012, p. 10) suggest asking, "What is the world you operate in requiring you to step up to and what are the areas in which you struggle to respond?" They believe that supervision plays a role in serving helping professionals develop the human capacity to deal with the increasing demands and challenges placed on them.

#### **5.8 Revisiting the key frameworks of supervision**

The findings of this study offer a deeper understanding of the experience of supervision. Key themes were identified and will be considered in relation to the existing key frameworks of supervision identified in the literature review.

### **5.8.1 Hawkins and Shoet (2012)**

The supervision I outlined in the literature review as proposed by Hawkins and Shoet (2012) is comprised of several elements, the key ones highlighted in this study are the seven-eyed model, the CLEAR model and the developmental stages of supervision.

The five typical stages proposed in the CLEAR model offer a structure to support supervisors to facilitate a supervision session. The contracting stage can offer an idealised perspective of the most valuable use of time and it is in this space where the session-by-session function of supervision can be determined. What elements does the supervisee seek resourcing or support in? As Daphne illustrates, “what you put in is what you get out” (Daphne, p. 6). What areas might they seek to develop or learn more about? In the listening stage, this could include the space for participants to express frustrations, to reflect, to be contained, to trust that thoughts can be expressed as they are without judgement and to be listened to with unconditional positive regard. The next stage of exploring, parallels participants’ experiences of exploring their deeper self and exploring their thinking, new perspectives and ideas; learning that can be implemented in the action stage and reviewed in the next session. This review process is likely to make a contribution to the experience of continuity, progress and movement within time, both on a session by session basis, but also within a longer time frame as ideas, thoughts and reflections are revisited time and time again.

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) refer to Heron's (1976) six types of intervention that can be used within the CLEAR model. Four of these types of intervention (prescriptive, informative, confronting, and catalytic) appeared to have a presence and contribute to the supervisees' experience of supervision as a learning space and of the deeper exploration of the self. The remaining two types (cathartic and supportive) would have instead contributed towards supervisees' experience of a safe relationship.

The seven modes Hawkins and Shohet (2012) advocate supervisors to take into account and address many of the systems and dynamics within and around a supervisory relationship that are often overlooked in other models. Criticisms of this model have included the views that the relationship is assumed. Through this study, our understanding of supervisees' experience of this relationship can be supplemented. The participants' experiences of the supervisory relationship inform mode 5 (focus on supervisory relationship) of the model, adding insight into how and why they might experience the relationship as they do. Participants' experiences of the deeper exploration of the self can inform mode 4 (focus on the supervisee) of the model through increased reflection on themselves. I would finally add that the learning space participants experience can inform modes 2 (exploration of the strategies and interventions used by the supervisee), 3 (exploration of the relationship between the client and the supervisee) and 7 (focus on the wider context in which the work happens).

The seven-eyed model also takes into account parallel processes. This is a secondary effect of countertransference, involves a temporary loss or blurring of boundaries,

confusion and intrusion and is a defence against anxiety (Wiener, 2007). It is where the dynamics of another relationship (for example the service-user and practitioner relationship) are acted out in the here and now in the supervisory relationship (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). This can work both ways resulting in supervision potentially having a direct effect on the work and dynamics of the service user and practitioner relationships (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). When participants spoke of their relationships with the families, I noticed that many of the descriptions were similar to how they spoke of the relationship with the EP supervisors. I believe the possibility of this occurring and many of the experiences the themes captured are likely to offer a model for how it is anticipated that service users might experience the support of the FSKWs.

Hawkins and Shohet (2012) also remind us that the developmental stages of supervisee and supervisor need to be taken into account and have an influence on where the supervisee's and supervisor's focus might lie, consequently affecting which mode they might spend more time in. Participants in this study have been in the position of being supervisees for between 10 and 15 years, perhaps increasing the likelihood that they may be working at the highest level where their focus is 'process in context centred' but may equally be working at any other level. This is also applicable to the supervisors who have varying levels of experience in supervising.

The findings seem consistent with Hawkins and Shohet's (2012) suggestion that supervision has a role in looking after oneself, enabling and staying open to new and continual learning, and flourishing to work to the best of one's ability. This would prevent "staleness, rigidity and defensiveness" leading to 'burnout' (Hawkins &

Shohet, 2012, p. 6). The findings however add to this, demonstrating that supervision with EPs for these participants went beyond prevention of burnout, and continual learning, but offered supervisee another level of flourishing through the deeper exploration of themselves.

### **5.8.2 The General Supervision Framework (GSF)**

I described in the literature review that Scaife's GSF (Scaife, 2010; Scaife & Inskipp, 2001; Scaife et al., 2008) had a particular focus on the supervisor, the process and content of supervision through three dimensions of supervisory role behaviour, supervisor focus and the supervisory medium. The experiences of the participants demonstrate that although this framework is taken from the supervisor's perspective, the richness, breadth and personalised element of the process isn't really captured in it. For example, for the dimension of 'focus', I would add the deeper exploration of the self that participants experienced. For the dimension of supervisor role behaviour, I would add more aspects related to the safe boundaries of the relationship, the containment and the ability to tolerate and withstand the breadth of emotional experiences. Finally, for the dimension of 'medium' I would add the relationship, the explorative nature of the space and the learning offered from the new perspectives and reflection.

### **5.8.3 The cyclical model of counsellor supervision**

The final model I wrote about in the literature review was the cyclical model of counsellor supervision (Page & Wosket, 2001; Wosket & Page, 2001) offering five stages that can support movement through a session increasing the possibilities of the aims of the session to be met. This has similarities to the CLEAR model, but offers the additional recognition of viewing the model as that of a container, addressing more of the major role of the relationship in supervision and recognising the varying amount of clarity and definition various aspects require. The participants in this study offer us a better understanding of what the 'space' might encompass; a space to explore the self, to learn through challenging thinking and new perspectives. The participants also enlightened our understanding of how the processes of contracting and reviewing can contribute to the tension between a supervisee's awareness of their own needs, their value judgement of the supervisory space and consequently the choice of whether to take up the offer to engage in supervision or not. The findings suggest that these contracting and reviewing processes also make a contribution to how the relationship is experienced, if it is perceived as safe, containing, and whether it offers the opportunity for supervisees to explore, reflect and focus on themselves as practitioners and as individuals.

### **5.9 How experiences might map onto stages of psychosocial development**

Erik and Joan Erikson's (Erikson & Erikson, 1998) eight stages of psychosocial development has been applied to supervision with school psychologists by Kaufman



& Schwartz (2003) and by Studer (2006) with school counsellors, both in north America. The first stage of trust parallels the first steps of the supervision process to establish communication and trust, that is dependent on the perceived quality of the relationship (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003; Studer, 2006). This is parallel to the overarching theme in this study of 'a safe relationship'. The second stage of autonomy involves being able to be and express themselves, an empowering and confidence building stage (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003; Studer, 2006). This is what is seen in the third super-ordinate theme of this study, 'a trusting space where one can be true to self'. The third stage of initiative follows and is marked by a recognition of one's abilities and new learning opportunities and the ability to take risks (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003; Studer, 2006). This mirrors the theme 'a learning space' as does the next stage of industry where thinking is broadened and skills are built upon and mastered (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003). This stage is also characterised by more self-awareness and supervision is used for self-exploration (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003; Studer, 2006), similar to the overarching theme in this study of 'the deeper exploration of the self'. This overarching theme also relates to Erikson's next two stages of identity and intimacy. The identity stage is where within the context of a system and with the security of a trustful relationship, the supervisee is experiencing professional tasks and is reflecting on and evaluating themselves (Kaufman & Schwartz, 2003; Studer, 2006). Intimacy is reflected by a deeper understanding and validation of the person they have become and both the stages of intimacy and the next stage of generativity may be reflected by taking on a supervisory role themselves (Studer, 2006). Although this wasn't case formally, Daphne exemplifies this by adopting this role informally with others. The last stage of integrity is thought to

involve looking back in retrospect in an evaluative way and maybe associated with the evaluation of the choice of whether to continue on the supervisory journey or not.

These stages of development could roughly map onto the findings of this study, encapsulating some of the experiences (refer to Table 7 below). However I would question the linear nature of the process and I would argue that the process is much more complex than to be reduced to a linear model.

Erikson & Erikson's (1998) stages of development	Experiences of supervision	
Trust v Mistrust	A safe relationship	} Movement within time
Autonomy v Shame/doubt	A trusting space where one can be true to self	
Initiative v Guilt	} A learning space } The deeper exploration of the self	
Industry v Inferiority		
Identity v Role Confusion		
Intimacy v Isolation		
Generativity v Stagnation	Reflecting on own capacity and abilities	
Integrity v Despair	Having a choice of whether to engage in supervision	

**Table 7:** Erikson and Erikson's (1998) stages of development mapped alongside experiences of supervision

### 5.10 Scope for further research

This study has explored the experiences of supervisees engaging in supervision with EPs. This has been from one side of the supervisory relationship, and therefore there is scope to further explore EPs experiences of supervising other professionals in more

depth. An example would be to explore supervisory dyads in more depth from the perspectives of both the supervisor and the supervisee.

The participants in this study had engaged in supervision for between 10 to 15 years with a range of between two and four supervisors. Within this, there is variability in the developmental stages of the supervisor and supervisee. This creates further questions around how the supervisory relationship and the how the experience changes and develops over time. There is scope for research that maps across developmental stages of supervisor and supervisee, this could be through a longitudinal study that punctuates the relationship over the years as it develops and changes. A study could also explore the less successful and maybe even more negative experiences of supervision, those supervisees who opt out of the offer of supervision, or having opted in and then withdrawn. These experience could equally inform the practice of EP supervisors.

Another consideration to explore is the extent to which having the same supervisor for over ten years and changing supervisors more frequently has an impact on the experience. For example, how might differences between the two arrangements of consistent and changing supervisors change the experience, processes and development of the supervisee? There is also scope for further research on the frequency of supervision. In this context, supervisees were engaging in supervision once every half term i.e. six times a year. How might a more frequent or sparser arrangement impact on the experience?

This study has focused on one type of professional. EPs are increasingly engaging in supervision with other practitioners. In the LA the research was conducted in, Behaviour Support Workers, Autism Support Workers, Information, Advice and Guidance Advisors are accessing EP supervision. Does their role mean that supervision offers them a markedly different experience, value or function? Ayres et al. (2015) also raised the following issues at a service level to consider that if adapted, are also applicable in the context of inter-professionals supervision:

- What are the enabling factors that lead to the establishment, maintenance and development of inter-professional supervision within an EPS?
- Is there a need for models that are more appropriate to the EP and other various professions?
- How can we further evidence the impact of supervision?
- How can EP services share good practice more widely?

A significant challenge remains; that of finding a causal link between the specifics of supervision and client outcomes (Scaife et al., 2008). Bernard and Goodyear (1998, p. 254) believe there is “a tension between rigour and relevance in supervision outcome studies, which might be exemplified by the difference between efficacy studies and effectiveness studies”.

### **5.11 Implications**

The implications of this study’s findings are presented at the level of individual EP practice, the service level and at the level of national guidelines.

### 5.11.1 Implications for EP practice

The findings of this study have several implications for EPs. With a purposive, homogenous sample and small sample size, the aim of this study was not to claim generalisability and therefore does not. Instead the in-depth analysis alongside the transparency enables us to transfer these findings to similar contexts.

In similar contexts, when embarking on a supervisory relationship, EPs need to establish and consider how to demonstrate their capacity to contribute to the establishment of a safe relationship; through mutual respect, unconditional positive regard, authenticity, confidentiality, transparency, contracting boundaries, reviewing, being reliable and even tolerating difficult emotions from very early on in the relationship. EPs need to recognise that the relationship needs to be perceived as 'good-enough' for it to continue and it be valued.

EPs need to be aware that the aforementioned safe relationship will lay the foundation for a learning space. This learning is experiential, reflective, with a suitable level of challenge to promote a struggle that promotes growth and encourages change. It also involves recognising and building on strengths. This learning space is not limited to theory, skills and knowledge but reaches the core of one's self and individual being. If the relationship is safe and trustworthy enough, the hardest things can be thought about, things that are beyond the capacity of the day to day workings of a team, and demand a space that is removed from this, yet understanding of it. EPs need to appreciate that supervision offers not only session-by-session, but long term

continuity and the opportunity to review, revisit and build on the learning and discovery that takes place influencing the personal and professional identity and development of supervisees.

EPs need to appreciate that supervisees experience a tension between taking the risk of entering a supervisory relationship and having their needs met. A value judgement will be made and so the more involved and explicit both parties are in contracting, agreeing and regularly reviewing how they will work together, the more likely the relationship will offer a valuable journey that creates the space for both to grow as individuals, both personally and professionally.

Power imbalances in the relationship may make it difficult for supervisees to initiate contracting and reviewing processes, so EPs hold more responsibility in ensuring that this becomes routine practice so that can be expected from supervisees. EPs also need to be aware of, name and address any other potential power imbalances in the relationship that might impact how supervisees will experience the supervisory relationship, the communication and the boundaries of supervision.

### **5.11.2 Implications for EP services**

As demonstrated in the literature review, inter-professional supervision is increasingly being practiced across the country. It is important for EPs and services to ensure they have a secure understanding of supervision, the power of it, and the sensitivity needed to be able to make a valuable contribution to it so that it will benefit

a supervisee. I advocate that services promote the DECP guidelines to all EPs engaging in supervision, and encourage discourses around it. Inter-professional supervision makes a contribution to building and growing relationships between teams of professionals working with children, young people and their families. The latest Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Code of Practice (CoP) (2015) emphasises the use of a multi-agency approach that the Every Child Matters (ECM) agenda initiated in 2003. The CoP invites different professions within Children's Services to work more closely together to provide a more holistic service to children, young people and their families. Services could consider what teams of professionals are in proximity to be able to access and benefit from EP supervision. Hawkins and Shohet (2012) remind us that alongside greater demand and fewer resources, helping professionals on the front line are at most risk of feeling the consequences of this.

Further questions these implications raise include:

- Which professionals might be in most need of supervision?
- Could EP services offer supervision as part of their chargeable services?
- If services had the capacity to offer supervision, how would they promote it?
- Do we as a profession have enough evidence base to promote its effectiveness and impact?
- How would we support teams to make an informed decision in choosing between the more costly option of individual supervision in comparison to the more cost-effective alternative of group supervision?

Services could also consider promoting and encouraging EPs who have undertaken training and have certified supervisory skills to join the Register of Applied Psychology Practice Supervisors (RAPPS).

### **5.11.3 Implications for national EP guidelines**

The DECP guidelines (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010) state that:

The format, frequency and duration of supervision should be negotiated and reviewed by the supervisors and supervisees to ensure that identified needs are met. For each arrangement it is important that contracts are drawn up at the onset, agendas are agreed and parameters, roles and functions are clarified and agreed. (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 6).

This need not be limited to the surface-level supervisory arrangements. I recommend that EPs and supervisees both take a collaborative role in maximising this, endeavouring to be as honest, open and explicit as possible when having these negotiations. These conversations need to be revisited regularly as the relationship establishes itself so a deeper and more intimate understanding is given the opportunity to be communicated and shared thus enabling an increasingly valuable, growth-promoting working relationship.

The DECP guidelines (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, pp. 6, 11) also state that “supervision should be provided by someone who is able to give a high quality, developmental experience” (p. 6) and also that “in order to protect themselves and to ensure they provide high quality supervision, it is important that EPs ensure they



have acquired core competencies in supervision” (p. 11) as summarised in Figure 10 below.



**Figure 10:** Supervision competencies (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010)

The guidelines offer a framework of the core supervision competencies to include respect, listening skills, understanding of professional and ethical issues and confidentiality (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). They identify the profession specific competencies to include training, values, context, knowledge skills and evaluation (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010). They finally identify the specialist/therapeutic competencies to cover a particular approach involving specialist knowledge (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010).

Smythe et al. (2009, p. 19) writes about the gap between knowledge and living of the know-how, where knowledge can “seduce the novice into believing a way can be learnt ahead of experience”. There is a tendency to rely on formal guiding structures and evidence-based practice for supervisory practice and as a result feel more certain in one’s practice (Smythe et al., 2009). Smythe et al. (2009, p. 19) believe that “the

real mark of excellence can only come when we allow ourselves to become lost in the unfolding of each unique moment of a supervision relationship.”

Bartle (2015) suggests that there is scope for the relational aspect of supervision to merit a greater emphasis on professional guidelines and practice. The evidence of the importance of the safe supervisory relationship this study demonstrated supports this. I would further suggest that there is a recognition of the degree, depth, extent and breadth of which supervision can cultivate the development of a professional individual. This is a unique space that would benefit many practitioners who serve children, young people and families facing challenges.

### **5.12 Limitations**

The limitations of the approach of this study were discussed in the methodology section. Transparency of the procedures used enable a reader to evaluate how transferable the study's findings might be to other similar contexts. Further limitations are identified under three main aspects: the processes of participant selection used, the potential for positive bias and using the medium of language as the primary tool for accessing supervisees' lived experience.

A limitation of this study was determined by the selection process in search of participants. Due to asking the EPs about the longevity of the supervisory relationships, estimations were used in order to determine which participants had the longest enduring engagement with supervision. Although these time-frames as well

as any periods of non-engagement were clarified at interview, there may be some FSKWs who had equal substantial experiences of supervision whom I did not interview. In particular, two participants who were excluded, one was excluded in order to prevent too large a proportion of supervisees to be engaged in supervision by the same EP, and one participant who was excluded due to availability within time scales. Although my sampling method does not intend to be representative, the findings would have been different had a further two FSKWs been interviewed. Keeping the sample size at seven and not including these additional two participants, also allowed room to appreciate the idiography of each individual experience.

All FSKWs who were invited to interview accepted my invitation to interview and had repeatedly opted to continue to engage in supervision over the years. This may have resulted in the second limitation of my findings of bias towards a positive view of supervision and against more negative or challenging experiences of supervision. There also seemed to be a discourse within the team that was re-affirmed when I spoke with the pre-school specialist teaching team manager around how much supervision was valued. I wondered if when FSKWs were informed of my work, FSKWs felt in some way obligated to promote it as positive and valued in the fear that with the service's currently reduced EP capacity there was a risk of it not continuing indefinitely.

Although at the beginning of the interviews it was emphasised that I was interested in their individual experiences, participants expressed concern of whether what they were sharing and what I was looking for, for example, "I might not be giving you the

answers you need [laughs]" (Barbara, p. 8) and "I don't know if I'm answering it right [laughs]" (Barbara, p. 22). This illustrates how they might have viewed me as not just researcher, but as a member of the EPS and could have affected how they responded in interviews. As a novice researcher I was not aware at the time if there was anything else I could have done to minimise this effect.

The nature of the data collection method of interviews creates some limitations in itself. All interviews conducted were linguistically based and therefore the expression of the experience was limited to this medium of communication, in particular this might have had more of an impact for one participant for whom English was not her first language.

The challenge of translating experience into language is in the nature of words which label, pin down and separate one thing as being different from another. In experience understandings dance together as unthinking being and responding. (Smythe et al., 2009, p. 18).

It is also possible that other means could have been used to express and communicate the experience, for example through the use of drawings. The interviews were also conducted at one point in time and so responses may have been different if the interviews occurred at any other time. An alternative means of accessing the experience would have been through the use of diary entries over a period of time.

### 5.13 Reflections

I have been interested in the phenomenon of supervision since even before my doctoral training. When I volunteered in a community 'befriending' scheme where I had regular contact with an isolated individual in my community who had mental health difficulties, I was at the time supervised by a Social Psychologist. This was my first experience of a form of inter-professional supervision. I remember really valuing this supervision I received and it offered a space that was different to any other I had experienced before. It gave me the opportunity to reflect on my position and freely decide what next steps I would take and I was guided just when needed. I remember being supported with ending this work as my supervisor could foresee my burnout before I recognised it myself. My choice of institution for my doctoral training was also influenced by the emphasis and value placed on supervision. In my first year of training in a Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service multi-agency team placement, I was supervised by a Clinical Psychologist. I have also been engaging in supervision in the contexts of my placement, this research and in a personal domain, over the last three years of my training. I have experienced it to be very powerful and in many ways the most engaging hours of my training and was fortunate to be working in a service that valued supervision as I did and had their practice of inter-professional supervision established over the years.

I therefore have had, and continue to have positive experiences of supervision leading me to value it as a phenomenon. In my position as researcher I have aimed to research the individually constructed worldview of participants by bracketing my own views,

yet accepting that as researcher, my dynamic interaction contributed to the co-construction of the outcomes of this study. I endeavoured to bracket theories and my preconceptions by attending closely to the experiences and meaning-making of participants through for example 'bridling' and conducting the systematic literature review after analysis. Through reflexivity, awareness of myself, my thoughts, reactions and my views, I endeavoured to keep these apart and make room for the experiences of the supervisees. Through the process of using IPA, I recognised that it is was easy to assume that I have understood what is meant by a particular familiar word or phrase and impose my own understanding. This was particularly noticeable at the stage of analysis where I was unable to ask participant for further clarification and it required me to pay attention to the hermeneutic cycle of movement between the part and the whole to guide my interpretations. My engagement in conversations with the London IPA group and colleagues also conducting research using IPA, have supported my endeavours to display Yardley's (2000, 2015) characteristics of quality qualitative research. Sensitivity to context, transparency, reflexivity, coherence, commitment, rigour, impact and importance, all demonstrate and contribute to the trustworthiness of these finding and conclusions.

#### **5.14 Dissemination**

Findings were presented to the EPS during a whole service day. FSKWs and the pre-school specialist teaching team manager were offered the opportunity to attend a presentation of my findings. These findings will also be presented to the service I join

in the next academic year raising the profile of the value of supervision and offering an opportunity for the service to consider offering inter-professional supervision.

## 6.0 CONCLUDING COMMENTS

The aim of this study was to explore how FSKWs experience engaging in supervision with EPs and to add depth and richness to existing literature on inter-professional supervision within the EP profession. This study distinguishes itself from previous studies as the context of the study permitted me to draw on the experience of over 500 sessions of supervision spanning a period of between 10-15 years. The aim of the methodology underpinning this was to explore how participants have made sense of their experiences of supervision whilst minimising the impact of pre-existing theories and literature. Nevertheless, my involvement as researcher makes a partial but limited contribution to the construction of the study's findings. Whilst claims of generalisability are not made, the insight this study offers can inform the profession's understanding of supervision and how it is experienced.

The analysis revealed that for these participants the experience of a safe relationship is central to the supervisory experience, to learning and enabling a deeper exploration of the self. This means that participants experience an intimacy and a trust that enables them to be true to themselves. The relationship is experienced as a joint venture that is freely embarked on by both supervisor and supervisee that has a holding presence and can tolerate a catharsis for the supervisee.

These features of the supervisory relationship lay the necessary foundation for enabling a creative space for personal and professional learning and growth. This learning offers supervisees an opportunity to reflect on their own capacity and



abilities, extends their thinking and creates the space to explore new and alternative perspectives. People learn through relationships and as Christine stated, “our job is all about relationships” (Christine, p. 8-9). The field of Educational Psychology in my view centres on relationships and learning. I chose to complete doctoral training in this field at the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust because of its values centred on the understanding of relationships, and in this, lies the foundation of all learning.

The richest and most unique feature of engaging in supervision with EPs for these participants, is the opportunity to focus on, and more deeply explore the self. In pulling back the layers they access parts of themselves that call for further insight and understanding. It is through this inward looking process where the potential for change lies. As Daphne states, “the more you kind of know about yourself the more you know about other people” (Daphne, p. 25). This will only transpire in the context of a safe and trusting relationship.

I advocate that through the supervisory relationship, EPs can model and influence the relationships supervisees have with service users. Supervision questions and challenges thinking and one’s core being in a way that enables supervisees to learn about themselves in an empowering a sustainable way. In turn, as supervisees experience themselves develop in supervision, in the same way, they can in turn mirror this experience and endeavour to replicate it with the families they work with. EPs therefore have a key role in empowering and supporting professionals who also work with children, young people and their families.

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## 8.0 APPENDICES

- A. Heron's (1976) six categories of intervention as adapted from Hawkins and Shohet (2012)
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**Appendix A: Heron's (1976) six categories of intervention as adapted from Hawkins and Shohet (2012)**

<b>Category</b>	<b>What it looks like</b>
Prescriptive	Giving advice, being directive
Informative	Being didactic, instructing, informing
Confronting	Being challenging, giving direct feedback
Cathartic	Releasing tension, abreaction
Catalytic	Being reflective, encouraging self-directed problem-solving
Supportive	Being approving/confirming/validating

## Appendix B: Inclusion and exclusion criteria applied to systematic literature search

Inclusion Criteria	Exclusion Criteria
Peer reviewed	Not peer reviewed
Written in or translated into English	Not written in or translated into English
A doctoral study or published article	Editorials
Study focuses on 'professional supervision' as defined by the DECP (Dunsmuir & Leadbetter, 2010, p. 7) "A psychological process that enables a focus on personal and professional development and that offers a confidential and reflective space to consider one's work and responses to it".	The term 'supervision' is used with a focus on line management.
	Supervision appears in the findings/outcomes of a study only.
Educational Psychologists (or equivalent School Psychologists or School Counsellors) are the supervisors.	Supervisor is not an Educational Psychologist (or equivalent School Psychologist or School Counsellors). For example, supervisor is a Clinical Psychologist or Counsellor.
Study where the supervisee is of a different profession to supervisor.	Supervisee is an Educational Psychologist (or equivalent School Psychologist or School Counsellor) in Training.
Study where what is offered by EPs is identified as 'supervision'	Other professional support groups not identified by authors as 'supervision' per se, although overlapping features/qualities may be present e.g. studies around Work Discussion Groups, staff sharing schemes, group consultations, solution focused groups or collaborative problem solving groups.

## Appendix C: Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) of identified studies in systematic literature review

Three broad issues need to be considered when appraising the report of a qualitative research:

- Are the results of the review valid?
- What are the results?
- Will the results help locally?

The 10 questions below are designed to help think about these issues systematically. The first two screening questions is answered with a 'yes' or a 'no'. If the answer to both is 'yes', the remaining questions are then answered using '-1' for 'no', 0 for 'unsure/can't tell' and +1 for 'yes'. These scores are totalled up to reach a rating of high (between 3 and 7) medium (between -2 and 2) or low (between -7 and -3) The final rating is then converted to stars (high = 3 stars\*\*\*, medium = 2 stars\*\*, low = 1 star\*) and included in Table 4 in the main body of the text. The two papers that did not continue beyond the first two CASP questions are rated as 'not applicable' (N/A) due to the nature of the papers.

Study →	Soni (2010) thesis + Soni (2013) published article of above thesis	Garwood (2012) thesis	Soni (2015)	Madeley (2014) thesis	Osborne & Burton (2014)	Callicott (2011) thesis then published as Callicott & Leadbette r (2013)	Dunsmuir, Lang & Leadbette r (2015)	Maxwell (2015)	Bartle & Trevis (2015)	Hulsi & Maggs (2015)
CASP questions ↓										
1. Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. Is a qualitative methodology appropriate?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Is it worth continuing?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, this is a reflective piece.	Yes	No, this is a discussion piece.
3. Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-	+1	-

4. Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research?	+1	+1	+1	0 [only 5 of the 30 participants were engaging in supervision at the time of this study]	+1	0 [How much and for how long supervision was accessed, as well as whether it was an individual or group arrangement]	0 [Self-selecting bias]	-	+1	-
5. Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-	+1	-
6. Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-	+1	-
7. Have ethical issues been taken into consideration?	+1	+1	0 [more detail on how research was explained to participants would enable this to be clearer]	+1	0 [more detail on how research was explained to participants would enable this to be clearer]	+1	0 [more detail on how research was explained to participants would enable this to be clearer]	-	+1	-
8. Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-	+1	-
9. Is there a clear statement of findings?	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	-	+1	-
10. How valuable is the research?	(7) High	(7) High	(6) High	(6) High	(6) High	(6) High	(5) High	-	(7) High	-



## Appendix D: Letter of ethical approval

The Tavistock and Portman   
NHS Foundation Trust

Quality Assurance & Enhancement  
Directorate of Education & Training  
Tavistock Centre  
120 Belsize Lane  
London  
NW3 5BA

Tel: 020 8938 2548  
Fax: 020 7447 3837  
[www.tavi-port.org](http://www.tavi-port.org)

Miss Maria Wedlock

13<sup>th</sup> March 2015

**Re: Research Ethics Application**

*Title: Exploring the experiences of Family Support Key Workers (FSKWs) receiving supervision from Educational Psychologists (Eps)*

Dear Maria,

I am pleased to inform you that subject to formal ratification by the Trust Research Ethics Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2015, your application has been approved.

If you have any further questions or require any clarification do not hesitate to contact me.

I am copying this communication to your supervisor.

May I take this opportunity of wishing you every success with your research.

Yours sincerely,



Louis Taussig

Secretary to the Trust Research Ethics Committee

Cc Dr Mark Turner

**Appendix E: Research Outline**

Researcher: Maria Wedlock

The Tavistock and Portman   
NHS Foundation Trust

I am a Doctoral student at the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA and I can be contacted via email at [mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk). This research is supervised by Dr Mark Turner, email: [mturner@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:mturner@tavi-port.nhs.uk). As part of my Doctoral training, I am completing a 2 year training placement at Educational Psychology Service, . I can also be contacted through the following email address [maria.wedlock@.gov.uk](mailto:maria.wedlock@.gov.uk) and at the following telephone number 0 .

**Title:** Exploring the experiences of Family Support Key Workers (FSKWs) receiving supervision from Educational Psychologists (EPs).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of FSKWs receiving inter-professional supervision from EPs. The aim is to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the perspectives of FSKWs involved in inter-professional supervision and their supervisory relationship.

**Method:** I will initially ask EPs across the service to complete a data capture form to guide my selection of a minimum of 6 FSKWs. I will conduct semi-structured interviews with the FSKWs who following this, are willing to participate in this study. There will be no incentives offered. I may need to conduct a follow-up, second interview with participants depending on the outcomes of the first. Following interviews with the FSKWs, I will ask EPs to complete a second data capture form in order to gather further contextual information. Information and consent forms will be distributed in order to inform participants about my research and ensure informed consent is sought.

**Analysis:** Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith et al. 2009) will be used as the method of analysis to support the aims of this study that is intended to focus on the FSKWs' perceptions, views, experiences and understandings of their supervisory relationship.

**Relevance and Impact:** The Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC, 2007) stated that "*high quality supervision is...vital in the support and motivation of workers undertaking demanding jobs and should therefore be a key component of retention strategies...with a dynamic, empowering and enabling supervisory relationship...and is therefore at the core of...continuing professional development.*" (p.3). With national moves towards multi-agency working and more integrated services (DfE, 2014), there is scope for richer and more in-depth research that addresses not only the experience of those involved in inter-professional supervision, but also the issues involved in two professions meeting, with the aim of improving how they work together and the potential to improve outcomes for children and families. Other Local Authorities could benefit from this research where EPs are considering providing inter-professional supervision and particularly relevant for professionals who are involved early intervention and prevention work (DfE, 2003). In addition, there is potential to inform practice and broaden the role of EPs across the country, supporting, empowering and building capacity in other professionals who work with children and families.

**References:**

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## Appendix F: Email messages sent to area managers

### Email to EP managers:

Dear...DPEP,

I would like to request your permission to conduct my Doctoral research involving EPs in your area. Please read the information sheet attached which explains the details of this research.

I am requesting to involve EPs who supervise FSKWs in my research by asking them to complete two data capture forms. The first data capture form to be distributed in April 2015 is intended to lead me to the FSKWs who have been receiving supervision from EPs. The second data capture form will seek some further information about this supervision and will be distributed in August 2015.

Please respond to this email with a decision as to whether you agree or disagree for this research to be carried out. In addition, please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries regarding this study.

Kind regards,

Maria Wedlock  
Email signature

### Email to FSKW managers:

Dear ...Pre-school Manager,

I would like to request your permission to conduct my Doctoral research involving FSKWs in your area. Please read the information sheet attached which explains the details of this research.

I am requesting to involve FSKWs who receive supervision from an EP in my research by asking them to participate in an interview with me, of approximately an hour in length, about their experience of this supervision. Informed consent will be sought on an individual basis and confidentiality will be assured. This first interview may be followed up with a second interview if it is felt necessary.

Please respond to this email with a decision as to whether you agree or disagree for this research to be carried out. In addition, please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries regarding this study.

Kind regards,

Maria Wedlock  
Email signature

## **Appendix G: Email to EPs requesting initial data capture form information**

Dear...EP

As part of my Doctoral research, I am seeking some details about the Family Support Key Workers (FSKWs) who I understand are currently receiving supervision from you, ...(FSKW names here)...(please do correct me if these details are inaccurate). I am seeking to find out how long they have been receiving this supervision, in order for me to recruit participants who have had the most of this 'supervisory experience' i.e. for the longest period of time. Please see the attached document titled 'Research outline' if you would like to find out further details about this study.

I would be most grateful if you could take a few moments to complete the attached data capture form. I would much appreciate if you could respond to the following questions about each of the FSKWs you are currently supervising as accurately as you can. I have included two copies of the table for you to accommodate for this.

Please be aware, that by responding to this email you are giving consent for me to use this data solely for the purposes of my research and I would like to remind you that you are not obliged to take part in this research.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries and I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Maria

Email signature

**Appendix H: Initial data capture form**

# The Tavistock and Portman

NHS Foundation Trust

Dear EP,

I would like to remind you that I am looking to find out how long each Family Support Key Worker (FSKW) you are currently supervising has been receiving this supervision, in order for me to recruit participants who have had the most of this 'supervisory experience' i.e. for the longest period of time.

I would much appreciate if you could respond to the following questions about each of the FSKWs you are currently supervising.

Name of FSKW	
The date from which you have been supervising this person.	
The frequency/regularity of your supervision sessions.	
The mean length of time the supervision sessions last.	
If possible, please specify the number of supervision sessions you have had with this FSKW.	
Finally, please add any additional information you think might be relevant, for example, if you are aware that the FSKW you are currently supervising has also been supervised by another EP previous to yourself, and if so, any further details you might know, such as the length of time.	

(The above grid was multiplied in accordance with the number of FSKWs that EP supervised)

Thank you for volunteering this information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries.

Kind regards,  
Maria Wedlock

**Appendix I: Email to FSKWs inviting participation in this study**

Dear FSKW,

I am hoping you may remember being informed by (pre-school specialist teacher team area manager) that I am conducting some research as part of my Doctoral training on the experiences of Family Support Key Workers being supervised by Educational Psychologists (EPs). I have understood from [EP] that you have received supervision from EPs for a number of years and so would like to invite you to participate and be part of this research through interview with me. I have attached an information sheet that includes further information about this study and informed consent so you can decide whether or not you would like to participate in this study.

Please can you let me know what you decide and if you agree to participate, we can arrange a time and place to meet, where you will have another opportunity to read the information sheet and to sign the consent form and ask me any further questions before being interviewed.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

Maria

Email signature

## Appendix J: FSKW information sheet about study

Researcher: Maria Wedlock

The Tavistock and Portman   
NHS Foundation Trust

I am a Doctoral student at the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust, 120 Belsize Lane, London NW3 5BA and I can be contacted via email at [mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:mwedlock@tavi-port.nhs.uk). This research is supervised by Dr Mark Turner, email: [mturner@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:mturner@tavi-port.nhs.uk). As part of my Doctoral training, I am completing a 2 year training placement at Educational Psychology Service, . I can also be contacted through the following email address [maria.wedlock@.gov.uk](mailto:maria.wedlock@.gov.uk) and at the following telephone number 0 .

This information sheet is to provide you with the information about this research that you need to consider in deciding whether to participate in the study. Your participation is voluntary, you can choose not to participate in part or all of the project and you can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

**Title:** Exploring the experiences of Family Support Key Workers (FSKWs) receiving supervision from Educational Psychologists (EPs).

**Purpose:** The purpose of this study is to explore the experience of FSKWs receiving inter-professional supervision from EPs. The aim is to gain a richer and deeper understanding of the perspectives of FSKWs involved in inter-professional supervision and this supervisory relationship.

### Confidentiality:

I am collecting data via a semi-structured interview. The interview schedule will be around your experience of supervision by an EP. Names and data will be de-identified (i.e. any identifiers will be removed and replaced by a code) and the county you work in will not be named. The interviews will be digitally audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim by myself as researcher, and the recordings and transcripts will be carefully stored in secure facilities within my place of work, a local government building. The confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limits and may in some circumstances be disclosed, in the event of a freedom of information request. This final write-up of this research will be published and stored at the Tavistock & Portman Library. In writing up the study, no participants will be identified but I will be using quotes which may be identifiable to your supervisor. Interviews will be expected to take in the region of one hour, and if a second interview is requested, this will be expected to be no more than 30 minutes. Participants will be interviewed at a preferred location where a private room will be arranged.

### Disclaimer:

You are not obliged to take part in this study, and are free to withdraw your consent for me to use this data for this study at any time prior to analysis of the data before the 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015. After this time, I will not be able to distinguish your data from that of other participants. Should you choose to withdraw from the study you may do so without disadvantage to yourself and without any obligation to give a reason. This project has received formal ethical approval from the Tavistock and Portman Trust Research Ethics Committee (TREC). The data generated in the course of the research will be retained in accordance with the Tavistock and Portman Data Protection Policy. If you have any concerns about the conduct of the investigator, researcher, or any other aspect of this research project, you can contact Louis Taussig, the Trust Quality Assurance Officer, [ltaussig@tavi-port.nhs.uk](mailto:ltaussig@tavi-port.nhs.uk).

## Appendix K: FSKW consent to participate in this study

# The Tavistock and Portman

NHS Foundation Trust

## Consent to participate in this study

**Title:** Exploring the experiences of Family Support Key Workers receiving supervision from Educational Psychologists.

I have read the information leaflet relating to this research in which I have been asked to participate and have been given a copy to keep. The nature and purposes of the research have been explained to me, and I have had the opportunity to discuss the details and ask questions about this information. I understand what is being proposed and the interview in which I will be involved has been explained to me. I understand that my involvement in this study, and particular data from this research, will be de-identified (i.e. any identifiers will be removed and replaced by a code) and the county I work in will not be named. Only the researcher and the researcher's supervisor involved in supervising this research will have access to the data. It has been explained to me what will happen once the research has been completed.

I hereby freely and fully consent to participate in the study which has been fully explained to me. I understand that my participation is voluntary, that I can choose not to participate in part or all of the project and that I can withdraw at any stage of the project without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way.

Having given this consent I understand that I have the right to withdraw consent for my data to be included in this study at any time prior to any analysis of the data, before 20<sup>th</sup> July 2015, without disadvantage to myself and without being obliged to give any reason.

### Confidentiality

- I will transcribe all data so only I will hear the conversations recorded.
- I will not discuss information shared with anyone, except if information given means that someone is at risk of harm; in which case it will be my duty to tell you that I will have to share this information with my line manager.
- The confidentiality of information provided is subject to legal limits and may in some circumstances be disclosed, in the event of a freedom of information request.

### Anonymity

- If any information given compromises anonymity it will not be reported.
- Any demographic data deemed relevant will be retained.
- All paper files, digital recordings and computer files including coded interview data will be stored by me in a locked filing cabinet up until 10 years after submission and then destroyed after the data has been analysed.

### Informed consent

- Data will be reported in a Thesis that will be stored in the Tavistock & Portman NHS Foundation Trust Library.
- Interviews will inform future inter-professional supervision for EPs.
- You can withdraw from the research anonymously at any time during the interview without any negative connotations.

I give my consent to be interviewed by Maria Wedlock.

Signed:

Date:



## Appendix L: Interview schedule

I will initially verbally confirm that the participant is freely volunteering to participate in this study and clarify that I can choose not to participate in this study and that I can withdraw without being penalised or disadvantaged in any way. I will also give participants few moments to re-read the information and consent form and offer them the opportunity to ask me any questions they might have about giving their consent and their participation.

*This is a semi-structured interview and these questions will be used as guidance. They are intended as open and expansive questions to encourage the participant to talk at length and provide a detailed account of their experience with examples welcome. My verbal input will be minimal, although I will probe the participant to find out more about any interesting things they say and give time to reflect on responses and add any further comments. I am interested in your experience as a whole.*

1. Please can you start with a brief description of your role?
2. Can you tell me a bit about your understanding of the term 'supervision'?
3. Can you tell me about your experience of being supervised by an Educational Psychologist?
4. How would you say it differs from the supervision you receive within your team?
5. Can you remember and describe what it was like for you when you first started supervision with an EP, at the beginning? Has your relationship to supervision changed over time?
6. Can you tell me about your experience of your relationship with the EP who supervises you? Has it changed over time?
7. What do you experience as helpful in a supervisor?
8. Do you experience feeling unable to discuss something in supervision? If so, tell me more about this.
9. Can you tell me about your experience between supervision sessions? E.g. does it come to mind, do you think about next/last session or not at all?
10. Do you believe supervision contributes to your personal and professional development? Impact on you as a FSKW? If so, how? Or if not, why not? How does it impact on your work/relationship with service users?
11. When you change supervisors, what is that like? Difference/similarity between supervisors?

### Debrief:

*Is there anything else you would like to add or discuss in further detail? Are there any positive or negative feelings that have surfaced during the interview? My direct contact details can be found on the information sheet so that you can call me confidentially at a later date if you so wish.*

**Appendix M: Email to EPs requesting final data capture form information**

Dear...EP,

You may be aware that I have now completed my interviews for my Doctoral research that I briefly spoke about on the supervision refresher day. I have attached the summary sheet of my study I have sent you previously, as a reminder. Thank you for support with the initial data capture form, and as I understood on the day, this might be a good time to ask you help me with the final phase of my data collection.

I would like to ask you to please complete the 6 questions in the attached Word document that will enable me to provide some contextual information to my study as required by my methodology. In this instance, this is further information about what the supervision offered to family support keyworkers looks like in the service. Please note, that this is not matched to the individual interview material. I'm aware that there is a bit of overlap with the questions you answered for the service at the supervision refresher training day, but I hope you understand my slightly different position as researcher.

Thanks again for supporting me with this study, and should you have any further queries, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Wishing you a restful summer break,

Maria

Email signature

**Appendix N: Final data capture form completed after interviews**

# The Tavistock and Portman

NHS Foundation Trust

Dear EP,

Please complete these questions that will enable me to provide some contextual information to my study, and note that this is not matched to the individual interview material.

1. Please provide a brief description and summary of any training you have received in supervision below.

2. Do you receive ongoing support for supervising family support keyworkers? If so, how frequently? And in what form?

3. Do you use any particular model(s) of supervision? If so, please name them below.

4. Please name which particular psychological underpinnings inform the supervision you offer family support keyworkers.

5. Is a contract drawn up for the supervision at the start of your engagement? If so, is this reviewed? If so, also please briefly describe what this considers/includes/looks like.

6. Are any records of these supervision sessions kept? If so, by whom? What type of record? And for what purpose?

Thank you for volunteering this information. Please feel free to contact me if you have any further queries.

Kind regards,

Maria Wedlock

## Appendix O: Adaptation of contracting template recommended in service

### EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY SERVICE SUPERVISION POLICY SUPERVISION CONTRACT Based on Carroll and Gilbert (2011)

This is a supervision contract between ...and ... from ... until review or ending....

We operate under the following Codes of Ethics...

#### Working alliance

What supervisee wants (style):

- 
- 
- 

What supervisor offers (style/approach):

- 
- 
- 

Professional needs of supervisee:

- 
- 
- 

Strengths of the supervisee:

- 
- 
- 

#### Practicalities

Timings, location, mobile phones...

#### Procedures

We have agreed that the following arrangements will apply in the situation of a cancellation or non-attendance at a session...

When there are disagreements, disputes, conflicts between us...

If there is a need for extra supervision...

Keeping of supervisory notes...

Emergencies....

What the supervisee will do if the supervisor is not available...

### **Boundaries**

What we mean by confidentiality is...

What we will do about managing a dual relationship...

### **Roles and responsibilities**

As a supervisor I will take responsibility for:

- Time keeping
- Managing the overall agenda of the session
- Giving feedback
- Monitoring the supervisory relationship
- Creating a safe place
- Monitoring ethical issues of counselling and supervision
- Keeping notes of sessions
- Drawing up any reports required

As supervisee I will take responsibility for:

- Preparing for supervision
- Presenting in supervision
- My learning (objectives) and applying what I have learned from supervision
- Feedback to self and supervisor
- Keeping notes of sessions for application

**Any other issues to be negotiated:**

### **Evaluation and review**

This contract can be re-negotiated by either party at any time.

Signed            (Supervisor)            Date

Signed            (Supervisee)            Date

Signed            (Relevant other)            Date

## Appendix P: Sample of noting of exploratory comments

Left hand side only

Blue = descriptive comments

Green = linguistic comments

Red = conceptual comments

Weird - has to describe, explain, articulate.

He was the first child to die where a keyworker was working. Since then it has happened 10 times and there does seem to be more support. *Doesn't want to be too critical.*

Team has grown & developed but I was probably a significant contributor to that as it seemed like I had to supervise them now to supervise me. It became a massive thing to realise they couldn't support me. I was really unhappy about it. *Upsetting. Weight of event - massive! Weight of realisation of lack of support.*

I would openly speak about what was happening in the team, dynamics, politics, relationships, everything. *+ all poured out. - opened up completely.* You can share some of this at home, but supervisor understood the bigger picture. *Whole systemic perspective. Whole picture.*

It happened at work, so it was a work issue. *Protective of too much of burden going home, especially if death & dying was present at home.* I needed work support with this work issue. *Recognising own needs. Learn this through supervision?*

With the children we're working with, with life-limiting diseases, it is there. This is an issue that will re-occur & space is needed to process that. *It can't be ignored. I have to be able to manage it.*

P: Yeah it was, it was weird, but then, (clears throat), he was the first, um, so out of, he was the first... child, in the preschool team... where a keyworker was working with the child and they died. I mean, since then, there's probably now about 10 children that have died, on keyworker's caseloads, um, so you know, in fairness, there, there does seem to be, more support, from the team, about that issue, but when it happened, I was the first keyworker with the first child, and it just seemed like I had to supervise all my colleagues, to supervise them how to supervise me, and, it became... a massive thing, to realise and I was really unhappy about it.

I: *And* that's were supervision with the Educational Psychologist played a part?

P: *Massively.* Yeah because I could openly... tell EP... um, what had gone on in work, in every kind of way, with the dynamics, with the politics, with the relationships, everything and it, it was important, you know you can share some of what's going on at home, but, it's not the same... when, when you're sharing it with someone in work who understands the bigger picture, and, and it's sounds really silly, but for me, and I really don't mean for it to sound as prescriptive as I'm saying, but for me, him dying, in a way, it still was a work issue. You know, so I felt like in a way, that I needed work support with this work issue, that clearly has now become a, with the kind of child... children that we're working with now, it's become, you know, it's there, in children having life-limiting diseases now.

Appendix Q: Sample of developing emergent themes

On the right hand side.  
 Light blue = first attempt  
 Purple = second attempt

The supervision from one supervisor in particular had a massive effect on me.  
*Massive effect.*

ore than just rapport, but relationship? she built up a rapport over 5 years with her.

She learnt a lot from EP. Heaps. Learning from supervisor as holder of knowledge? Contradiction to facilitator role?

She liked one supervisor's ability to clarify what you were saying. Wants to interact with you. Active listening. Very good at listening to you, say everything, then summarising it. Splitting

Leaving to remember the good bits, but also reflect & work on areas of grey. Bad = areas of grey? Bringing out strengths. Leave you with an approach to try on with areas of grey. Elaborate on later.

A skilled way of working I like that. emphasised really. Power imbalance. More skilled than herself?

She's know first supervisor since she's started the job - the longest.

P: Um...different, personal and professional...well you can, the supervision from EP had a massive effect on me, personally and professionally. I, I feel she really, you know, over the years, and so if you're having supervision for a long time over 5 years, you do build up a rapport with that person, (clears throat) and you learn a lot from them, and I learnt heaps from her personally and professionally, um...we've...what I like, what I like with EP and EP, is that, EPs really good at um...clari...clarifying a lot of what you say, and very good at listening to you, say everything, and then right at the end, EP like summarises the good and bad bits that you've brought out, but, I can see it's important to her to leave you remembering those good bits, but also to be reflective and work on those areas of grey, but yet, EP would, leave you with an approach to try on with the areas of grey, and I, I like that. It's a really skilled way of working that EP 's got and I, and I like that. Um, with (clears throat), because I've known EP ever since I started the job, um, and I feel, and not that I mean to bore you with all personal stuff, but along with

Massive effect  
 Personally & Professionally

Build up a relationship over time  
 Rapport  
 Learning from them  
 Learning

Active listening  
 Processing  
 Recognition of strengths  
 Brings out positives  
 Work on areas of grey  
 More to think about  
 Skilled way of working

Known person since starting job.



## Appendix R: Eleni's grouped emergent themes forming sub-ordinate themes with key words

Sub-ordinate theme - "Genuinely interested in you"		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Focus on self	5	"...[EP] gives me the same level of, interest, passion..."
Focus on self	9	"...that personal attention..."
Authenticity	13	"...it's a genuine serious conversation about something that matters, that [EP] is genuinely interested in..."
Personalised learning	20	"...it would only be shared in that way if it's relevant and to do with what we're talking about..."
Feels valued	20	"...genuinely concerned about what's best for you, and how you are gonna work the situation"
Personalised	2	"...not to be, um talking as much as if it's about them, it's there to facilitate you..."
Being facilitated	1	"...to sort of draw out what it is you're wanting to say, trying to say, um whether it is you want to brainstorm that idea...[omission]..to, bring that out of you..."
Needs responded to	11	"...[EP] just seemed to be intuitive to draw out times if you were, asking for help or advice, or just wanted to say, just listen...[omission], [EP] could just pick out those things"
Felt understood	10	"...[EP] had, um...empathy, you know, compassion"
Processing	14	"...clarifying a lot of what you say...[omission]...listening to you say everything, and then right at the end, [EP] like summarises the good and bad bits that you've brought out..."

Sub-ordinate theme - Comfortable intimacy		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Revealing of self through humour	20	"...different, but great humour, and that comes out..."
Playful with each other	21	"...teasing or having fun with...[omission]...I can easily do so."
Affection	21	"You know [EP] would chuckle away, and then say something (laughs) back..."
Less guarded over time	20	"...where you've got to know someone after a few times, so maybe you can relax a little bit, um..."
Could speak freely	22	"...I could openly...tell [EP]...um, what had gone on in work, in every kind of way..."
Revealing self	2	"...to bring you out"
Intimacy	9	"...I mean just the three of us...[omission]...it was like an extension of that..."
Equal to each other	15	"...I've never felt that [EP]'s there and I'm here (one hand higher than the other)..."
Non-judgemental	1	"...environment that allows you to talk freely..."

Sub-ordinate theme - A place for the hardest things		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Managing risk of death	11	"...when you're also working with families of children that have life limiting illnesses and things, and you're then going through your own, things where you're partner's life is also, you know..."
Tolerance of difficult feelings	17	"...I can live with the awkwardness..."
Sensitive closure	11	"...[EP] was very good at still managing to end those sessions, you know cos they do have to come to an end, and, as difficult as they are, [EP] was good at rounding that off..."
Supported when others couldn't	10	"...it was very odd, because I didn't find great support from my own team, or my line manager at the time, but I did from [EP]."
Realisation of being unsupported by team	22	"...it just seemed like I had to supervise all my colleagues, to supervise them how to supervise me, and, it became...a massive thing, to realise I was unhappy about it."

Sub-ordinate theme - Growth / development		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Nurtured	2	"...drip-feed-come-guide you..."
Receiving	4	"...I want to get as much as I can from them, you know..."
Grows from own contribution	4	"...I realised I think it's based on what you yourself offer, and what you give...[omission]...you only get out of it what you put in."
Extends thinking	5	"...sort of challenging and idea..."
Learning	14	"...you learn a lot from them, and I learnt heaps from [EP] personally and professionally."
Learning to communicate with others	12	"...being, becoming in tune with who you're working with..."
More to think about	14	"...work on those areas of grey, but yet, [EP] would, leave you with an approach to try on with the areas of grey..."
Differentiated learning	4	"...pitched it at the right level for me..."
Self-awareness	16	"...how you deal with situations yourself, and how comfortably you deal with those situations..."
Recognition of strengths	14	"...to leave you remembering those good bits..."
Integrating theory and practice	4	"...how they incorporate different theories and approaches with what you've just brought up as a point..."

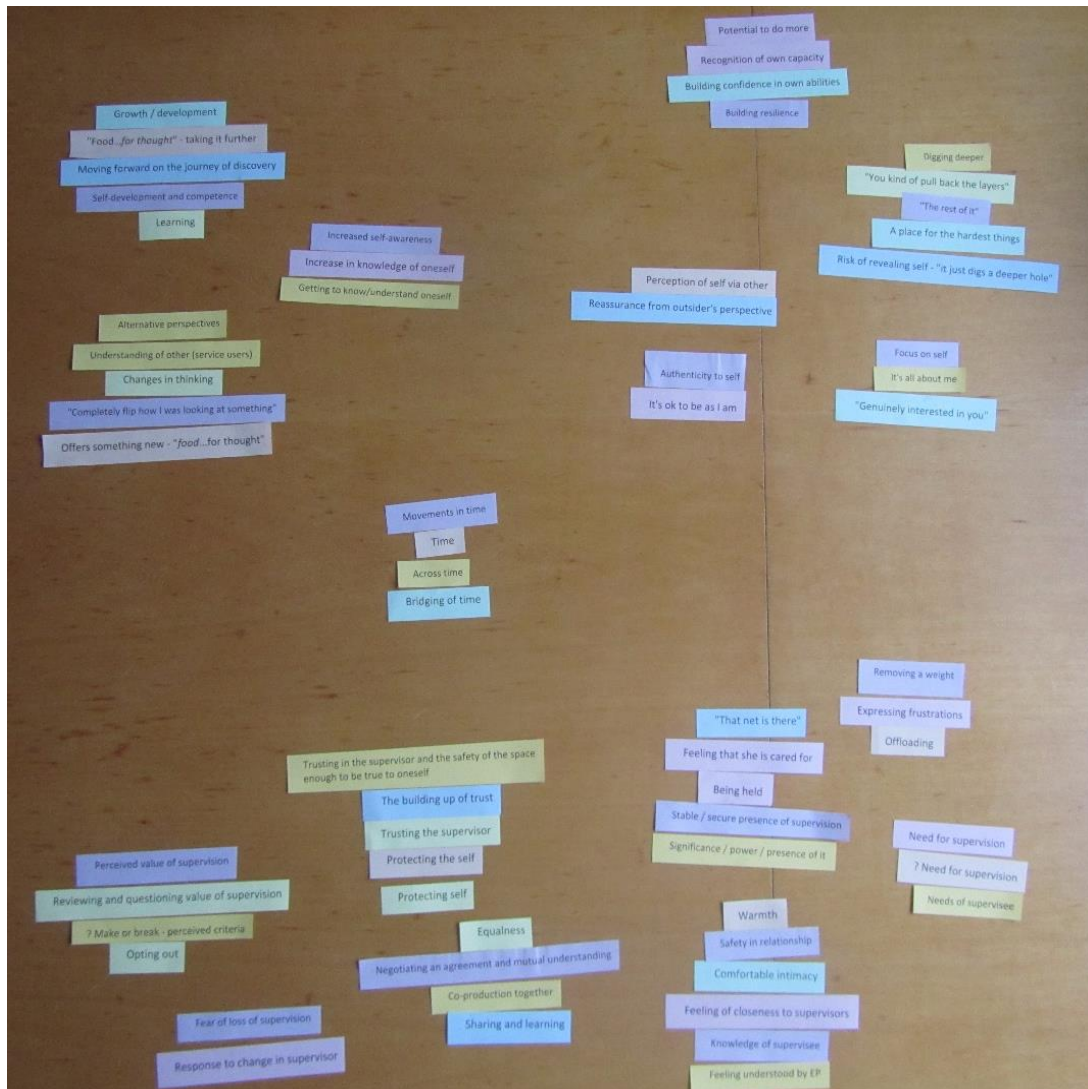
Sub-ordinate theme - Building confidence in own abilities		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Empowered	15	"...build me up I think, you know in confidence..."
Equipped with toolkit	12	"...I'd go out the room in a way armed with some approaches to try..."
Equipped with toolkit	18	"...something for you to go on."
Self-belief	17	"...does make me feel like I have the skills to be able to do it."
Learning to manage confrontation	10	"...over time [EP] taught me, was just how to deal with confrontation..."
Equipped for role	17	"...if you're geared up and tooled up with...[omission]...when you're tooled up in all those areas..."
Transferable skills	18	"...you can always take those and think, oh, I can use it with that family, or I can say it with that family..."

Sub-ordinate theme - Bridging of identity		
Emergent themes	Page	Key words
Connects past and present	15	"...because of how long I've known [EP] is that [EP], reminds me of different things I knew...[omission]...reminded me, well you used to do that, and remember this and remember that..."
Re-learning	15	"...that's allowed me to go over a lot of things..."
Both of you change over time	19	"...you've changed as well, I've, I've changed, you develop over time...[omission]...that would be the same for [EP], you know, [EP]'s another person..."
Linking across sessions	20	"...it was about you self-reflecting, on, what you may have told [EP] last time..."
Self as consistent over time	8	"...I don't think I've changed (emphasis) that much in how I come to the meetings, actually, um...I still talk about things in the same way..."
Vulnerable self-exposed	15	"...[EP]'s aware of (clears throat), that time when I was off work and how I looked in my recovery..."

Discarded themes	Page
Confidentiality	2
Values time	3
Values diversity of experience	3
Supervisor as holder of knowledge	4
Awareness of difference between self and supervisor	4
Infrequency of contact influences relationship	6
Less continuity due to time lapse	6
Responsible for prioritising issues to bring	8
Permission to distance and protect self	12
Anticipation of feeding back	13

Discarded themes	Page
Recognition of its importance	13
Distinct pockets of 'boundaried' time	16
Try to understand others	17
Values diversity	19
Supervisor as holding knowledge	19
Understanding of context	22
Protective of home	22
Support in context	22
Awareness of impact	23

## Appendix S: A provisional arrangement and grouping of sub-ordinate themes across participants



## Appendix T: Full set of data

Available electronically.