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Does the consensus about the value of supervision in social work stifle research and innovation?

This special issue of the Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work journal focuses on the topic of supervision in social work. We wanted to set a broad scope by highlighting the importance of supervision for all: supporting and developing practice from education to leadership. Because, from looking at much of the published work to date, one could be forgiven for thinking that supervision in social work is something mainly for students and newly qualified practitioners. Nothing could be further from the truth. We believe, as do many others, that supervision is critical for students, practitioners and managers at all levels and stages of their career. When social workers do not have suitable space and time in which to stop, think, and reflect, their emotional and social wellbeing suffers, and they provide a poorer service for the individuals, families and communities they work with. It is pleasing to see that, in recent years, many organisations in the United Kingdom (UK) have been able to focus on, and by all accounts, improve the supervision they provide for students and early-career practitioners. The challenge to improve support for students and newly qualified social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand remains (Ballantyne et al., 2019; Hay, Maidment, Ballantyne, Beddoe, & Walker, 2019). We should, with equal vigour, be doing the same for more experienced workers, supervisors, managers and leaders. Given the consensus that exists within the profession about the importance of supervision, there is no reason not to.

Yet this consensus is itself worth thinking about. Where does it come from and why? And if we all agree about the importance of supervision, why is that it has only become the focus relatively recently of serious social work research? (Sewell, 2018). It is now nearly a decade since Carpenter, Webb, and Bostock (2013) concluded that "the evidence base for the effectiveness of supervision…is weak" (p. 1843). And it is doubtful whether a repeat of this review now would come to a very different conclusion, despite the fine efforts of an increasing number of scholars. A recent Delphi study by Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, and Tsui (2016) found that, amongst a group of international experts, the need to develop an empirical evidence base for supervision, particularly in relation to people who use services, was (still) the clearest priority. Wherever our consensus about the importance of supervision comes from, it is not the result of an abundance of evidence.

The full explanation for the existence of this consensus is undoubtedly complex and recursive. Here we suggest just three possible reasons. First, many social workers have had positive experiences of supervision and of the difference it has made for their practice and their personal and professional well-being. By which we do not mean that all social workers consistently receive good supervision all of the time—unfortunately, we know that this is not the case (e.g., Turner-Daly & Gordon, 2017). Yet of those who report poor experiences, a significant proportion are likely, at one time or another, to have experienced something much better, even if only when they were a student. As a result, there are many within the profession who can personally attest to the value of good supervision.

Second, it is a given that social work is an emotionally demanding profession and that students, workers and managers alike need support. Social workers are (for want of a

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better word) *exposed* through their work to situations of trauma, harm, loss, grief, deprivation, oppression and discrimination. We do not mean to give the impression that social work can only ever be a grim profession. There are many examples which show quite the opposite (Hardy, 2015). It would also be wrong to suggest that the challenges faced by paid professionals are comparable to those experienced by many people who use services. Nonetheless, it is impossible to deny that, in order to do their job well, social workers need effective emotional and social support. Given the long history of supervision within social work, it should not be surprising that supervision is considered one of the best supportive mechanisms available.

Finally, our consensus view of supervision may be aided by a certain lack of clarity about what exactly we mean. There are few very precise definitions of it. The word *supervision* can be used to describe a relationship, a formal meeting and a process. Many academic papers on supervision do not define what kind of supervision they are discussing or evaluating, or which aspects of it. Supervision is something of a *blank slate*, onto which different commentators can project their own ideas of what it means. This flexibility is useful for promoting its importance and establishing a consensus. Public inspection bodies (such as Ofsted in England) can say that supervision is important because it ensures close management oversight of practice. The British Association of Social Workers and the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers can say that supervision is important because it helps ensure the professional development of their members. Managers can say that supervision is important because it enables them to gather information from workers (Manthorpe, Moriarty, Hussein, Stevens, & Sharpe, 2015). Employers can say that supervision is important because it helps improve staff job satisfaction and retention (Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009). And so on. Thus, when we ask whether supervision is important, it is rare to find anyone who disagrees—but what they mean by supervision may not be immediately obvious.

There are, of course problems, with each of these three reasons. As we have already alluded to, when language is used with a lack of precision, it makes it very much harder to know what we really mean. When we say that supervision is critical for emotional well-being, what do we mean by *supervision* and what do we mean by *emotional well-being*? For that matter, what do we mean by *critical*? Without being more precise about the different behaviours, relationships and processes contained within supervision, it is unlikely we will progress much beyond where we currently stand in relation to the evidence-base. O'Donoghue, Wong Yuh Ju, and Tsui's (2018) work on an evidence-informed supervision model is an excellent example of the kind of scholarship we could do with much more of. In relation to the argument that social workers need emotional support, we are not about to disagree. But we can ask whether supervision is necessarily the best way to provide this kind of support. Many people in different professions face similar challenges—without the kind of supervision that is so commonplace in social work. Might we find better outcomes from other kinds of intervention? And how do people in other professions manage without supervision? In healthcare services in the UK, for example, there are many thousands of people who benefit every month from attending Schwartz Rounds (Maben et al., 2018). Meeting the emotional needs of dozens of people at the same time may well prove to be a lot more cost-effective than trying to do so via a series of one-to-one meetings between supervisors and individual workers (assuming that is what we mean by supervision). As for the suggestion that personal experience is an important reason for the consensus, this may well be the case. But personal experiences cannot help us answer the kind of cost-effectiveness questions we have just mentioned, and neither can we use such evidence to address

the counter-factual question—what would have been different without supervision (particularly if we want to know what would have happened if something else was available instead)? Providing high-quality supervision takes a great deal of time, skill and effort. What benefits do we get for all of this input for staff and for people who use services, and what other potential benefits might we be missing out on as a result?

The consensus that exists about the importance of supervision can therefore be seen as a two-sided coin. On the one hand, having a consensus is good. It shows the extent to which we can agree with one another (and there remains plenty in social work about which reasonable people may disagree). A consensus enables us to stop debating (to some extent) and start doing. Yet having a consensus also creates some challenges. It results in some important questions being left un-asked—or even unrecognised. It can delay, perhaps indefinitely, the development of an evidence-base. After all, why dedicate funding resources, time and effort to produce the evidence that supervision *works* when everyone already agrees that it does? A consensus may also lead us to overlook examples of how supervision can actually be harmful (Beddoe, 2017; Ellis, Creaner, Hutman, & Timulak, 2015). In fact, there may be nothing more useful for making progress in theory and evidence-generation than a bit of healthy (and respectful) disagreement, or at least a comparison of different points of view. Which brings us neatly onto the articles within this special edition….

This issue contains eight full-length articles which will contribute to the ongoing scholarship of supervision. The contents include a mix of qualitative, quantitative and theoretical approaches. First up, David Wilkins considers the important question, "does social work supervision *work?*" Wilkins takes methodological inspiration from realist approaches to evaluation to set out an initial working theory of social work supervision for child and family services, developed from an analysis of six reviews of the supervision literature. Wilkins concludes by arguing that this working theory offers the basis for future evaluative studies of supervision. It is our hope that further scholarship in this important topic will produce both rich findings and an evolving theory of supervision.

In 'Ngā Aroro and social work supervision', Eliza Wallace, Ngāpuhi, Te Rarawa, explores the interconnectedness of ngā aroro (key concepts) from Te Ao Māori that influence critical reflection in supervision and enhance the cultural effectiveness of supervision. Wallace presents not only rich findings from her qualitative study but also describes the embedding of research principles and ethics grounded in kaupapa Māori (Māori approaches). This methodology provides "a supportive shelter for consciousness-raising, critical dialogue, reflection on supervision practice and for oral cultural narrative to be honoured". The article challenges us to take a fresh view of supervision theory and practice, considering the strengths of supervision provided by non-registered social work supervisors and the cultural significance of supervision being developed and evaluated with indigenous aspirations at the centre.

Matt Rankine's article, 'The internal/external debate: The tensions within social work supervision', reports findings from qualitative discussions with key informants and supervisory dyads in community-based child welfare services regarding reflective practices in supervision. Internal and external supervision arrangements were a common topic of discussion in the study. Rankine's analysis identified important themes including the contribution of external supervision to "building capacity, resilience and confidential reflective space"; the focus of internal supervision on managerial and organisational agendas; tensions associated with external supervision regarding funding; and organisational and professional accountability.

In 'Supervising the supervisors: What support do first-line supervisors need to be more

effective in their supervisory role?', Frances Patterson's theoretical article explores the transitions of those stepping into the supervisor role. Drawing on the experience of teaching managers on post-qualifying courses in professional supervision in Scotland, Patterson argues that the reflective supervisory needs of supervisors deserve greater priority. Supervisors in many countries have minimal training for the role (often short internal courses only), and few opportunities for ongoing professional development. Patterson's review of the containment function of supervision "makes evident a flawed logic if support for the emotional impact of the work is offered only to direct practitioners" given managers often hold the responsibility for their team's work.

In the first of two articles in this issue, Kieran O'Donoghue reports on a national survey on the supervision of registered social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand. A postal survey of 278 registered social workers was conducted to gain information about their supervision, and to compare with the Social Workers Registration Board's (SWRB) policy and guidelines. This is a very helpful report as it establishes much detail about various aspects of supervision, including forms, overall emphasis, logistics, types of contact, climate, methods and processes, experiences of their supervisor's approaches and models, session processes and content and their overall satisfaction and evaluation. Such information will usefully inform future supervision research in Aotearoa New Zealand. O'Donoghue reports from this survey that most registered social workers' supervision is in accordance with SWRB policy but that further work is needed to address the cultural responsiveness of supervision in relation to supervisees and service users. Suggestions are made concerning further research about the influence of gender, culture, sexual orientation, experience, qualifications, and registration status on supervision relationships.

In 'Courageous conversations in supervision,' Allyson Davys notes that challenging conversations, commonly associated with some form of emotion, are features of many social workers' daily routine and frequently appear on the supervision agenda. This article focuses on the supervisor's role in courageous conversations and identifies some of the obstacles to addressing difficult situations. Davys emphasises the importance of supervision contracts in the establishment of clear expectations and the development of an effective supervision relationship, whilst recognising the power inherent in the supervision process. Davys identifies three kinds of interventions: relational, reflective, and confrontational. The framework presented highlights the need for clarity about the motivation for, and purpose of, a courageous conversation and for clear identification of the desired goal or outcome.

'Professional supervision and professional autonomy' is the title of the contribution by Synnove Karvinen-Niinikoski, Liz Beddoe, Gillian Ruch, and Ming-sum Tsui. This article has previously appeared in chapter form in Blom, Evertsson, and Perlinski (2017) and is based on the authors' Delphi study (Beddoe et al., 2016). In this contribution the authors theorise the tension between supervision as being, on the one hand, a surveillant tool of management and on the other, a practice of critical reflection. They argue that such tensions pose a threat to professional social work autonomy and agency. An alternative, theoretically grounded approach is suggested, building on traditions of critically reflective supervision. Considering professional supervision within the frame of human agency will help practitioners and supervisors alike to construct sustainable and proactive social work: "Instead of despairing about the loss of autonomy, the professionals may go through significant societal and professional transformations as subjects of their own expertise and professional agency."

In a second article for this special issue, Kieran O'Donoghue reports results from

a survey of registered social workers who are supervisors in Aotearoa New Zealand. The national postal survey of 278 registered social workers supervision gathered data about the background, experiences and views of 138 supervisors. O'Donoghue concludes from his analysis that most supervisors provide supervision that is typical of individual, clinical or professional supervision and is aligned with local professional standards. Echoing the findings from analysing registered social workers' responses in his previous article in this issue, O'Donoghue raises concerns about the predominance of non-Māori supervisors and the cultural relevancy, safety and responsiveness of supervisors for Māori supervisees. O'Donoghue offers a challenge to the SWRB to engage with the matters raised about the diversity and training of the supervisory workforce for social work.

In a Commentary article by Penny Sturt and Bridget Rothwell, 'Implementing the integrated model of supervision: A view from the training room', they explain what the integrated model is and how, as trainers, they use it, and some of the challenges to effective supervision practice that come up in discussions when training supervisors in the UK. Drawing on supervision literature, they present a reinforced 4Rs model, integrating reflection, restoration, resilience and recording, grounded in the organisational context which influences so much supervision practice.

Finally, this special issue includes two Viewpoint pieces. The first, 'Burnout in social work: The supervisor's role' by Vicki Hirst is based on the author's experience of supervising social workers who have burned out. Hirst's refection addressed the questions: What can I learn from their experience? How does current literature inform supervisory practice in this area? How can I and other supervisors best respond? Hirst's reading of recent literature and professional reflections validated much current supervision practice but introduced some new ideas. She concludes that informed and skilled social work supervisors are well placed to support social workers in preventing burnout, managing it if it does occur, and supporting a return to work, and to the profession as appropriate.

Last up, Craig Holz examines the issues of *cost* and external supervision in 'A manager's challenge: Is external supervision more valuable than increased training money for staff?' Holz starts with the debate about the relative strengths of external and internal supervision. External supervision is often recommended for professional development reasons, for example, but there is a significant financial cost involved. Internal supervision provides greater oversight of staff and simplifies communication, but issues of power are often significant. Holz presents a hypothetical case study of an agency considering changing its supervision systems and the relative benefits and risks that need to be considered.

We wish to thank all the contributors to this special issue and offer a special thanks to the many anonymous peer reviewers whose work is invisible to readers but which has strengthened the final articles.

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Social work supervision in child and family services: Developing a working theory of how and why it works

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Does social work supervision work? Social work academics and others have argued repeatedly that we need to focus more attention on understanding whether and how supervision helps improve outcomes for people who use services. As things stand, we currently have little evidence either way—and although the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence, this is far from an ideal situation.

APPROACH: Taking inspiration from realist approaches to evaluation, this article sets out an initial working theory of social work supervision for child and family services, developed from an analysis of six significant reviews of the supervision literature. Each review was analysed to identify key contexts, mechanisms and outcomes for supervision.

CONCLUSION: Notable gaps within the theory are identified in relation to workers, outcomes for children and families and how supervision can promote a rights-based approach. The article concludes by arguing that this working theory offers the basis for future evaluative studies of supervision.

KEYWORDS: Supervision, social work, children and families, what works

It is widely accepted that the evidence base for supervision is relatively weak. No review or meta-analysis has ever found strong evidence that supervision consistently makes a difference for people who use services, and there is only relatively weak evidence that it makes a consistent difference for workers (Carpenter, Webb, & Bostock, 2013). A Delphi study in 2015 identified that, amongst a group of international experts, the need to establish the evidence base for supervision, and particularly in relation to people who use services, was viewed as a pressing priority (Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, & Tsui, 2015). Despite these limitations, there remains a strongly held belief within the social work profession that high-quality supervision really does make a difference, not only for workers but for people who use services too. And while it is true that "a consensus is not an evidence-base" (Forrester et al., 2019, p. 3), it is also true that the absence of evidence is not evidence of absence.

In recent years, there has certainly been an increased focus on supervision within the social work academy, demonstrated not least by an increasing number of journal publications (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015; Sewell, 2018). In the *Aotearoa New Zealand Social Work* journal alone, there have been 23 articles (including book reviews) published with *supervision* in the title in the past 10 years. (The significance of this journal's contribution in particular has been recognised internationally in Sewell, 2018.)

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In England, there has also been a concerted effort in practice to provide more effective supervisory support, particularly for early-career practitioners (Schraer, 2016). Similar efforts have been made elsewhere, as Rankine (2017) outlines in relation to Aotearoa New Zealand. Despite these well-intended and in many cases successful efforts the general picture remains one of concern about the managerial capture of supervision (Manthorpe, Moriarty, Hussein, Stevens, & Sharpe, 2015; Wilkins, Forrester, & Grant, 2017). Turner-Daly and Jack (2015) found that supervision sessions in England may focus on case-management to the exclusion of much else, while Baginsky et al. (2010) reported that senior managers often consider supervision to be a mechanism for performance-management, rather than a forum for support. In Aotearoa New Zealand, similar concerns have been expressed by Rankine (2017) and Moorhouse, Hay, and O'Donoghue (2014), with the suggestion that supervision functions in many cases as a mechanism for the surveillance of practice within a neoliberal context.

Yet, it is also true that more effective supervision is not only possible but is in some places flourishing. In a number of local authorities in England, there has clearly been much thought given to the purpose of supervision and thriving cultures of reflective and supportive approaches have been and are being developed (Lees, 2017). Bostock's work has been instrumental in helping to identify key components in the relationship between certain forms of group systemic supervision and the practice skills demonstrated by workers (Bostock, Forrester, Patrizo, Godfrey, & Zonouzi, 2017; Bostock, Patrizo, Godfrey, Munro, & Forrester, 2019). Davys, May, Burns, and O'Connell (2017) have also looked at how supervision is evaluated in practice by supervisors and supervisees in Aotearoa New Zealand. Research from America has helped identify how supervision can improve workers' knowledge of theory and practice models (Smith et al., 2007) and self-efficacy (Collins-Camargo & Royse, 2010), as well as influencing job satisfaction and retention rates (Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009).

However, as we strive to prove that supervision works, it is important to consider (or not to forget) that simplistic conceptions of *effectiveness* are likely to be unhelpful. It is increasingly recognised, particularly within the realist tradition, that the evaluation of complex social interventions cannot simply ask "what works?" Instead, we need a more nuanced understanding of what works *for who* and *how and why* (Pawson & Tilley, 2014). This is especially true when considering the complex interplay of values, ethics, power and culture that takes place within supervision (see Elkington, 2014). As Pawson and Tilley (2014) explain, when undertaking evaluations, we need to consider how human beings behave, decide and respond within social contexts, and to understand complexities such as motivation and inter-personal relationships. A parenting programme may work for a group of enthusiastic, motivated and voluntary attendees but is less likely to work for a group of de-motivated and mandated attendees. For complex interventions, they work (or not) because the people involved in them behave in certain ways and make particular decisions—and it is these behaviours and decisions rather than the intervention per se which 'cause' the outcomes. This approach speaks directly to the importance of considering questions of culture and diversity, something long recognised within the supervision literature as being of paramount importance (Cashwell, Looby, & Housley, 1997).

Developing a working theory

Realist evaluation "starts with a theory and ends with a more refined theory" (Currie, Chiarella, & Buckley, 2019, p. 1322). The purpose of realist evaluation is to develop and test what is known as a *programme*

theory (see Byng, Norman, & Redfern, 2005; Byng, Norman, Redfern, & Jones, 2008). This kind of mid-range theory seeks to describe how an intervention works. It includes a description of the wider conditions in which the intervention should be situated and the kinds of outcomes you can expect to achieve. It also describes the moderators that influence how the intervention works (Funnell & Rogers, 2011). There is no one way to express a programme theory (Taylor-Powell & Henert, 2008) but they will usually include inputs (e.g., staff, funding, training), outputs (e.g., meetings, advice and information) and outcomes (e.g., changes in behaviour and mindset). The aim of a programme theory is to provide a simplified model to communicate the key elements of an intervention (Taylor-Powell & Henert, 2008).

Theory development of this kind does not rely solely on existing empirical work. Indeed, given that realist evaluation starts with theory, this would not always be possible. Instead, the theory is developed from a range of sources, which may include existing empirical work, but can also involve conceptual and theoretical discussions and the experiences, expertise and views of people involved in the intervention. When these theories are developed based on existing literature, it is common to undertake consultation and empirical work as a natural development and testing process of the theory (see Shearn, Allmark, Piercy, & Hirst, 2017). For this article, the programme theory has been developed based on six existing reviews of the supervision literature and in relation to the context of child and family social work specifically.

Defining supervision

As the purpose here is to develop a working theory of supervision for child and family social work, the following definition is used: "Supervision is a regular, planned, accountable process, which must provide a supportive environment for reflecting on practice and making well informed decisions using professional judgement and discretion" (British Association of Social Workers, 2011, p. 7). Other definitions are available and as noted by Sewell, "caution is needed [because] nomenclature is used differently" (2018, p. 253). Social work supervision is considered here specifically, as distinct from supervision more generally (for example, in psychotherapy or infant mental health work). Sewell's suggested definition by way of comparison is that supervision:

> …is the relationship between supervisor and supervisee in which the responsibility and accountability for the development of competence, demeanour and ethical practice takes place. The supervisor is responsible for providing direction to the supervisee, who applies social work theory, standardized knowledge, skills, competency, and applicational ethical contact in the practice setting. (Sewell, 2018, p. 253)

As the focus of this article is on supervision within a specific practice context (statutory child and family work), the definition of the British Association of Social Workers is preferred. However, it is important to note that this definition makes no reference to ethics, unlike Sewell's definition.

Method

Six key reviews of the supervision literature were identified from the past two decades. Between them, these reviews include 250 individual articles, albeit this figure is cumulative (Table 1). The reviews were selected non-systematically and on the judgement of the author because they cover a significant period of time (the past 20 years of research), and because they focus on a range of different areas (from the functions of supervision and the supervisor–supervisee relationship, to experiences of supervision, the organisational context and outcomes for workers and people who use services). As the aim is to develop a working theory of supervision, the reviews were selected to ensure breadth, rather than following

Table 1. Overview of the Review Articles Included in Developing the Programme Theory

Review citation	Articles included	Areas considered
Tsui (1997)	30	Descriptive studies, supervisory functions and the supervisory relationship
Bogo & McKnight (2006)	13	Characteristics of supervisors and the wider organisational context
Barak et al. (2009)	27	Worker outcomes
Carpenter et al. (2013)	21	Outcomes for workers
O'Donoghue & Tsui (2015)	86	The experience of supervision, supervision within child welfare and the influence of supervision on clients and workers
Sewell (2018)	79	Reviews of research, specific models of supervision, supervisory functions, experiences of supervision and worker outcomes
	Total = 256	

the precepts of a traditional systematic or narrative review.

The reviews were analysed to identify descriptions of *how* supervision works, for *whom* and under *what* circumstances. Three questions were asked in relation to each review: (1) How does supervision work and for who? (2) What helps supervision to work well and what hinders it from working well? (3) In what contexts does it work? Each review was read with these questions in mind, to produce a series of *if-then* statements. If-then statements are used to help understand the causal relationships that underlie the intervention (Taylor-Powell & Henert, 2008, pp. 7–8). They are a form of mini-hypotheses about why and how something happens. Consider the following extract from Carpenter et al. (2013):

> Where workers reported feeling negative about rapport, this was associated with… emotional exhaustion, whereby workers felt detached, no longer saw themselves as valuable and lost track of their personal needs. (p. 9)

From this paragraph, one can generate a series of if-then statements as follows:

> IF workers feel negative about rapport with their supervisor,
>
> THEN they will report feeling negative about rapport;
>
> THEN they will feel emotionally exhausted and detached,
>
> THEN they will less valued and lose track of personal needs.

Other examples of if-then statements from Carpenter et al. (2013) are given in Table 2. These statements are then grouped together to form explanatory accounts (Table 3), and those accounts in turn consolidated (Table 4). The same process was applied to each of the six reviews. Sheehan et al. (2018) provide a much more complete, example of a similar process in action. From these accounts, an initial programme theory was produced as both a diagram and in a descriptive format.

Table 2. Examples of Initial If-then Statements Drawn from Carpenter et al. (2013)

If workers have poor rapport with supervisors, THEN they will feel less valued
IF workers have regular contact with supervisors, THEN supervisory support becomes more important to them
IF supervisors can be relied upon when things get tough, THEN workers are more likely to stay in their jobs
IF organisations are committed to the development of excellent supervision, THEN workers are more likely to stay in their jobs
IF supervision is structured to enable skills-development, THEN workers will develop their skills

Table 3. Examples of Explanatory Accounts Drawn from Carpenter et al. (2013)

Explanatory Account 1 IF organisations understand the needs of their workforce, THEN they can design supervision training to meet those needs
Explanatory Account 2 IF organisations provide supervisors with suitable training, THEN supervisors will develop the right skills
Explanatory Account 3 IF organisations highlight the importance of task-assistance within supervision, THEN supervisors will provide more task-assistance
Explanatory Account 4 IF supervisors are not given training in task-assistance, THEN they may not know how to do it

Findings

Within the six reviews, there were many rich ideas about how supervision works and under what circumstances. Using these ideas, an initial working theory was developed, including several contextual factors, moderators and outcomes (see Figure 1). A descriptive account of the initial programme theory can be outlined as follows:

> Effective supervision is predicated on a positive working relationship between the supervisor and the worker. The supervisor will be reliable, empathic, supportive, available and knowledgeable. They will be considered authoritative because of their personal and professional qualities and as a result will be trusted and respected. The wider organisation will recognise the importance of supervision

Table 4. Consolidated accounts Drawn from Carpenter et al. (2013)

Consolidated account 1: effective supervision improves worker outcomes, including well-being, job satisfaction and retention
IF there is a positive working relationship between supervisor and supervisee,
AND supervision includes education, administration and social and emotional support,
AND supervisors are seen as reliable, supportive, available and knowledgeable,
AND the supervisor provides guidance on work-related issues including problem-solving, task-assistance and well-being,
AND supervision is well-structured and includes problem-solving,
THEN supervisors are viewed as authoritative because of their knowledge and skills,
THEN workers trust and respect their supervisors,
THEN workers will feel emotionally supported and positive about their supervision,
THEN workers are protected against unreasonable job demands,
THEN workers will feel more satisfied about their workload,
THEN workers will feel less stressed and overwhelmed,
THEN workers will have higher job satisfaction and feel positively about the organization,
THEN workers are more likely to stay, turnover is lower, and retention is higher.
Consolidated account 2: organisational support for supervisors
IF organizations stress the importance of supervision,
AND stipulate minimum standards for supervision,
AND organisations find out from their workforce how they feel about job satisfaction, organisational commitment, stress and burnout,
THEN supervisors can be trained and supported to provide task assistance and social and emotional support,
THEN supervisors and workers will develop more positive working relationships,
THEN workers will feel more positively about supervision,

THEN supervision will be more effective,
THEN workers will develop their practice skills,
THEN workers will feel more positive about the organisation, accomplish more and experience less stress.
THEN workers will have higher job satisfaction, are more likely to stay, turnover is lower, and retention is higher.
Consolidated account 3: the benefits of supervision for the wider organisation
IF social workers feel supported by supervisors,
AND feel positive about the quality of their supervision,
THEN social workers will feel their workload is more manageable,
AND feel more emotionally satisfied at work,
AND view the wider organisation more positively.
Consolidated account 4: professional development and skills for practice
IF there is a positive working relationship between supervisor and supervisee,
AND supervisors trust social workers,
AND they share similar views about the importance of client-centred practice,
AND supervisors provide task assistance, education, training, coaching, instruction and advice,
AND help with the emotional impact of the work through reflection,
THEN workers will learn and develop their skills
AND feel more empowered and more equipped to perform their role,
AND will develop as competent professionals
Consolidated account 5: outcomes for children and families
IF there is a positive working relationship between supervisor and supervisee,
AND supervision includes education, administration and social and emotional support,
AND supervisors provide more oversight and input for complex cases,
AND supervisors help to define and describe desired outcomes for children and families,
AND provide help with problem-solving,
THEN workers will feel more empowered,
AND will develop their expertise in working with involuntary clients
AND are more likely to make better decisions
AND are more likely to work towards client-defined outcomes
AND will provide a more effective and better quality of service

and ensure it happens often and to a high standard. Supervisors will be well trained and share an understanding of workers' different needs. Supervision will be frequent and well-structured to provide education, administration and social and emotional support. The supervisor will provide guidance on work-related issues, including problem-solving, task assistance and by helping to define desirable outcomes for children and families. As a result, workers will feel emotionally supported and positive about their supervision, their supervisor and the wider organisation. Workers will be protected against unmanageable workload demands and will feel less stressed. This will ensure workers have higher rates of job satisfaction and the organisation overall will have good rates of retention and low turnover of staff. Workers will operate more autonomously, they will develop professional competence and practice skills, they will make better decisions, they will focus on client-related and client-defined outcomes and will provide a good service for children and families.

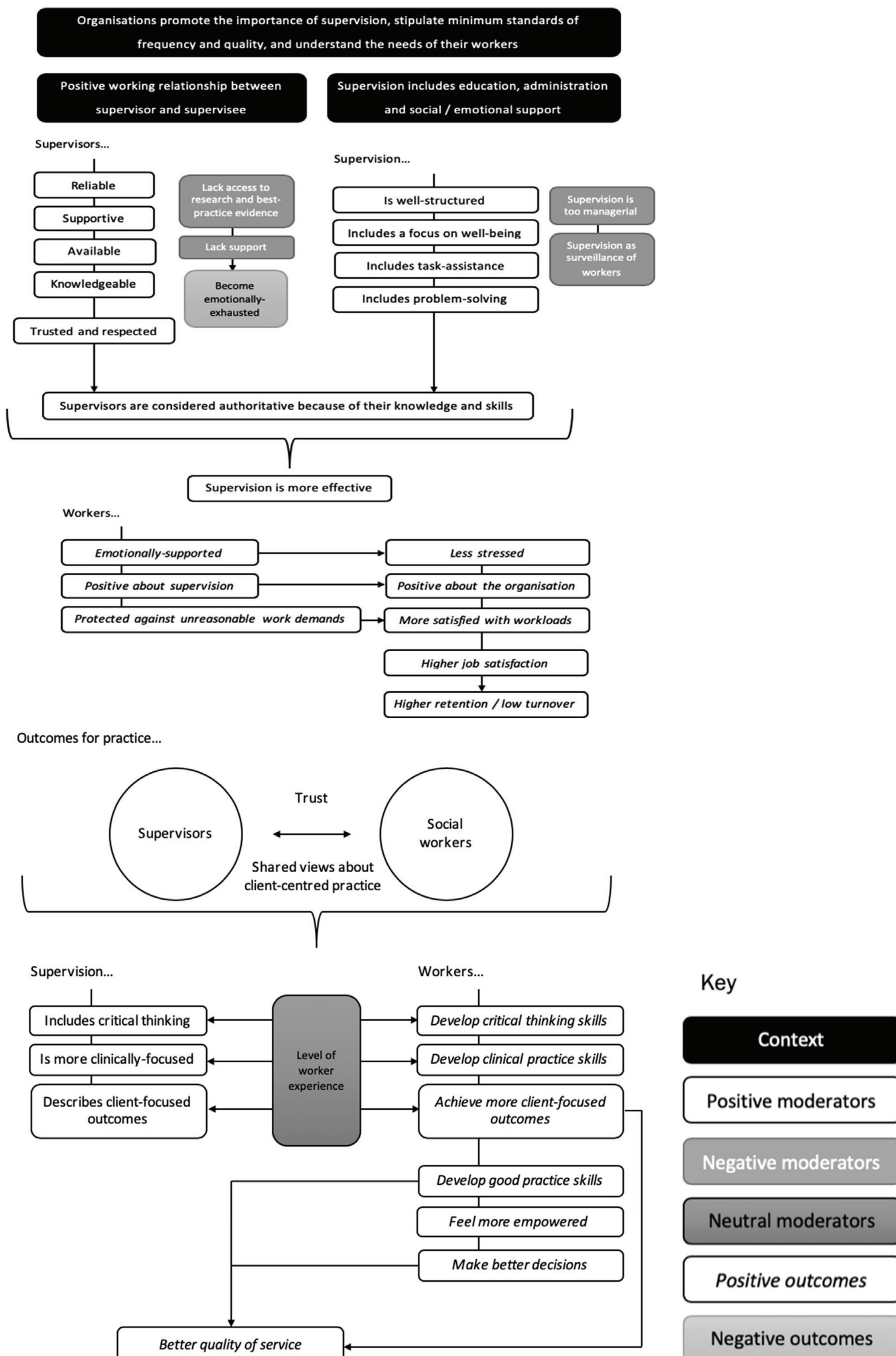

Figure 1. Initial working theory of supervision in child and family social work.

Description of key contexts, moderators and outcomes

Key context 1 – *Organisational support for supervision*.

The importance of organisational support for supervision and for supervisors was perhaps surprisingly not often made explicit within the explanatory accounts, however it was suggested by enough of the individual articles (e.g., Renner, Porter, & Preister, 2009) to be considered an important foundational context for the rest of the working theory.

Key context 2 – *A positive working relationship between supervisor and supervisee*.

All of the reviews were, on the other hand, very clear about the fundamental importance of a positive working relationship between supervisor and supervisee (e.g., Spence, Wilson, Kavanagh, Strong, & Worrall, 2001). Without this context, it seems doubtful that supervision can ever be truly effective.

Key context 3 – *Supervision including a range of functions*.

The need to ensure supervision includes a range of functions also helps to underpin the working theory. Supervision that focuses narrowly on performance management will not be effective in a range of other ways (e.g., O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015).

Supervisor-related moderators – *Supervisors are reliable, supportive, available, and knowledgeable.*

The reviews also explored the skills and capabilities required of supervisors to provide effective supervision, including behaviours (e.g., being reliable and available: Bogo & McKnight, 2006); attitudes (e.g. being supportive: Jacquet, Clark, Morazes, & Withers, 2008); and professional ability (e.g., being knowledgeable about practice: Kadushin & Harkness, 2014).

Supervision-related moderators – *Supervision is well-structured, and focused on well-being, task assistance and problem-solving.*

The organisation of supervision meetings was also discussed within the reviews, including what supervisors and workers should discuss in their time together. It is important that the discussion is well-structured, (e.g., Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1988), that it includes time to talk about worker well-being, and that the supervisor offers help with task completion (e.g., Juby & Scannapieco, 2007) and problem-solving (e.g., Harkness, 1995). It was also suggested that supervision should help describe and focus on client-related and client-defined outcomes (e.g., Harkness, 1995, 1997).

Worker-related outcomes – *Workers feel emotionally supported, positive about supervision and protected from unreasonable work-demands.*

In relation to outcomes, there was more consideration of benefits to workers (e.g., Mor Barak et al, 2009) than for people who use services. Effective supervision was considered to support workers' emotional needs (e.g., O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015), to contribute to more positive views of supervision and the wider organisation, and to protect workers from unreasonable work demands (as discussed particularly within Mor Barak et al.'s review, 2009). Taken together, these outcomes combine to reduce worker stress and increase retention rates.

Practice-related outcomes – *Workers develop practice skills and make better decisions.*

In relation to more practice-focused outcomes, there were a range of ways in which effective supervision was thought to help. Specifically, in relation to critical thinking skills (e.g., Lietz, 2008), better decision-making (e.g., Cearley, 2004) and an enhanced focus on client-defined outcomes (e.g., Harkness, 1995, 1997).

Child and family-related outcomes – *A better quality of service.*

The ultimate outcome of effective supervision is a better quality of service for children and families (e.g., Carpenter et al., 2013).

Discussion

The aim of the working theory outlined above is to aid understanding of how supervision works in the context of child and family services. It may also be useful in helping to identify where there are gaps in our understanding and for planning future empirical studies, in order to test some of the different hypotheses within the model.

Strengths and gaps within the theory

The most notable strengths of the initial working theory relate to: i) the characteristics of effective supervisors and of effective supervision; and ii) worker-related outcomes. The description of an effective supervisor as being reliable, available, supportive and knowledgeable is surely one that all supervisors and workers would agree with and echoes very clearly the argument of Kadushin and Harkness (2014) that good supervisors are available, accessible, affable and able.

Similarly, the positive moderating effects of well-structured supervision that manages to provide a balanced focus on a range of different issues – including education, administration, social and emotional support, worker well-being, task assistance and problem-solving – is also likely to be very familiar and agreeable. Perhaps less familiar will be the importance of using supervision to articulate client-related, and preferably client-defined, outcomes. This aspect of the programme theory draws significantly from the work of Harkness (1987, 1995, 1997; see also Harkness & Hensley, 1991) who found, in one of the few experimental studies of supervision, that a more outcomes-focused approach in supervision predicted client satisfaction with the service. Worker-related outcomes are also well described in the programme theory, with links made between the kinds of supervisor and supervisory characteristics outlined above and more manageable workloads, reduced levels of stress, a greater sense of empowerment, greater job satisfaction and higher retention rates. The logic of the relationships between these different elements is clear. Yet there are also some gaps in the theory as it currently stands, primarily: i) worker-related moderators; and ii) outcomes for children and families.

The programme theory outlines the key characteristics of effective supervisors (and of effective supervision sessions). Yet other than one neutral moderator in relation to worker experience, it contains limited details about the worker. This suggests that supervision will be effective *dependent* on the context and supervisor-related moderators, but *independently* of how the worker behaves and responds to it – a clearly unsustainable proposition. There are no complex social interventions which do not depend on how people behave and respond to them – and supervision is no different. Besides different levels of experience, what other worker-related factors might be important?

First, the worker's personal and professional values. There is one reference in the programme theory to the need for supervisors and workers to share a belief in the value of client-centred practice. Yet there are many other aspects of the worker's personal and professional value base we might also want to consider. For example, how far do they believe that genuine collaboration with parents is possible in the context of child protection services and when the risk to the child is high (Whittaker & Wilkins, 2018)? For that matter, what are the supervisor's values and beliefs in this regard? In the absence of these kinds of shared values, it seems unlikely that time spent in supervision describing and defining client-related outcomes would be of much use. Second, the worker's current practice skills and knowledge base. It may be that experience is a useful correlate of worker skill but there is not necessarily a direct link between the two. As noted by McHugh and Lake (2010, p. 279), "[e]xperience is a necessary but not sufficient condition for expertise and not all experienced [practitioners] are experts". Third, the worker's personal motivation

and enthusiasm for the work (separate from their personal values). If we consider the educational function of supervision, it has long been recognised in other settings that the motivation of the learner is a key moderator for the transfer of knowledge from "classroom" to practice (Gegenfurtner & Vauras, 2012). All of these issues suggest that we have further theorising to do about the role of the worker in supervision. We may know a great deal about what makes for an effective supervisor, yet we know comparatively little about what makes for an effective supervisee.

The question of outcomes for people who use services is also relatively undefined within the initial programme theory. As in many fields of practice, the question of outcomes in child and family social work is far from straightforward. It has been argued that we have become too focused on outcomes, failing to recognise that children's services are primarily rights-based, and do not necessarily aim to improve (measurable) outcomes in the majority of cases (Forrester, 2019). That being said, the relationship between practice and outcomes is also both more complicated and less significant than it first appears (Forrester et al, 2019). For most families referred to statutory services, social work makes little difference (Forrester et al., 2019). Not because social workers are poor at their jobs, but because most families do not have the kind of long-standing, serious problems that could benefit from social work involvement (Forrester et al., 2019). Within the initial programme theory as it stands, there is a greater emphasis on improving practice skills as a mechanism for improving outcomes than there is on protecting and promoting human rights. If it is true that social work is primarily a rights-based profession (Schraer, 2014), then effective supervision must have an important part to play in ensuring that workers are able to fulfil this central aspect of the role. A more refined version of the programme theory would therefore need to articulate more fully not only what a *better service* means in terms of measurable outcomes, but to ensure this includes protection and promotion of human rights.

Social work supervision as a moral and technical activity

It has long been considered that social work is both a rational–technical activity and a practical–moral one (Jordan, 1978) – and the same is true of supervision. When it is concerned with management accountability or even the surveillance of practice (Beddoe, 2010), supervision is overtly technical in nature. Yet supervisors also have a shared responsibility to set the moral climate for practice and to consider how social workers can be supported to "do the right thing" rather than (technically) to "do things right" (Munro, 2011). In the complex context of child and family services, where competing rights are balanced (Carter, 2016), identifying the right thing to do often requires some negotiation – and supervision can be a key forum for such negotiations to take place. Yet this is not reflected in the initial version of the working theory. This aspect of supervision is likely to form an important part in any future development of the working theory.

The absence of risk

A similar argument can be made in relation to the absence of risk. This may be suitable for supervision more generically but, in relation to statutory child and family services, it is a notable missing component, especially from the perspective of practitioners. As with the moral and rights-based dimensions of supervision, the relationship between risk and supervision is likely to form part of any future development.

Comparing the programme theory to the evidence-informed social work supervision model: similar yet different

Finally in this section, how does the working theory compare to other approaches in the same field, specifically O'Donoghue, Wong Ju, and Sui's (2018) evidence-informed supervision model? This model was, similar to the working

theory presented here, "pragmatically constructed…from research findings from social work supervision research" (p. 348), with the aim of "strengthening social work supervision…by building on the work of those who have gone before" (p. 354). The model contains five elements – the construction of supervision (how it is conceived and practised); supervision of practitioners (e.g., social and emotional support); the supervisory relationship, interactional processes (e.g., structure and the dynamics of the process); and the supervision of practice (e.g., clinical supervision). Compared to the working theory in this article, it focuses more on the evidence for each of these components and less on how different mechanisms and moderators combine to create desirable (or undesirable) outcomes.

Strengths and limitations of the study

The main strengths of this article are the attempt to bring together six significant reviews of the social work supervision literature in order to combine the underlying ideas about how and why supervision works within the context of child and family services.

As with any article, there are also some limitations. The working theory would have been developed in more detail had it relied on individual articles, rather than reviews. There are also many other articles on supervision that were not included within the reviews, and therefore have not influenced the theory. This is particularly true of non-empirical work. The working theory would also be enhanced via consultation with supervisors and supervisees and it is intended for this to happen in the near future.

Using the theory for further research

Realist evaluation "starts with a theory and ends with a more refined theory" (Currie et al., 2019, p. 1322). To refine this initial version of the theory, two studies are being planned. The first involves consultation with a range of supervisors and practitioners to ask whether the theory makes sense to them and what adaptations might be needed for specific contexts. For example, how do supervisors adapt their approach depending on the experience of the worker and how can this be reflected within the theory? Secondly, by breaking down the complex *intervention* of supervision into more manageable parts, we increase the scope of evaluative researchers to test the embedded if-then hypotheses. Evaluating the influence of supervision on people who use services is challenging, not least because of the high number of variables that would need to line up in order to establish anything like a direct effect (Fleming & Steen, 2004). By using this working theory, elements within this web of variables can be evaluated more directly. For example, what empirical evidence can we find to support the assertion that workers who feel more positive about supervision also feel more positive about the wider organisation? We know from existing studies that the assertion is at least partially supported by the evidence – but what are the moderators that affect the relationship and are there situations in which the relationship does not operate? Similarly, if supervisors *do* focus more on client-defined outcomes within supervision, is it true (in this context) that more client-defined outcomes are achieved? For this latter example, there is currently a study ongoing in England to explore exactly this question.

Conclusion

Developing a working theory is both the first and last step within the realist approach to evaluation. Initial theories such as this one can be refined in a number of ways, including by engagement with experts (e.g., supervisors and workers) and by empirical study. As outlined above, the intention is to do both of these things, to refine the theory to the point where it provides not only a more complete description of the intervention but also a helpful template for good supervisory practice within the child and family social work context.

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Ngā Aroro and Social Work Supervision

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: This article explores the interconnectivity between Te Ao Māori (Māori worldview) concepts and supervision.

METHOD: The main focus of the research was to highlight ngā aroro (key concepts) from Te Ao Māori that influence critical reflection in supervision and the cultural effectiveness of supervision. The embedding of kaupapa Māori (Māori approaches) research principles and ethics meant that the methodology provided a supportive shelter for consciousness-raising, critical dialogue, reflection on supervision practice and for oral cultural narrative to be honoured. A unique part of the methodology was the inclusion of a Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu, which provided the necessary cultural oversight of the research.

FINDINGS: The research used a thematic analysis that brought to light six conceptual themes from Te Ao Māori to unlock heightened holistic learning and support in supervision practice. The findings revealed that customary knowledge, skills and methods were purposefully accessed to enable the re-indigenising of social work supervision. The conceptual frameworks showed elements of co-design, an awakened spiritual awareness and a desire to explore one's cultural sense of self.

IMPLICATIONS: The research challenges the conventions of social work supervision to review supervision theory and practice particularly in considering the strengths of supervision provided by non-registered social work supervisors and the cultural effectiveness of supervision being developed, measured and evaluated based on the supervision goals of the supervisee and indigenous aspirations.

KEYWORDS: Ngā aroro; Māori concepts; supervision; culturally effective; indigenous

He timatanga—introduction

At times in supervision I have felt an uneasy tension at the precipice of where it is said that supervision and culture collide (Rewita, Swann, Swann, & Crocket, 2017). This is partially because at times I could not hear, see and feel my culture surrounding me in my supervision, in addition to my desire and need to know who I am as wāhine Māori (Māori woman) and to practise with cultural integrity (Wallace, 2018). The supervision reality for me often felt more like a tenuous balancing act of meeting the professional administrative tasks of supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Davys, May, Burns, & O'Connell, 2017) alongside trying to achieve authentic cultural congruency, which I needed to be unprescribed from a western lens or professional competency frame (Swann et al., 2017). Consequently, as a supervisor and supervisee, my supervision sessions became more about trying to enable reflective shifts based upon intergenerational ancestral knowledge and practice (Thomas & Davis, 2005).

Swann (2017) described this cultural reality in supervision as the disruption of the predetermined professional narrative

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in supervision with the privileging of customary knowledge and practices from Te Ao Māori. Consequently, this research explored the presence of Māori concepts as determinants that enable heightened critical reflection, learning opportunities and cultural effectiveness in supervision for social workers.

Ngā aroro—concepts from Te Ao Māori

According to Mead (2003), ngā aroro are linked to historical and contemporary contextual influences that inform a Māori worldview, particularly resonating in Te Ao Māori belief and value systems. Mead (2003) and Marsden and Royal (2003) highlighted the difficulties of identifying ngā aroro through the impacts of colonisation and the loss or suppression of customary knowledge, and stressed that, equally important is recognising the depth of understanding required in the meanings of each concept. By the same token, Pere (1982) pointed out that ngā aroro need to be truly understood in their totality, as each concept is intrinsically associated to the others, and are key to relational, applied knowledge and practice.

Barlow (1991) examined and described over 70 ngā aroro in everyday use, for example, wairua (non-physical, spirituality) and manaaki (care of others). In addition, authors Mead (2003) and Tate (2012) highlighted the intricate interplay of ngā aroro by saying that they can also be considered values. Furthermore, Marsden and Royal (2003), Eruera (2005) and Mead (2003) added that values and principles are related to ngā aroro in terms of guiding the use of ngā aroro in their correct practice and/or in the standards of behaviour required, for example, during the pōwhiri (the process of a formal welcome ceremony). For these reasons, Pere (1982) suggested that ngā aroro, along with associated principles and values, are grafted from a shared source code, adding that they need to be understood in their whole living-being.

Social work supervision

There is general agreement about the functions of supervision being: educational, supportive and administrative (Kadushin, 1976) and, respectively, as developmental, resourcing and qualitative (Hawkins & Smith, 2006, as cited in Hawkins & Shohet, 2012). Moreover, Davys and Beddoe (2010) noted an additional function, mediation described by Morrison (2001). For Morrison (2001, p. 29) the mediation function is the negotiation of the different, and sometimes competing, aspects of the supervision encounter with various stakeholders in consideration.

Many approaches to supervision emphasise the learning dimensions. Shohet (2011) deferred to Carroll's description of supervision as a journey of learning. Furthermore, Tsui (2004) and Wonnacott (2011) suggested that transformational learning in supervision occurs through the establishment of a trusting supervisory relationship upon which the successful transmission of social work knowledge is based. Hawkins and Smith (2006, as cited in Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) argued that for learning in supervision to be transformational and similarly translated as such in the practice setting, the supervisee not only experiences a different way of thinking but also a different way of feeling about a situation.

The central importance of culture in supervision has been discussed in international and Aotearoa New Zealand literature. Tsui and Ho (1997) identified supervision as being embedded in the context of culture, while Elkington (2014) described how raised consciousness about the need for cultural supervision has been triggered more recently by cultural safety concerns in the health sector (Wepa, 2015). This is not to minimise the foresight and effect of early proponents of cultural supervision models such as Webber-Dreadon's (1999) Awhiowhio model. Early kaupapa Māori indigenous approaches like

the Awhiowhio model sought cultural equity in supervision for Māori social workers, and were in tune with the indigenous rights movements occurring in the 1990s in response to the breaches of Te Tiriti o Waitangi (1840).

Cultural supervision appears to have flourished over the past two decades in Aotearoa New Zealand with evidence of a number of cultural supervision models in the local literature (Su'a-Hawkins & Mafile'o, 2004; Tsui, 2004; Connolly, Crichton-Hill, & Ward, 2005). However, Elkington (2014), Scerra, (2012) and Eruera (2005) share the view that professional supervision is heavily influenced by a predominately western perspective and encourage more indigenous supervision research to be undertaken.

There is evidence of the influence of western perspectives in cultural supervision and none more so than with the proposition that cultural supervision is framed around social work competency (Elkington, 2014), rather than competencies more akin to cultural accountability, for example, to whānau (family group), hapū (sub-tribe) and iwi (tribal affiliation) measures. In addition, Eruera (2007) highlights the lack of indigenous specificity that the broadness of the use of a term such as *cultural supervision* signals, for example, the status of Tangata Whenua (the indigenous people of the land) in Aotearoa lacks clarity. Concern has similarly been raised around cultural supervision being viewed as an optional extra or not being considered as rigorous as professional social work supervision (Scerra, 2012).

The local acuity for authentic indigenous supervision models such as kaupapa Māori supervision is well founded and documented in local literature (Eketone, 2012; Elkington, 2014; Eruera, 2005; Murray, 2012; Pohatu, 2004; Webber-Dreadon, 1999). Kaupapa Māori supervision has drawn attention globally, being viewed as leading cutting-edge indigenous social work supervision models of practice (Scerra, 2012). This is clear even in early indigenous supervision models and illustrated in Webber-Dreadon's (1999) indigenous supervision model, which points to the significance of expertise sitting outside the supervision alliance through the inclusion of kaumātua and kuia or the cultural knowledge of tribal elders in supervision. Further advances include the important practice of applying ancestral knowledge of takepū or principles in supervision (Pohatu, 2004).

The necessity of providing opportunities to critically reflect on appropriate ways of working alongside and, therefore, in harmony with Māori in order to build social worker confidence and to give an assurance of safe practice was described by Eketone (2012). In outlining a framework of culturally effective supervision which is beneficial to the supervision needs of Māori social workers, Eketone reviewed the culturally effective social work supervision functions. Included is the wairua function (Durie, 1994) or the spirituality dimension for Māori, which Eketone (2012) suggested encompasses aspects of the social practice experience which may be outside of a social worker's standard knowledge base. According to Eketone (2012), a key difference in culturally effective social work supervision is in the function of this type of supervision which has more of an emphasis on the spiritual and cultural protection of the supervisee, the supervisee's agency and the client.

Method

Kaupapa Māori research methodology

For this research, a dual approach, combining the use of the key principles of kaupapa Māori methodology (Mooney, 2012; Moyle, 2014; Smith, 2012) with a qualitative interview method (Patton, 2015), was utilised. The intention of this research was not to examine all facets of cultural social work supervision practice in detail, rather it was to highlight ngā aroro that enhance culturally effective social work supervision practice in contemporary Aotearoa.

The incorporation of kaupapa Māori research principles, for example, "kanohi kitea (the seen face)" (Moyle, 2014, p. 32)—to present yourself to people face-to–face—allows the researcher to explore culturally rich data uninhibited by the emotional intent, body language and subtleties of wairua (spiritual dimension) (Wallace, 2018). To ensure rich qualitative data (Patton, 2015), cultural narrative was captured through the use of a one-to-one, semi-structured interview method.

In order to identify emergent ngā aroro, the participants and the researcher needed to be culturally present and culturally sensitive in particular to the possibility of the sharing of whakapapa kōrero or oral histories, and allowances were made to accommodate free-flowing narratives (Wallace, 2018). The base questions were piloted and refined where required to ensure clarity. The four participant interview questions were:

1. *What should culturally effective social work supervision include?*
2. *Who should have access to culturally effective social work supervision?*
3. *Who should provide culturally effective social work supervision?*
4. *What are the skills, values and principles that could inform culturally effective social work supervision?*

Sampling

Purposeful sampling was used and included social workers who, at the time of the research, worked and resided in Te Taitokerau-Northland, Aotearoa. The potential participants needed to be members of the professional bodies of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW) and/or registered social workers with the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB). A professional membership was viewed as being a necessary participant criterion due to the social worker requirements inherent in membership with a professional body, particularly in terms of demonstrating an ability to work with Māori (SWRB, 2017) and in accessing regular supervision (SWRB, 2017). Furthermore, this would ensure both that the focus remained on the social worker as opposed to the organisation (Moyle, 2014) and the participant's organisational permission was not needed.

To ensure that new social work graduates had sufficient social work supervision knowledge and experience, the selection criteria included having at least two years of social work practice experience, having attended social work supervision regularly (i.e., one hour minimum at least once a month during those two years) and having provisional professional membership with ANZASW or SWRB.

In order to tap into potential supervision participants and ensure that both supervisees and supervisors met the research participant criteria, a call for research participants was made through the ANZASW Call for Research Participants guided process. In response to this call, seven social workers expressed an interest in being research participants. Six participants were subsequently selected on the basis that they met the research selection criteria. They then completed the participant consent form to be interviewed as a social work supervisor or supervisee.

Of particular importance is that the research catered for a uniquely wāhine Māori perspective to be appreciated as four of the six participants identified as Māori, with two having mixed heritage that included Māori (Wallace, 2018). Two of the six participants identified as either Pākeha (non-Māori) or New Zealander. These two participants both acknowledged the strong connections they had to the values, beliefs and practices from Te Ao Māori, in addition to working predominately with Māori whānau.

Interviews

Two participants were employed by non-governmental organisations and another

two participants by statutory organisations. Additionally, two participants had their own, individual, private practices. The iwi affiliations of the participants included Te Taitokerau iwi and iwi from across Aotearoa. The practice experience of the participants was broad and included having been involved in the following aspects of social work: community development, youth justice, care and protection, residential social work, social work education, teen parenting, violence prevention, the provision of supervision, working with older people, and health.

Research interview guidelines (Patton, 2015) were followed; the interviews were recorded and took approximately an hour. The interviews followed the whakatau (a process of welcome) by opening and closing with karakia (incantations), mihimihi (acknowledgements), as well as the sharing of kai (food) at the end of the interview. The interviewer and interviewee debriefed after the interview was completed and general notes were taken as to any emerging perceptions or themes. The interview venue was flexible, thus included interviews being conducted in the participant's or researcher's home.

The interview recordings were transcribed verbatim and the interview transcripts were returned to the participants to review and request amendments if required. The research participants' Guidelines for Amendments included a timeframe of review for the participants' transcript of two weeks with a follow-up hui (meeting) with the researcher if necessary (Wallace, 2018).

The Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu

The use of the Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu was an essential feature of the methodology for the research with similar types of roopu or groups being adopted in other kaupapa Māori research, (Ruwhiu et al., 2009). The Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu provided the interdisciplinary collaborative oversight for the research to be supervised from a western research knowledge base and mātauranga Māori research or Māori knowledge base. This was achieved by having an expert in Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga (Māori language and practices) from Te Taitokerau provide integral input into the entire research project, from the consultation for the initial research proposal to the correct interpretation of ngā aroro, the use of correct dialectical terms and the appropriate dissemination of the research through whānau, hapū and iwi channels. The success of the Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu was dependent on the mutual respect that each research supervisor demonstrated to one another their areas of expertise and the common goal they shared to support the research and the researcher.

Thematic analysis

A thematic analysis (Patton, 2015) was enlisted to draw conceptual themes from the raw data, providing a closer understanding of ngā aroro and their true meaning in supervision. The thematic analysis process involved identifying common conceptual themes in the interview transcripts, notwithstanding that this analysis method also involved taking note of emerging conceptual themes (Mooney, 2012).

Inductive and deductive approaches were used to establish conceptual themes (Patton, 2015). The inductive approach involved reviewing and manually coding emerging ngā aroro from the participants' transcript data. This was coupled with the deductive approach reviewing and coding ngā aroro established by the documentation (oral and written) of core Te Ao Māori concepts (Thematic analysis, n.d.). In addition, fundamental validation of conceptual themes was correlated with established themes from the literature review (Mooney, 2012). Direct quotes from the participants were also included to justify a conceptual theme (Abell & Myers, as cited in Mooney, 2012).

Admittedly, the research sample group was small; however, when a conceptual theme is known and collectively recognised across the sample group, the justification for a concept is said to have reliability (Patton, 2015).

Ethical considerations

Prior to undertaking the research, appropriate approval was needed by kaumātua and kuia from Te Taitokerau. In terms of correct cultural practice, without the approval from kaumātua and kuia, the researcher would not have been able to progress the research proposal. The consultation process with kaumātua and kuia took approximately three months during which time three hui were organised with the researcher and kaumātua and kuia to enable discussion and reflection about the implications of this research, the conclusion of which resulted in approval for the research to proceed.

In respect of the kaupapa Māori research principle, *kaua e takahia te mana o te tangata (do not trample over the mana of people)* (Moyle, 2014, p. 32), the research participants were identified by an abbreviated pseudonym. The dissemination of the research information was discussed with the participants and due consideration given to institutional requirements, professional responsibilities and whānau, hapū and iwi obligations. In terms of the ownership of information, and to respect the place where the research was undertaken, the findings are inherently a part of the whānau, hapū and iwi of Te Taitokerau.

The positioning of the Māori researcher is significant in kaupapa Māori research and is said to bring intrinsic biases (Bell, 2006; Cunningham, 1998; Hollis, 2006; Hollis-English, 2012, as cited in Moyle, 2014; Smith, 1999). In addition, for the purposes of this research, the researcher acknowledged the experience and knowledge she has on the topic of cultural supervision and the consequent power differential that this entails in positioning the research participants.

The locating of the Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu within the research was an essential aspect of the research methodology. In order to ensure that the membership of this roopu maintained its function and purpose, the Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu Agreement was developed. The agreement outlined the areas of knowledge of the advisory group membership as well as each of the research advisor's roles and responsibilities in the roopu and the research. The primary function of the roopu was for the researcher to unpack, discuss, reflect and appropriately manage any perceived or actual bias.

In addition, it was important that each aspect of the research methodology was acceptable to the participants as described in the kaupapa Māori principle, "aroha ki te tangata (a respect of people)" (Moyle, 2014, p. 31). With this principle in mind, the research participants were informed of the Whakawhanaungatanga Research Advisory Roopu and the terms of the associated agreement.

The diverse cultural realties that the participants were attuned to (highlighted in italics with pseudonyms, see excerpts in Ngā aroro—The conceptual themes section), showed their capacity to step into a supervision space that had been designed first and foremost by their own unique cultural ways of knowing and being. The following pseudonyms have been used for the six participants alongside whether they participated as a supervisor or supervisee in the research;

- ICW, SW1 and SW3 participated in the research as supervisees.
- SUP1, SUP2 and SUP3 participated in the research as supervisors.

Pūkōrero—Findings

The research findings (Wallace, 2018) revealed that the presence of ngā aroro in

supervision is intrinsically linked to the views and meanings of ngā aroro given by the participants. This is clear through the oral narrative linkages to the participants' own cultural knowledge base informed by their whānau, hapū and iwi knowledge and practice. Running alongside this was the participants' level of recognition of their own individual beliefs and values and, therefore, the extent to which they placed importance on incorporating ngā aroro.

Overtones of the injustices to Māori were echoed among the participants, as were the structural barriers to accessing suitable supervision for the expression of who they are as Māori. This was evident in the recurring challenge faced by the participants with regard to the varying practice expectations that come into play across organisations for working alongside Māori. However, as much as supervision was viewed by participants as being, more often than not, managerially controlled rather than social worker driven, there was validation within the findings that ngā aroro were activated in supervision (Wallace, 2018).

This type of activation was not superficial; rather, it was a deeply meaningful and authentic cultural experience in supervision. At times, the participants expressed the re-setting of their feelings of hurt and pain when ngā aroro were part of their supervision, and this provided a much-needed supportive buffer for those in particular who come up against institutional racism.

An array of skills, knowledge, personal and professional traits, supervision practice models and cultural experience were highlighted in terms of a supervisor who was culturally adept in understanding the intricacies of ngā aroro (Wallace, 2018). For example, this took the form of being able to provide guidance in terms of an imbalance of wairua (spirituality), having knowledge of whānau connections and relationships of whakapapa (genealogy) and possessing the tūpuna (ancestral) knowledge and skills of hohourongo or healing. Consequently, supervisors of this calibre were often sought through word of mouth and most likely from personal and or whānau connections, rather than from an organisational list of possible supervisors.

Ngā aroro—the conceptual themes

The participants' reflections on their supervision experiences revealed six primary conceptual themes or ngā aroro that were enablers of, and contributed to, their supervision being considered culturally effective. Emerging from the participants' narratives was a shared underlying knowingness that identifying with ngā aroro in supervision meant doing their supervision differently from clinical supervision. Furthermore, their supervision experience was correlated to their social work practice when working alongside Māori; that is, their social work practice was more effective culturally. The six core ngā aroro identified which form the conceptual themes are as follows (Wallace, 2018).

Whanaungatanga—enduring relationships

According to Hohepa (2011), there are two distinct aspects associated with the concept of whanaungatanga. Firstly, the whakapapa or genealogy that ties relationships together; and secondly, relationships may not necessarily be based on bloodlines but are still considered kin-like. Durie (1998) and Pere (1991) added that this concept includes extended whānau as well as interprofessional relationships with Māori.

This conceptual theme captured the participants' understanding of relationships that connected them to whānau, clients, peers, colleagues and supervisor, as well as at times hapū and iwi. The two conceptual touchstones that the participants attributed to the concept of whanaungatanga were whānau and whakapapa. SW3 explained how her supervisor has an in-depth understanding of who she is by knowing her (the supervisee's) own whānau saying that: *he* [the supervisor]

actually meets my needs at the times that I do use him [the supervisor]. In addition, she stated the value of understanding the interrelationship of whakapapa or genealogy and whanaungatanga:

> Māori staff that are dealing with Māori clients, mokopuna [grandchildren], you know that whole understanding around whakapapa and whanaungatanga is huge and if you don't really understand it, you can … make the work a lot harder for yourself.

Likewise, SW1 and SW3 illustrated that the customary practice of whanaungatanga occurred naturally in supervision for them as their supervisor was known to their whānau and selected because of this. At the same time, these two particular whanaungatanga-constructed supervisory relationships enabled critical reflection and professional learning to occur. This was enabled through trusting that their supervisors had sufficient understanding of the supervisees' personal qualities and attributes, and likely knowing the supervisees' roles and responsibilities within their own whānau, hapū and iwi. SW3 explained this further: *I know him through … relationships within our own whānau he's always been around and I just knew he knew me… knew things about me just through things we know*. SW3 also revealed that *he knows about the losses and the gains within our* [the supervisee's] *whole whānau…and it's being able to just sort of push me a little bit further to understand myself better.*

Mana and tapu—cultural safety

Pere (1991) said that tapu can be seen as a protective element and as a measure of respecting another human being, adding that tapu is intrinsically linked to mana. Mana is referred to as having prestige or influence (Mead, 2003; Pere, 1991). According to Mead (2003), mana can also be a key mediating factor in maintaining stability or balanced approaches in personal and wider relationships.

The seamless relationship between the conceptual theme of mana and tapu was reflected upon by the participants. Their narrative included the need to preserve the inherent dignity of all peoples. For instance, SW1 said of mana and tapu that it is *maintaining people's dignity* from a genuine place of caring, which she described as being *aroha* [compassion]. SW1 recollected her experience of upholding a client's mana in a practice situation she shared with her supervisor: *I* [the supervisee] *didn't want to trample on anybody's mana. I didn't want to but I felt really aroha* [compassionate] *for them* [the supervisee's clients].

The collective consciousness about the transgression of tapu and mana provoked considerable discussion and critical reflection during the participants' own supervision sessions. Representative of this was SUP3's reflections on the significance that tapu and mana play in maintaining respectful supervision boundaries: *having that belief that everybody has a tapu and mana so it's not violating* [violated] *even in supervision.* SUP3 further stressed that it is important for the supervisor and supervisee not to *takahia* or trample on a supervisor's or supervisee's mana during supervision.

Tika, pono, aroha—cultural integrity

The interaction between tika, pono and aroha is a fine-tuned interconnection based on being well informed or correct, genuine in purpose and coming from a place of aroha and compassion respectively (Mead, 2003; Tate, 2012).

The belief in the conceptual triad of tika, pono, and aroha was expressed by participants in real terms of expectations of culturally effective supervision practice either as a supervisor or supervisee. SUP2 shared her meanings of this conceptual triad: *I think that people that want that* [tika, pono and aroha] *for supervision…want to be loved and respected and treated* [with] *honesty.* Comparatively speaking, SW1 supervisor utilised this conceptual triad in the critical reflection phase of discussing a client issue, the outcome of which, SW1 said, was healing

for the supervisee. In addition, participants noted that tika, pono and aroha are essential in establishing trusting supervisory relationships and enabling supervisees, as SUP3 suggested, to bring important items to supervision such as *safety* concerns.

Manaakitanga—supportive approaches

Manaakitanga emphasises taking care of how people are looked after and cared for with a view to the fostering and nurturing of relationships (Mead, 2003).

The conceptual theme of manaakitanga encompasses ways of providing support in supervision and stimulating critical reflection. SUP1 aligned this to her perspective of servant leadership which is in contrast to advice-giving and described how she encourages supervisees to *consider or wonder what else they* [the supervisees] *might need to know and where they need to go.* There were a number of innovative cultural methods used that demonstrated the use of supportive approaches in supervision. For example, SW1 acknowledged the progressive steps of pōwhiri or welcome that required her to have a discussion about her supervision items prior to each supervision session taking place to ensure that the rituals of the supervision encounter were appropriate.

Wairuatanga—spiritual spheres

In its essence, wairua is an essential element in directing a process of engagement of the physical and non-physical spiritual spheres; in addition, wairuatanga brings together the collective knowledge and understanding of wairua (Ruwhiu & Ruwhiu, 2005).

The need to seek effective supervisory wairua support was a major driver for the participants, with SW3 going as far as suggesting that if her wairua is affected then *depending on how bad things get, it can be quite debilitating you actually can't do anything.* The overriding aspects of wairua that called for prompt supervisory support were described by SW3 as being represented by the feeling that *it goes home with me it's not something I can turn off.* SW1 emphasised that *there's got to be that spiritual aspect that wairua aspect* in supervision, and added: *so we* [the supervisor and supervisee] *have karakia* [prayer] *to me* [the supervisee] *in Māori* [there] *is a deeper sense,* in the meaning of karakia, which involves: *karakia to the atua* [gods] *to the whenua* [the land] *to the tūpuna* [ancestors] *to the awa* [rivers]. SW1 expressed appreciation for how *your wairua heals when it comes out of cultural supervision,* compared to that of clinical supervision: *yeah not always* [the same] *with clinical cause you gotta come out with tasks.*

Rangatiratanga—self-determining supervision

Self-determining indicators, according to Durie (1998) and Marsden and Royal (2003), are the broad objectives of rangatiratanga, the goal of which is the realisation of one's full potential.

This final conceptual theme embraced the innovative supervision approaches informed by mātauranga Māori or Māori knowledge. ICW articulated this by recognising in her supervision *a kaupapa Māori…format,* and as including a necessary part of her supervision the use of karakia as well as *working through Māori models of practice.* SUP3 identified how a *Te Tiriti* or Te Tiriti o Waitangi-based supervision approach has a part to play in meeting the needs of supervisees.
ICW also made links to a Treaty-based approach to supervision as she contemplated the loss of whenua or land as a part of her social work practice experience with whānau, as her reflections show here: *Māori are already in grieving due to things* [confiscation of lands] *that have happened with whenua* [land] *and so even though we* [social workers] *see all this grievance on top it's just a layer upon layer and underneath there's a really deep layer…having somebody* [supervisor] *to talk to about that deep grief is something that's really helpful.* Likewise, participants highlighted the importance of supervisors

knowing and practising ngā aroro in their wholeness, having knowledge of Te Reo Māori me ona tikanga (Māori language and practices) and having the ability to break down the complexities of ngā aroro, in addition to there being an expectation that ngā aroro are naturally applied in certain types of supervision methods.

Whakawhitiwhiti kōrero—Discussion

Examining ngā aroro revealed possible conceptual supervision frameworks which future research could explore further to uncover their potential. The initial signs are that ngā aroro supervision frameworks have a sense of collective cultural approaches, particularly in terms of enhancing critical cultural reflection (Wallace, 2018). This is expanded upon below in relation to each supervision framework.

In supervision practice, a whanaungatanga-constructed supervision framework may prioritise a supervisee's and their clients' whakapapa informed by their whānau, hapū and iwi knowledge. Perhaps a supervisor's knowledge in this framework would need to include having whakapapa knowledge about the supervisee and their clients. An addition to the critical reflection phase of supervision would include the hopes, dreams and expectations of tūpuna connected to the supervisee or the supervisee's clients and passed through the generations.

In supervision practice, a manaakitanga-led supervision framework could include hapū and iwi representatives conducting group supervision in terms of supporting supervisees in critically reflecting on their cases and collective notions of care and support for whānau.

In supervision practice, a wairuatanga-centred framework may focus on exploring sites of healing and opportunities for enlightenment through karakia, whakatauki (proverbial sayings), moteatea (traditional chant) from a supervisee's or supervisor's cultural repositories of knowledge.

In supervision practice, a rangatiratanga-based framework could concentrate on reflecting on whānau, hapū and iwi collective meanings pertaining to one's cultural identity. In doing so, this could enable the reclaiming of the cultural centre of self for the supervisee and/or for the supervisee's whānau or the clients they are working with. Unanticipated in the findings was the opportunity to consider resetting supervision functions as Figure 1 illustrates:

Limitations

The intention of this research was not to achieve a universal understanding of ngā aroro in supervision but, rather, to gain cultural insights. Furthermore, the research is not claiming to be representative of all social workers and their notions of supervision; indeed, there may or not be transferable points among and between hapū and iwi. The transferability will be left to the meaning given by supervisees and supervisors. While a comparative gender analysis may be considered necessary, it is important to note the valuable reflective time and space the research gave to a uniquely wāhine Māori perspective along with non-Māori participants who identified strongly with Māori values, beliefs and practices.

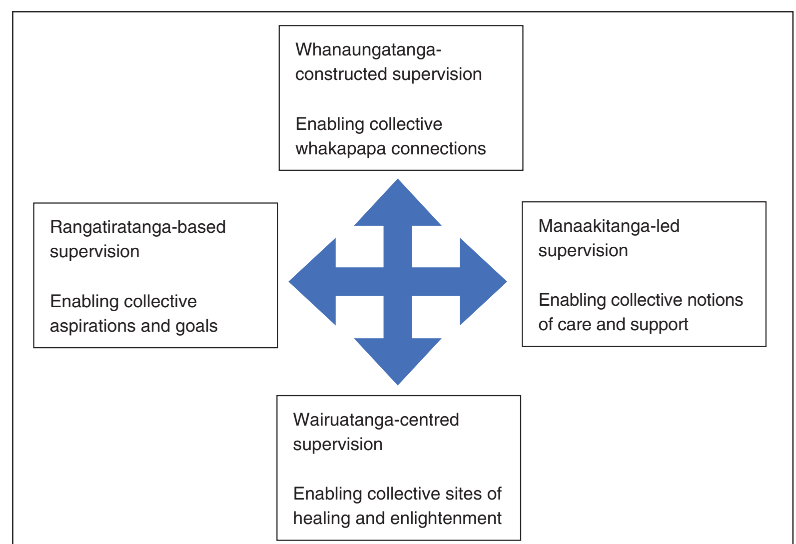

Figure 1. Ngā aroro as supervision conceptual frameworks and their functions.

Kōrero whakamutunga—Conclusions

For social work supervisors, this research highlighted the desire of supervisees to be supported to engage with supervisors who meet their cultural needs. This poses challenges in meeting professional supervision 'norms' as, at times, this means that supervisees are seeking supervisors who may not have a social work qualification but who do have a wealth of knowledge and expertise in other fields, for example, fluency in applying cultural concepts, healing and counselling. The re-indigenising of social work supervision requires the revival of conceptual frameworks like whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, wairuatanga and rangatiratanga. This does not mean that western theories are to be rejected. It does, however, question the assumption that western perspectives can adequately define supervision theory and practice.

Implicit through the narratives of He Whakaputanga 1835 and Te Tiriti o Waitangi 1840 of Aotearoa, is the underscoring of ngā aroro, particularly in terms of fostering respectful relationships. This would tend to validate the proposition that engaging in culturally informed supervision should be seen as a necessity for all supervisees and supervisors in Aotearoa rather than as an option.

Creating space in social work supervision for ngā aroro is not entirely about the professional requirements of supervision. Explicit in unique cultural supervision spaces is the co-design of supervision. In this case, culturally co-designed supervision places a greater emphasis on the cultural phenomena that are occurring for the supervisee in their practice context and within the supervisee and supervisor relationship.

Indigenous supervision frameworks help to keep supervision relevant in contemporary social work settings. This signals an assurance that supervision is evolving and keeping in line with indigenous aspirations. Furthermore, it shows that the field of social work supervision is willing to be evaluated based on the cultural context within which supervision operates. Most important of all is the creation of critical reflection opportunities for social workers to enhance their own cultural capacity and to better serve the cultural needs of the whānau that social workers work alongside.

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The internal/external debate: The tensions within social work supervision

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Supervision is crucial to social workers' practice. Within the current managerial social services environment, the supervisor juggles organisational and professional accountabilities—organisational agendas often dominate practitioners' reflection. In response, alternative types of supervision have emerged, one of which is external supervision.

METHODS: This paper analyses qualitative discussions with key informants and supervisory dyads in community-based child welfare services regarding reflective practices in supervision. Internal and external supervision arrangements were discussed in depth relative to their impact on social work practice.

FINDINGS: Analysis of discussions identified four themes: the significance of external supervision for building capacity, resilience and confidential reflective space; the role of internal supervision for managerial and organisational agendas; tensions associated with external supervision regarding funding and accountability; and important attributes of the supervisor in successful working relationships.

CONCLUSIONS: External supervision is essential for professional competence but considerable inter-organisational variation exists in how this is utilised. Three key considerations emerged: accountabilities of external supervisor, supervisee and internal supervisor towards collaborative practice, evaluation and feedback; purchasing of external supervision; and the professional development of external supervisors. Further education connecting the importance of the supervisory relationship to realise critical thinking and practice development is essential for the future of social work.

KEYWORDS: Supervision; external supervision; social work; reflection; professional practice

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A safe space in supervision is essential for social workers' professional development and critical reflection of practice. For this space to be created, supervisors require a range of skills and juggle a number of responsibilities. Supervisors need specific relational skills so that rapport and trust can be successfully developed in the supervisory relationship (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). The supervisor also needs to balance any tensions between organisational and professional accountabilities of the supervisee (Beddoe & Egan, 2009).

Within Aotearoa New Zealand, the neoliberal environment where social workers operate has often meant a struggle for survival with funding, resources and meeting tight managerial targets (Rankine, Beddoe, Fouché, & O'Brien, 2018). For organisations in this environment, processes, policies and resourcing are prioritised over

the professional needs of social workers. Similarly, supervision has mirrored these priorities—social workers use this time to co-ordinate and prioritise managerial agendas and caseload expectations at the expense of critically reflective practice (Beddoe, 2010). With such influences on organisational agendas and managerialism permeating the supervisory space, supervisors struggle to facilitate learning for supervisees.

Traditionally, internal supervision arrangements have been common practice in social work organisations (Beddoe, 2012). This type of supervision between the supervisor and supervisee occurs within the organisation where, commonly, the supervisor is also the manager, team leader and holds organisational accountabilities for the supervisee's practice. Such supervisory relationships over-emphasise managerial imperatives and targets that the supervisee needs to meet for the organisation and less emphasis on individual learning. Therefore internal supervision can also be commonly defined as "line management" (Beddoe, 2012; Morrell 2001, 2008), which follows a similar process for each social worker. Due to the strong managerial emphasis, an imbalance of power within internal supervision where social workers are instructed what to do can lead supervisees to feel unsafe to discuss their vulnerabilities or practice concerns. Typically, only caseload discussion and administrative matters feature in internal supervision. The impact of managerialism on internal supervision stifles the professional development of the social worker, their critical reflection and the development of alternative practice strategies.

In recent years, dissatisfaction over "one size fits all" (Beddoe, 2015) supervision arrangements, such as internal supervision, has led to the development of alternative types of supervision for social workers. Research in Aotearoa New Zealand related to current social work supervision in different contexts has identified the importance of professional practice to social workers and the need to develop relevant bi-cultural supervision models in social work (O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2005; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). Alternative types of supervision that have been developed include: group supervision (Rankine, 2013), cultural supervision (Eruera, 2012) and external supervision (Beddoe, 2012). External supervision (where the supervisor is external to the organisation) has been a popular alternative to supplement existing traditional internal supervisory relationships within some organisations.

External supervision ensures a balance of particular functions in supervision with line management, choice is facilitated by the supervisee (Beddoe & Davys, 2016) and a space for the supervisee to reflect on practice away from the usual office space (Busse, 2009). External supervision provides supervision the option of a private service that has market value and is purchased by individuals or organisations (Beddoe, 2012). Within various organisations, external supervision may be mandated within policy which the organisation pays for (or the social worker may themselves pay) and the necessary arrangements are made for regular (usually monthly) meetings.

However, for managers and practitioners alike, external supervision can cause confusion related to its difference from internal supervision, the sorts of discussions that take place and the connection/distinction between them. In Aotearoa New Zealand, considerable variation exists between external supervisors regarding skills, qualifications, professional background and experience (Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), 2018). The supervisors themselves are also expected to be social workers unless there are specific reasons and the supervisee ensures appropriate links to the social work community are maintained (see ANZASW, 2015). In addition, given that the external supervisor is removed from the supervisee's organisation, consideration needs to be given to the level of accountability to organisational guidelines

in such relationships (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). These arrangements become problematic for managers within social service organisations who may invest financially for this service to ensure professional practice for social work staff but struggle to see the value of external supervision towards meeting service outcomes. Also, Beddoe and Davys (2016) have queried the process of the organisation advising the external supervisor of the social workers' identified performance issues.

Within this qualitative study, discussions related to internal and external supervision are analysed from participant interviews from a previous study that explored current practices related to reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work in Aotearoa New Zealand and how these could be improved (Rankine, 2017). External supervision frequently emerged from the interviews as significant in the development of reflective supervision. Participants include social work supervisors and supervisees who have all had experience working within community-based child welfare in Aotearoa New Zealand. This field of social work practice provides an example of the variation of supervisory relationships within Aotearoa New Zealand in the wider context of managerial changes influencing service delivery from neoliberal state agendas. An in-depth description of the current internal–external supervision arrangements emerges from the interviews and the importance of social workers receiving external supervision in this context.

Literature

Supervision has been part of social work practice for over 100 years and is the professional relationship between the supervisor and supervisee to meet the supervisee's organisational, professional needs and support the development of practice (Davys & Beddoe, 2010).

Supervision has been valued in social work practice internationally as an ongoing and regular process within a social worker's career (Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, & Tsui, 2016; Carpenter, Webb, & Bostock, 2013). Many authors have supported the positive contribution that supervision makes towards practitioners' performance and retention in social work (Carpenter et al., 2013; Mor Barak, Travis, Pyun, & Xie, 2009). Regulatory bodies (such as the Social Workers Registration Board in Aotearoa New Zealand) have highlighted the requirement of social workers to have regular, monitored supervision within organisations as part of professional development. Sewell (2018) has also identified the growing profile that supervision has in international journals and in social work education.

As part of professional practice, supervision is multifaceted and serves a number of different functions within different organisations. Traditionally, supervision has provided a description of the supervision session with a balance between each function necessary in order to meet service users' needs (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). These functions include an administrative, educational process and a supportive role that assists with the exploration of feelings, boundaries and sustains worker morale (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). Morrison (2001) also suggested that social work supervision has a mediation purpose where negotiation occurs between professional and organisational needs. The mediation function identifies the systemic tensions that exist within supervision to provide a balance of support, practice development and administration (Morrison, 2001); and the quality of the interpersonal interaction in supervision (Mor Barak et al., 2009).

Balancing the supervision functions

Within the current managerial climate, obtaining a balance between different supervision functions within social service organisations is problematic. Within organisations there is a focus on outcomes,

performance and efficiency often at the expense of relationships in practice (Bradley, Engelbrecht, & Höjer, 2010). This managerial discourse, introduced by managers from business backgrounds, has impacted on supervision and has become an accountability tool focusing on job completion (O'Donoghue, 2015). Dominance of one particular function of supervision overriding others has become a common theme in many organisations influenced by current discourses of risk, safety to the organisation and the context of where supervision takes place (Beddoe, 2012). Adamson (2011) depicted supervision in organisations as a "swingometer" between conflicting roles and functions where time spent on a particular function of supervision reflects a pre-determined agenda that is not politically innocent. Baglow (2009) commented that:

> The challenge for social work supervision is to now resist the twin pressures to capitulate to the state and replace social work supervision with a watered-down management/administrative supervisory role, or to retreat into a psychological individualism that would restrict supervision functions to education and support. (p. 366)

Supervision requires a critical re-positioning so that a balance of alternative supervision functions is achieved between administration and the social worker's professional development (Mo & Tsui, 2018; Noble & Irwin, 2009). The development of diverse types of supervision emphasise the changing needs of practice and organisations and where one type of supervision certainly does not fit all purposes (Beddoe, 2015). There is a need to separate the management and professional commitments through the use of co-existing forms of supervision. This diversity in supervision can be seen within an Aotearoa New Zealand context where a number of approaches and methods operate (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012).

Central to the co-existing aspects of supervision are the *accountabilities* of the social worker (both professional and organisational) which can, at times, act in opposition to each other. The biggest challenge in supervision is to provide a balance between organisational requirements and the social worker's professional expectations. In addition, supervision agendas will be influenced by the context of social work supervision—between occupational professionalism and organisational professionalism (Bradley et al., 2010). Internal and external supervision provide opportunities to reflect on different aspects of practice. Characteristically, internal supervision has a focus on administrative and organisational matters while external concentrates on professional practice issues (Beddoe, 2012; Egan, 2012).

Internal versus external supervision

Historically, supervision has been provided internally, only in the social worker's workplace (Egan, 2012). Many social service organisations continue to have policies related to social workers receiving traditional forms of supervision from their line managers. For example, Egan (2012) reported from her online study that two-thirds of social workers in Australia had supervision only from their line manager. The fusing of supervision with line management is indicative of managerial culture in organisations and can become the accepted norm in supervision processes. This has been seen in social work supervision, particularly within statutory organisations, with their focus on risk, surveillance and administration (Beddoe, 2010). Over time in the workplace, a social worker may inherit the role of supervisor without specific qualifications or relevant experience and base their supervision on the sessions they have received themselves (Carpenter et al., 2013; Hair, 2012; Kadushin & Harkness, 2014). The impact of such managerial processes has led to a lack of understanding and decline in professional supervision (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). O'Donoghue (2015) identifies that social work supervision in the 21st century is an evolving paradigm

that needs to shift away from a traditional internal supervision model performing all functions within an organisation to a portfolio model where managerial aspects are separated from professional aspects of supervision and supervision occurs within a community of practice.

For some social service agencies, professional aspects of a social worker's practice are discussed with an external supervisor (Bell & Thorpe, 2004). External supervision takes place between a supervisor and practitioner who do not work for the same organisation and it occurs outside of the worker's normal place of work (Beddoe, 2012). External supervision has a focus on education and lifelong development (Mo & Tsui, 2018) that ensures the social worker's practice and objectives are met. The effectiveness of external supervision has assisted practitioners in child welfare to develop their knowledge base, ethics and values (Harvey & Henderson, 2014; Itzhaky, 2001; White, 2015).

Different types of supervision exist across different countries and are determined by particular socio-political influences. In Aotearoa New Zealand, a distinction has been made between internal and external supervision where social workers can access alternative sources and may have more than one supervisor (ANZASW, 2015; Mo & Tsui, 2018; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012) whereas Bradley and Höjer (2009) identified two separate types of supervision in social work child welfare agencies in England and Sweden and in South Africa (Bradley et al., 2010). The benefits of external supervision were identified as work-related and emotional support as well as a potentially positive impact for service users (Bradley & Höjer, 2009). The supervision functions were explored across these countries and different possibilities for learning and innovation were acknowledged between external and internal supervision arrangements and the associated challenges to provide a balance in these arrangements in their respective environments (Bradley & Höjer, 2009). Mo and Tsui (2018) also highlighted the relevance of the socio-political context in Shenzhen, China influencing external supervision arrangements. An external supervision initiative was developed by Hong Kong supervisors in order to develop professional capability and capacity of social workers (Mo & O'Donoghue, 2018). External supervision had important implications in this environment for reflective, developmental, educational and contextual awareness for social workers in organisations.

The international interest in social work supervision and its effectiveness on practice outcomes has become a topical issue in literature (Beddoe et al., 2016). Moreover, the tensions associated with balancing different supervisory functions within the current managerial climate and the context of practice has been increasingly debated. External supervision is one particular area requiring greater scrutiny in how practice for the social worker can be developed.

Methodology

This qualitative study has been developed from previous research findings (Rankine, 2017). The research involved key informants and supervisory dyads (24 participants in total) with the aim of exploring current practices related to reflective supervision in community-based child welfare social work in Aotearoa New Zealand and how this could be improved. The University of Auckland's Human Participants Ethics committee approved the research. Community-based child welfare services were selected in this study as very limited literature exists related to supervision in this field of practice and the current impact of the socio-political environment on these organisations. Participant information concerning external supervision frequently emerged from interview discussions related to the significance of reflective supervision and what currently supported this in practice.

Data were gathered from participants in two ways: key informants engaged

in semi-structured interviews with the researcher and the supervisory dyads recorded a typical supervision session and participated in a follow-up session with the researcher. All data were audio-recorded and transcribed. To protect confidentiality, participants chose a pseudonym. Participants responded to an advertisement distributed via a national social work body for key informants and an invitation distributed by several regional managers in community child welfare across Auckland, New Zealand for the supervisor–supervisee dyads. Key informants were selected due to their experience in community-based child welfare and providing supervision in this field of practice. The supervisory dyads comprised either internal or external supervisory relationships and they volunteered to participate in the study. All participants brought diverse practice knowledge from their varied experiences, qualifications in social work, registration with the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) and/or membership of ANZASW. The study participants provided the following demographic profiles: 18 identified as being Pākeha (European)/New Zealanders; four as New Zealand Māori; one as Māori/Pasifika; one as Chinese; between the ages of 20 and 70; 21 were female, three were male. The nine key informants identified as external supervisors of social work practice. The eight supervisory dyads who participated comprised of three internal and five external pre-existing supervisory relationships. All supervisees who participated received internal supervision and, in addition, six of the eight supervisees received external supervision, paid by their organisation. One participant was involved in both stages of the study.

The key informants interviewed gave their views related to the current context of supervision, reflective practice and social work within community-based child welfare. Within this article, the key informants' discussions related to external and internal supervision are analysed. Information from each supervisory dyad was gathered from two separate sessions: the recorded *supervision session*, between the supervisor and supervisee, and a *follow-up session* together with the author that related to their recorded supervision several weeks later. The follow-up session provided an opportunity for the dyad to review their supervision session via the transcript and to interpret their level of reflection and learning with support from the author. The findings from the dyads analysed here focus on the supervisory relationship, the associated tensions and the impact of internal and external supervision to develop professional practice. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2013) has been used in developing findings from the key informants' and supervisory dyads' feedback. NVivo™ software (QSR International Pty Ltd. Version 10, 2012) assisted with the electronic storing and categorisation of the data.

Findings

Analysis of the participant data identified four themes: the significance of external supervision towards support and professional development of the social worker; the role of internal supervision in meeting organisational agendas; the tensions associated with external supervision; and important attributes needed in supervision towards a successful working relationship.

The significance of external supervision

The first theme highlighted the value of external supervision for social workers. External supervision provided the space for a professional focus and the supervisor being external to the organisation is symbolic in creating a shift for the supervisee where they can openly discuss their practice. Participants like Grace explained her definition and the significance of her external supervision:

> Because this is outside the organisation… there's [a] physical space coming to supervision, leaving supervision and

> then re-entering the workspace. That's a very important thing. The fact that Jessica [external supervisor] is outside the organisation, I take this time—it's all about me….I can make my feelings come into it here. (Grace)

Many of the dyads interviewed were highly familiar with the purpose and the importance of external supervision specifically for their professional growth:

> I'm really lucky in that I do have external supervision which means that when I have things I want to work through, I know that they don't come back to the organisation. So that's really important, particularly as I hold things that should not be reflected back to the organisation. (Jen)

It was evident from analysis of the findings that the supervisor in external supervision had an important role to facilitate reflection and the professional development of supervisees:

> I've always seen my role as just being a very compassionate listener and I feel really strong in myself that whatever comes to the table, it's going to be okay. So I relish the thought when you come Rangi, because I'm like "I can sit back and we're going to go on this journey"…I had to be really quiet and I need to let her have a lot of the talk time. (Ohaki)

The importance of external supervision that favours a professional discourse enabling reflection on practice was promoted by several external supervisors in the study. This relationship was identified as different to internal supervision:

> Because you are external, you don't have that management stuff that you need to work through with [the supervisees]… generally it's their time, they come through the door and they tell me their goal and agenda. I provide the process and take them through that reflection… They can bring one case to me and spend the whole time talking about one incident that happened on one case…I don't think you have that luxury in internal supervision. (Bridget)

The freedom of social workers to choose (and leave) their external supervisor leads to added commitment to the relationship. As an external supervisor, Laura offered that this was important for social workers in order to develop the relationship:

> I think [external supervision] makes a difference because they are choosing for a [supervisory] relationship that they are attaching a lot of value to and knowledge they have about me…My sense is that [external supervision] provides the educational and supportive side [to practice]. (Laura)

The power dynamic between external supervisor and supervisee was also a significant factor that assists supervisees to feel more comfortable to talk about feelings:

> [L]essening that power differential [through external supervision] helps supervisees to be freer to be able to say, "This person irritates me and I feel pissed off with them all the time"…Having the relationship with the supervisor so you can say that. (Mary)

The role of internal supervision

The purpose of internal supervision was identified in the data analysis as being different to external supervision. Internal supervision has an over-emphasis on participants' accountabilities to the organisation policies where both the supervisor and supervisee are employed (Bradley et al., 2010). As a consequence, the supervisor has control over the supervisee's work and is responsible for checking that outcomes and targets of the organisation are met. Analysis of the data from the participants highlighted internal supervision primarily being

concerned with case management and organisational agendas.

> In the organisation it's about the cases and how the cases are moving or not moving and how they're going to move. So there's a different focus. (Grace)

> [Internal supervision is] a situation where you feel like you are reporting to a superior. Often there's that sense [of] performing an accountability function, people are less likely to discuss aspects of uncertainty or mistakes. (Mary)

Many of the participants demonstrated their awareness of the managerial tensions in supervision that impact on reflection and the value of the professional relationship. Laura made the following observation:

> If it's about going through your client list for the week and what you're doing with them…then the space for reflection is not that great. If you've got a bureaucratic, managerial, outcomes focused efficiency and compliance monitoring culture happening, then that would reduce the opportunity for taking the time to really reflect on practice and what might be informing it. (Laura)

The internal supervisor too, is often buffeted between multiple roles—line manager, supervisor, senior social worker—and meeting organisational expectations. A common characteristic of the internal supervisor role is navigating hierarchical management structures that are influenced by risk to the organisation and meeting service outcomes (Beddoe, 2012). Internal supervision was revealed by the participant data as working as a mechanism for being told what to do. As an internal supervisor, Yvonne raised that her understanding of supervision was different to how she worked:

> For me social work is about helping people and enabling them to do things. So supervision is exactly that—enabling the supervisee to do things, to do their work and to advocate for the supervisee but also to get the supervisee to have the feeling that they have the power to do things themselves. Because I find [instead] that supervisees come to me and want the answer from me. "Tell me." (Yvonne)

The influence of managerialism on internal supervision is concerning for the reflection and professional development of social workers. Managing risk and achieving best outcomes have been previously identified within statutory child welfare services (Beddoe, 2010) and now features prominently in social work supervision within community-based child welfare. The impact that this may have on children and families as service users was evident in Laura's powerful consideration:

> The administrative part to supervision being paramount serves the agency's requirements and needs…things become automatic. You've got a procedure and you just follow it. You're not thinking about it…workers stop feeling and thinking about themselves and their relationship to the work…[and] it's just about getting things done…It might mean that decisions get made that are the most expedient rather than looking at other ways and resources. So it might mean that things [are] on a one way track. (Laura)

The tensions associated with external supervision

Although the value of external supervision was identified by participants, a tension exists in the provision of external supervision within community-based child welfare agencies. The availability of external supervision to social workers in order to develop their professional and reflective practice appeared to be sporadic. From participants' experience, such as Caveman, social workers would not be "getting enough [external supervision]…aren't getting that to improve practice and make it safer."

The quality and type of supervision offered within organisations is highly variable. This offers an explanation for the consequences associated with reduced funding and compliance measures that dominate community-based child welfare services. In addition, the size, location, and the context of each service is different and reproduces a range of organisational cultures (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). For some community-based child welfare services external supervision may be seen as a luxury:

> I think there's some agencies who put a lot of energy into professional development and thought into supervision for their staff. They do this incredibly well. Then there's some agencies who don't get off the starting blocks who really don't have a grasp of supervision…[external] supervision is often at the bottom of the pile. There's all these other things we have to do and then it's, "What do we do about supervision?" (Rosie)

There is a clear commitment by some organisations to recognise the professional commitments of the SWRB in Aotearoa New Zealand and pay for external supervision. However, the ongoing expenses for community organisations associated with the provision of external supervision for social workers within the current fiscal environment are huge:

> Looking at our increasing numbers of registered social workers, what is growing is that part of the payment belonging to professional bodies and…meeting the criteria for supervision … The cost to the organisation is huge. This organisation has always had a very strong drive in the last ten years for our social work staff to have regular external supervision. It's just that our team has grown. (Jane)

The financial pressure on organisations to pay for external supervision for social workers has left managers wondering whether the service is getting value from this interaction. Moreover, the complexity between external supervision and management is highlighted between a balance of accountability for good practice, feedback processes and surveillance of practitioner's work.

> It's something the organisation's paying for, and when you are paying for the results, how do you know you're getting value?…How does the organisation make sure that the external supervisor is really aware of the context?...What…about that feedback loop and accountability around external supervisors? [But] also contracting with supervisors who are willing to work with the vision and values of that organisation. (Debbie)

Towards a successful supervisory relationship

The key attributes towards a successful supervisory relationship formed the final theme identified from the data and were considered important irrespective of the supervisory relationship being internal or external to the organisation. Therefore, the most important factors related to successful supervision were the attributes and skills of the supervisor to canvass critical reflection and the practice needs of the supervisee. The supervisor was described by participants as requiring a number of qualities and skills. Caveman described the supervisor as being "well trained, well prepared, knowledgeable" and "have a good handle on critically reflective practice" as well as maintaining "good boundaries." Rose agreed that her supervisor needed to be "strong enough to stand up and make those challenges to me." Facilitating deeper learning and critical reflection through open questioning was another fundamental requirement:

> The supervisor is able to ask key critical questions to enable the supervisee to figure out the answers for themselves...So they've got to turn it over in their minds and…come to the decisions themselves reflectively. (Elizabeth)

A good connection between the supervisor and supervisee was also viewed as essential by participants. This good connection was described by participants across internal and external supervisory relationships. Attributes such as honesty, openness and trustworthiness were recognised by Jane (describing her external supervision) and Susan (describing internal supervision):

> I also believe that my relationship with Debbie is sufficiently honest enough—if Debbie thought there's a complete lack of connection she would ask a question that would lead into a conversation about that. And trust in a relationship. (Jane)

> I think we have a good, open, honest relationship…I feel like if I have something I'm concerned about I can talk to Jock about it…I always feel that I've been listened to and that's really important that I'm supported. (Susan)

Supervision that facilitated critical reflection, explored diversity and a range of functions was also identified as important to the relationship. This, in turn, allows the supervisee to articulate their practice and develop their learning:

> [Supervision] covers the professional knowledge and skills…power, cultural experience…[but also] anything that might be getting in the way personally of being able to practise competently, safely, respectfully [with] thoughtful self-awareness towards the families and clients. (Laura)

The value of external supervision was highlighted by participants in the study as essential for social workers to discuss professional issues, whereas internal supervision was important from an organisational perspective to monitor caseload and role accountabilities. Despite the significance of external supervision being identified, participants argued that there is variability in this taking place between different community-based child welfare agencies—the financial implications of providing this a major factor. Despite the differences between internal and external supervision, the attributes and skills of the supervisor were recognised as key in providing a successful relationship.

Discussion

Within the current practices of community-based child welfare social work in Aotearoa New Zealand, a clear distinction is identified between organisational and professional agendas within supervision. These predetermined agendas influence how knowledge is reproduced within the supervision session, the discourses, and the responsibilities of the supervisor in developing a supervisee's practice (Adamson, 2011). These agendas are unmistakably recognised within the participant discussions in the study: internal supervision represented a focus on casework and organisational accountabilities, whilst external supervision assisted with practitioner support, critical reflection and development. The discrepancies between internal and external arrangements in supervision are similar to previous definitions in the literature (Beddoe, 2012; Bradley et al., 2010; Egan, 2012; Hair, 2012). Analysis of the participant data in the study also revealed the social workers' clarity around their expectations and boundaries associated with the supervision they received. These provided the basis for the sorts of discussions that took place in the session. The participants described external supervision as more invested in the supervisory relationship and the social worker's development whereas internal supervision was about task completion. These descriptions aligned with internal supervision having an administrative focus (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; O'Donoghue, 2015) and external supervision performing an educative function (Mo & Tsui, 2018) with external supervisors providing more constructive feedback and possessing greater practice knowledge and skills than internal supervisors (Itzhaky, 2001).

The focus on risk and meeting organisational targets in the current managerial climate (Beddoe, 2010) has ensured the ongoing trend for internal supervision to continue within community-based child welfare services. This focus was evident in the participant discussions—organisational policies and procedure were followed within internal supervision often at the expense of professional development and critical reflection. The internal supervisor is more concerned with social worker's caseloads and providing quick solutions. Supervisees also expected that their supervisors would provide them with expert answers (Hair, 2012). The danger associated with such internal supervisory relationships is that the balance of effective supervision for practitioners to reflect on their work becomes lost within ingrained managerial practices (Beddoe, 2015; Bradley et al., 2010). The process of supervision then becomes mechanistic and preoccupied with surveillance promoting a dominant discourse without opportunity for the social worker to engage in critical analysis.

To combat neoliberal and organisational pressures infiltrating supervision structures, external supervision has been endorsed by some community-based child welfare agencies as maintaining a professional discourse. External supervision also meets the necessary requirements and professional obligations to social work practice (ANZASW, 2015). External supervision, as a supplement to other forms of supervision, featured regularly in the study: five of the eight supervisory dyads were external relationships and six of the eight supervisees stated that they received external supervision paid by their organisation. Alternative forms of supervision have assisted with developing critical reflection and addressing power and structural inequalities in practice (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Hair, 2012). Further evaluative research regarding external supervision is imperative in order to understand its place in enriching social work practice (O'Donoghue, 2015).

Within such an austere environment for cash-strapped, community-based child welfare services, managers have inevitably raised questions associated with the value of external supervision. This tension was noted within the analysis of the data, as well as the variability of external supervision occurring for some social workers within different community-based child welfare services. Three key factors need consideration.

Firstly, the connections and distinctions between external and internal supervision and the mechanisms put in place between all parties to ensure the external supervisor's responsibilities for the supervisee's work and the relationship with the supervisee's organisation. Beddoe and Davys (2016) suggest three-way conversations between external supervisor, internal supervisor and social worker as an essential way of communicating an effective process and ensure competent, safe practice for service users. However, such relationships require obligation, transparency and ongoing evaluation. Davys, May, Burns, and O'Connell (2017) have previously identified that, although most social workers evaluate supervision, there is no evidence of an organised approach. This can typically be seen within various external supervision arrangements where there may be some informal review process or none at all. Managers, external supervisors and social workers need to devise regular co-ordinated feedback and evaluative approaches to demonstrate the importance, value and accountability of external supervision to practitioners and organisations.

Secondly, the external supervisor provides their services at a cost that has market value (Beddoe, 2012). Questions are then raised regarding the payments and rates for this service. From participants in the study, external supervision was paid for by the organisation to ensure professional standards were maintained. Although managers in organisations have characteristically approved the external supervision of social workers, this is not

guaranteed by services lacking funds, such as community-based child welfare. Individual social workers, for a number of reasons, may also "purchase" an external supervisor—this user-pays scenario (in this case, the social worker) looks set to grow in the future. Contracted arrangements in meeting costs between the social worker, their agency and the external supervisor will also become commonplace.

Thirdly, the verdict is still out on an external supervisor's skill base, qualifications and experience. Without the protection title of an external supervisor and the specifics this entails, this type of supervision practice is open to interpretation and inconsistency. To become a suitable external supervisor, qualifications related to supervision with an appropriate tertiary provider are required in order to understand the practice and knowledge base behind supervision. In addition, external supervisors also need to have experience of the contextual environment that the supervisees operate in. The development of a best practice supervision culture by supervisors is essential so that skills, knowledge and guidelines can be maintained (O'Donoghue, 2010). The ongoing learning of the external supervisor can be successfully obtained through the professional development of networks and communities of practice. This is an area that needs further exploration in practice and research.

For supervision to develop social workers, an analysis of the relational dynamics within supervision needs to be ongoing. The participant data described important attributes essential to any effective supervisory relationship. These attributes presented as similar to O'Donoghue, Munford, and Trlin's survey (2006) related to factors required for any conducive supervision environment and relationship between supervisor and supervisee. The balance between professional and organisational tensions is "the essential dilemma of any supervision arrangement" (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 114) which requires review and transparency in the relationship.

Supervision within community-based child welfare requires, not line management, but vision and creativity that values relationships in order for social work practice to be effective. Whether the supervisory relationship is internal or external, the supervisor needs to have appropriate skills and knowledge to maintain the significance of critical reflection in the session (Hair, 2012). The supervisee, too, needs to utilise the supervision space to explore work structures and how they practise. Practitioners require further education on how to use the supervisory relationship to realise change, critical thinking and the development of the social work profession in the future.

Limitations

The participants have described their own varied experiences of external supervision in community-based child welfare specific to Aotearoa New Zealand. The size of the study was small and therefore views related to cultural diversity and participant experience of external and internal supervision were not captured on a wide scale. These understandings may not represent other social work organisations or contexts so claims of generalisability and transferability are limited. However, the study has highlighted the importance of external supervision for social workers, as well as the tensions between organisational and professional agendas influencing external supervision taking place. Further examination of these relationships and their value to social work practice in the current managerial landscape needs to be critically explored.

Conclusion

Within current supervision practices is the tension associated with the social worker meeting organisational versus professional demands. External supervision was

commonly identified by participants in this study as a valuable space to openly discuss practice and critically reflect on their work—an area often missing in internal supervision arrangements. However, there are many associated complexities and variation within external supervision arrangements for social workers within organisations. Critical consideration of the external supervisory relationship and its accountabilities are required between external supervisors, practitioners and managers. These arrangements can then be utilised to their full potential in developing practice, critical reflection and ultimately, better results for service users in communities. External supervisors too, require qualifications and the development of ongoing skills and knowledge. This can be achieved through the development of practice communities for supervisors and a best practice supervision culture.

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Supervising the supervisors: What support do first-line supervisors need to be more effective in their supervisory role?

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Stepping into a supervisory role in social work involves a shift of status, perspective and identity. New supervisors bring skills and experience which can be both asset and hindrance as they make the transition. Frequently they encounter gaps in training, support and supervision as well as dissonance between espoused policy and their own experience. This article identifies ways in which supervisors can be resourced to meet the challenge of their role and, as a result, be better placed to support others. It explores what is involved in supervising the supervisors, drawing on the experience of teaching managers on post-qualifying courses in professional supervision in Scotland.

APPROACH: Themes commonly applied to the supervision of practitioners are explored in relation to those who are one or more steps removed from direct practice; seeking to identify what has shared relevance and what may be distinctive to those in a supervisory role.

CONCLUSION: A congruent approach to support and supervision across all levels of an organisation helps foster a reflective culture which can engage with emotions and with complexity.

KEYWORDS: Supervision; reflection; containment; development

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Stepping into a supervisory role in social work involves a shift of status, perspective and identity. While there are undoubtedly transferable skills from direct practice, this is new territory which holds unfamiliar challenges. Lack of preparation or training is a common experience for new supervisors (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Mor Barak, Travis, & Bess, 2004) and many find their way as best they can; influenced by their own supervision history; resolved to emulate what they appreciated most as a practitioner and avoid those behaviours or attitudes which they found unhelpful. Social work has been described as an "invisible trade" (Pithouse, 1987) made partly visible through discussions in supervision. Social work supervision itself is practised in spaces which are not open to view. The appropriate privacy and confidentiality of these conversations means that the interaction between supervisor and supervisee is rarely observed with the result that there are limited opportunities to learn from others or get direct feedback on one's own supervisory practice.

With a few exceptions (Beddoe & Davys, 2016; Cousins, 2004; Patterson, 2015, 2017) there is sparse literature on the support and supervision of social work supervisors. This knowledge gap stands out when teaching on a supervision module where participants range from newly promoted first-line managers to those in senior management roles. For those supervising other managers,

it is often necessary to translate theoretical perspectives to fit a context which is one, or more, steps removed from direct practice. While this has value in emphasising common ground, it risks oversight of what may be distinctive about supervising the supervisors. A more focused gaze on this area feels worthwhile, not least because of what is often missing in managers' own supervision and the tendency for managerial and administrative priorities to eclipse other dimensions (Ruch, 2008; Ward, 2012).

A discrepancy between the ideal and what actually happens is not uncommon in the context of supervision. Policy documents reflect aspirations for best practice but reality on the ground can diverge markedly due to a range of factors: policy ignorance, lack of commitment, and competing demands. Rankine, Beddoe, O'Brien, and Fouché (2018) carried out research in community-based child welfare services exploring the tensions between managerial imperatives and relationship-based practice and highlighting the role of reflective supervision in supporting workers to develop their own theories-in-action. In similar vein, a study involving observation of supervision within children's services in a London borough demonstrated how managers frequently adopted a problem-solving approach in contrast to their stated intention of supporting workers' own reflection (Wilkins, Forrester, & Grant, 2017).

For managers, the gap between policy rhetoric and their own supervision experience can be wide and such dissonance undermines an organisation's capacity to effectively contain the work undertaken. The concept of containment (Bion, 1962; Ruch, 2008; Smith, 2000) has relevance for social work supervision even in contexts where psychodynamic theory has little, if any, direct influence. Insights gained from Menzies-Lyth's (1970) seminal research on social defences against anxiety have been applied to diverse social care settings (Jones & Wright, 2008; Lees, Myers, & Rafferty, 2013; Whittaker, 2011) highlighting how failure to attend to the emotional impact of practice can lead to dysfunctional organisational processes; decline in staff motivation and have a detrimental impact on the quality of care provided. Ruch (2012) argues the case for reflective, relationship-based management and her model of holistic containment offers a counter-balance to the technical–rational cultures which currently prevail. Health and social care services intersect with people's lives when they need support; when they are in crisis; when they have experienced trauma. At its best, professional supervision provides a safe space where feelings stirred up by close and sustained involvement in this kind of work can be given expression so that practitioners retain the capacity to feel empathy; to see, to hear and to think clearly. Emotional work does not stop at first-line management level but pervades the whole fabric of the organisation. There appears, however, to be a lack of consistency in how the containing function is enacted across more senior tiers of management where, arguably, there is increasing complexity and no dilution of anxiety.

Informed by over 10 years' involvement in a teaching role with social services managers and supervisors in Scotland, this is a conceptual article reflecting on the support needs of first-line supervisors. It utilises well-established themes from supervision theory but examines these from the perspective of managers' own supervision, seeking to identify what may be lacking in, or distinctive to, their role. Developmental models are deliberately chosen to open this discussion in recognition of the significant personal and professional impact many experience as they transition from practitioner to manager roles. Included in this is the challenge of navigating power dynamics within supervisory relationships; having the confidence to exercise role authority when appropriate but able to value the expertise of others and appreciate supervision as a shared learning space (Carroll, 2009). The discussion then moves to the different functions of supervision and how these play out in relation to supervisors

themselves. Influenced by Morrison's (1993) early observation that the unmet support needs of managers may contribute to their subsequent neglect of the support function when supervising others, there is particular focus on the restorative function and the purpose this serves for those not directly engaged in practice. This leads on to further exploration of the interplay between supervision and direct work: the role of supervisors in modelling relationship-based approaches and the ways in which emotions, anxiety in particular, infuse every level of an organisation involved in social care. Managers aware of the potency of below-the-surface dynamics appreciate the importance of reflective supervision where complex material can be processed. If they are to offer that "quiet space" (Beddoe, 2010, p. 1293) to their supervisees, this article argues that managers need regular protected time for reflecting on their own practice.

Developmental models and transition from practice to the supervisory role

Developmental models offer supervisors insight into the differing needs of practitioners with various levels of experience. Some caution is necessary as developmental progress is not a simple linear trajectory nor is there a fixed end point where the autonomous professional has no need of support or oversight. Those limitations notwithstanding, such models serve as a useful checking mechanism: a newly qualified worker seeking frequent guidance and reassurance feels appropriate while a more established practitioner displaying similar behaviour might prompt the supervisor to reflect on whether they have nurtured a degree of dependency or if some other factor has contributed to low confidence. Developmental frameworks are a way of charting the incremental steps of increasing confidence and competence expected as a worker's experience grows. This can be expressed as a fluctuating balance of dependence and autonomy (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) or as stages of conscious and unconscious competence (Strandgaard, 1981). Blanchard, Fowler, and Hawkins (2006) portray how the enthusiasm of a beginner wanes and disillusionment can set in when progress seems slow and hard-going. Consistent support is needed to motivate and encourage someone along the route towards capable performance and increasing self-reliance. These are well established models but, when combined with recognition of a developing supervisor's parallel journey, more complex pictures emerge.

For supervisors adapting to their new role, a staged process also applies (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Hawkins & Smith, 2006; Hess, 1986). Initially, the need to provide answers, to be helpful and to do the right thing is a strong driver. If their former practitioner identity provides more secure grounding than the new managerial role, it is hardly surprising this is the expertise a supervisor will draw upon. Nor is this inappropriate so long as the supervisor's needs do not undermine a worker's capacity to find their own solutions or prevent them grappling with dilemmas which have no clear answer. In contrast to those who argue that key skills are transferable from social work practice into management roles (Coulshed & Mullender, 2006; Tolleson Knee & Folsom, 2012), Saltiel (2017, p.546) identifies the "limited usefulness" of managers' practice experience suggesting that different attributes are required to promote reflection and analysis on the part of their supervisees. Resisting the tendency to move too swiftly into problem-solving mode is shown to be difficult even for experienced managers who value reflective supervision (Wilkins et al. 2017), and it can be particularly challenging to acknowledge doubt and uncertainty when still trying to prove one's own worth as a supervisor. A felt need to offer solutions, while it may partly align with the developmental stage of a newly qualified worker, is likely to be a poor fit for more experienced practitioners and potentially leaves the supervisor feeling inadequate in their role.

Becoming a supervisor involves role adjustment including acceptance of the power differential separating one from former peers (Cousins, 2004; Patterson, 2015). There is a transition from "doer role" to "leader role' (Stoner & Stoner, 2013) which involves achieving things through others. While some new managers welcome this stepping back from direct practice, others may experience loss or reluctance to let go of the practitioner identity in which their skills and competence are well established. Such ambivalence can lead to an active-intrusive (Wonnacott, 2012) style of supervision; a micro-managing approach which limits the autonomy of workers. Until confidence has developed in the supervisory role there are potential hazards to be negotiated. Faced by staff members who are challenging or those who are highly experienced, it can be hard for novice supervisors to calibrate their approach avoiding both permissive and authoritarian extremes. The role strain inherent in managing the "tension between management control and professional autonomy" (Wong & Lee, 2015, p. 165) is potentially acute for an inexperienced manager still struggling to find their feet.

Stoltenberg and Delworth (cited in Hawkins & Smith, 2012) suggest that new managers gain a growing appreciation of complexity in their supervisory task but may be reticent to seek help from others. This resonates with research findings that managers' learning and development needs are given low priority both by themselves and by their organisations (Ofsted, 2012; Patterson & George, 2014). It echoes the testimony of many first-line supervisors on post-qualifying courses who describe their experiences of infrequent or business-focused supervision. While recognising a deficit, their attention is more focused on frontline practice than self-advocacy or seeing the organisation's supervision culture as a holistic entity. Later stages of the developmental model indicate supervisors' increasing commitment to critical reflection and their capacity to use different approaches in response to diverse situations and people. There is, however, no firm guarantee such progress will occur and Blair and Peake (1995, cited in Cousins, 2004) suggest that training makes an important contribution: "supervisors do not necessarily become more competent merely by gaining experience in providing supervision" (Cousins, 2004, p. 180).

Writing about the 'Support to Front Line Managers' Project' initiated by the Children's Workforce Development Council in England in 2010, Harlow (2016) describes employers' primary focus on training and education for new managers with less attention paid to other modes of learning such as coaching, mentoring or action learning. She highlights the value of "relational and reflective methods of preparing front line managers to undertake relational and reflective supervision with social work practitioners" (Harlow, 2016, p. 684). A comparable emphasis on "relationship-based practice supervision" is included in the Post-qualifying Standards for Social Work Practice Supervisors in Adult Social Care (Department of Health and Social Care, 2016, p. 9) and the newly developed Practice Supervisor Development Programme describes "the need for emotionally literate, reflective, curious supervision which promotes critical thinking, hopeful practice and wellbeing" (Holmes, 2018). These are encouraging signs that professional supervision is gaining status and recognition within the UK and resources being invested in supervisors' development. It remains clear, however, that stepping from a practitioner into a management role represents a significant transition. Most new supervisors are required to build relationships and manage the performance of workers with a diverse array of experience and commitment. There is a necessary adjustment to the delegated authority of a new role while having to earn authority from below (Obholzer, 1994) if they are to practise effectively. The challenge is heightened for those promoted within their own team or supervising in an integrated setting with staff from a range of professional backgrounds.

Functions of supervision and the place for support

A triad of functions within professional supervision is commonly recognised (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Inskipp & Proctor, 1988; Kadushin, 1976). To the three core elements of management, development and support, Morrison (2005) adds mediation as a fourth function, taking account of the supervisor's pivotal role in communicating both upwards and downwards in an organisation. The language used to describe the functions varies across supervision literature, in part reflecting professional cultures but also adapting to changing expectations, for example, Hawkins and Shohet (2006, 2012) intentionally use developmental, resourcing and qualitative functions to emphasise shared responsibility between supervisor and supervisee. Writing in a health context, Wallbank (2010) has chosen the term *restorative* (from Inskipp and Proctor, 1988) rather than *support*, but, in the global north at least, there is broad similarity across disciplines in how the functions are understood. There is also shared perception of how the management or administrative function has assumed a dominant position within practitioners' supervision, reflecting the influence of managerialism; societal preoccupation with risk and a culture of inspection and audit (Adamson, 2011; Beddoe, 2010; Johnston, Noble, & Gray, 2016; Noble & Irwin, 2009). When attention is directed to the supervision of supervisors, this imbalance of functions appears yet more acute but without the same critical scrutiny of what it means when support and development are superseded by managerial priorities. In some work settings, supervision may be rebranded as a business meeting, communicating a clear message that administrative issues take precedence. This is at odds with formal policy documents which rarely indicate that professional supervision is limited to practitioners alone or that the purpose of supervision mutates at different levels of the hierarchy. While this article is focused primarily on managers' support needs, the tendency to prioritise staff training needs above their own (Patterson & George, 2014; Ofsted, 2012) may, in part, arise because professional development is low on the agenda in their own supervision.

The role of support within supervision is never wholly straightforward with justified concerns about the risk of prioritising workers' interests over those of people using services. Cousins (2010) highlights the way supervisors can inadvertently collude with a *treat me, don't beat me* game, slipping into therapeutic mode and losing focus on the service user. Different strategies may be employed to hold the child or adult in mind but a definition of outcomes as "the impact of activity or support" on a person's life (Cook & Miller, 2012, p. 8) can serve as useful anchor point in supervision. While evidence of such impact remains limited and often anecdotal (Carpenter, Webb, Bostock, & Coomber, 2012), the reminder that supervision is striving to make a difference for the better in people's lives is important. This conscious intent has validity regardless of how far removed from direct practice supervision takes place. Hughes and Pengelly's (1997) model encompasses three dimensions of managing service delivery, facilitating practitioner's professional development and focusing on practitioner's work. Their approach translates effectively across to managerial roles, legitimising those elements which risk being overlooked: facilitating managers' professional development and focusing on managers' work. The supervision of staff is fundamental to their work and is a complex activity with far-reaching implications for the quality of practice (Ofsted, 2012). It is noteworthy, therefore, how limited the opportunities are for managers to reflect in depth on their supervisory practice; to examine the skills they are using and to identify process dynamics at work below the surface in supervision.

Various models of peer or group supervision offer space for such reflection (Golia & McGovern, 2015; Patterson, 2017; Wallbank, 2013a) and Davys, Howard, Rankine, & Thompson (2019) describe a process

of thinking aloud used within a small learning community to deepen participants' supervisory skills and competence. Approaches such as these may complement and enhance line management supervision or, alternatively, may compensate for what is missing in formal structures. Debates about the merits of separating line management from clinical or reflective supervision (Bostock, 2015; Bradley & Höjer, 2009; Children's Workforce Development Council, 2010; Wong & Lee, 2015) are context-dependent but, whether the intent is to counter-balance a managerialist culture or address the needs of diverse professionals in an integrated setting, there are benefits and drawbacks to consider. Amongst these is the risk of splitting, or the organisation failing to provide effective containment for work that is, of necessity, emotion-laden and challenging, if support is de-coupled from management supervision.

The Ofsted report of 2012 identified "the importance of holistic and systemic support for staff" (p. 5) and noted that "effective support depended on the creation of organisational cultures that were characterised by high expectations, high support and high challenge" (p. 6). The report's focus was on direct practice with children and families but its emerging themes of a systemic approach; the importance of "senior managers modelling the behaviours required of effective supervisors" (p. 17), and the way in which a relationship-based culture was mirrored in work with parents, demonstrate that congruence across every level of an organisation is critical. Sound support and supervision for managers resources them in their vital role of supporting frontline staff. Sustaining good supervision demands that attention be paid to the support and development of supervisors as well as the functional tasks assigned to them.

Containing the container

The support or restorative function within supervision is bound up with the emotional impact of practice. Working in close proximity with painful human experience affects those involved. Too intense an involvement with powerful emotions can be debilitating but too great a distancing, or denial of the feelings evoked, renders practice unsafe (Dwyer, 2007; Horwath, 2016; Stanley & Goddard, 2002). One of the purposes of supervision is to offer a space where emotions are valued and legitimised. A worker's affective response may at times distort their judgement, giving a false sense of certainty or introducing bias into their decision-making but can also alert them to concerns which might go unnoticed. There are risks in attaching too much or too little weight to emotional information and a supervisor's role is to help explore what is significant. While knowledge of a practitioner's caseload is helpful, so too is a degree of detachment which enables the supervisor to question certitude (Laming, 2009), to offer a different perspective and to observe details which may have become invisible to the worker.

Supervision, ideally, provides the kind of emotional containment which sustains people's capacity to carry out their work without doing damage to their health and wellbeing or blunting their responsiveness as a caring professional. In an early edition of *Supervision in the Helping Professions*, Hawkins and Shohet (1989) drew comparisons with coal miners' right to wash off the pit-grime in their working time rather than carry it back to their homes and families. And Zagler-Roberts (1994) warns that uncontained staff may lose the passion and commitment that drew them to work in a caring role. Rooted in psychodynamic theory, the concept of containment is based on the idea that a parent or caregiver contains the anxiety which threatens to overwhelm a hungry, tired or fearful infant by providing a consistent and reassuring response. Feelings which were unbearable become possible to endure and relief is provided. While supervision does not seek to infantilise or to rescue a practitioner, the ability to listen and contain feelings

of vulnerability, loss, anger or frustration without being overwhelmed allows these to be processed. Through a collaborative working alliance, the supervisor and supervisee can find a way forward which does not deny the challenge faced but makes it more manageable.

In the context of residential care for older people, Jones and Wright (2008, p. 341) suggest that containing supervision "may be considered as not too rigid and not too fragile". The supervisor needs to actively feel the worker's emotions while still "retaining balance of mind." Writing about the supervision of fear, Smith (2000, p. 25) describes how a "combination of availability and attention …. may aid supervisees in finding a reassurance in and of themselves". He notes the value of a supervisor being prepared to think about a worker's experiences with them. It is not necessarily action that is helpful but a willingness to be there, to give time and to listen without criticism. Ruch's (2012) model of holistic containment shows how other structures within the workplace can complement supervision, supporting relationship-based approaches at management level and in direct practice. This helpfully points to a wider organisational responsibility; taking ownership of how its core activity, or primary task, impacts on staff and seeking to contain this effectively at the level of feeling, thinking and doing.

This brief overview of supervision's containing function makes evident a flawed logic if support for the emotional impact of the work is offered only to direct practitioners. While managers may be one or more steps removed from frontline practice, they are potentially holding the anxiety of a team of workers and in addition may be covering the caseload of absent staff or vacant posts. Toasland (2007) describes the pressure on first-line managers to be the "primary container" capable of holding the projections of others while neither colluding nor withdrawing. Holding a middle position between operational and strategic imperatives, they are subject to the anxieties of referrers and senior managers as well as practitioners and therefore need their own "positive containing supervision" in which to process rather than be driven by such pressures (Toasland, 2007, p. 202). Morrison's (2005) three-cycle model of the impact of anxiety on supervision demonstrates the importance of a systems perspective. Drawing on Vince and Martin's (1993) work, Morrison distinguishes between a collaborative organisational environment capable of holding uncertainty, risk and ambiguity and a compromised organisational environment which lacks containment or safety. The latter risks the kind of dysfunctional social defence systems (Menzies-Lyth, 1970) which impact at individual, team and organisational levels, undermining trust and diverting attention from the primary task while a collaborative organisational environment is characterised by its capacity, at every level of management, to stay clearly focused on people who use services.

Writing in a health context, Wallbank (2013b, p. 176) suggests that "restorative supervision provides a parallel process where the leader feels supported and understood and is able to provide that experience to their staff." This is an example where the restorative dimension of supervision has been identified as a distinct element to be addressed independently and not conflated with line management. The value of clinical supervision for nursing managers has been explored in earlier studies (Johns, 2003; Sirola-Karvinen & Hyrkäs, 2008) but in relation to broader leadership capabilities rather than their capacity to respond to the emotional impact of practice. Action learning sets for supervisors (Patterson, 2017) offer another approach based on peer collaboration which enables managers to identify and explore issues affecting them personally as well as professionally. Across the helping professions and in the context of ever-increasing pressures, attending to the support needs of managers is important if they are not to become overwhelmed or

their capacity for empathy blunted (Cousins, 2004). There is a need to contain the container and model a supervision culture which attends to feelings as well as tasks.

Reflection and reflexivity in the supervisory role

Reflective supervision is promoted and aspired to in many work settings but not always evident in practice (Wilkins et al., 2017). Aside from competing pressures on the time available, shifting into reflective mode and holding back from problem-solving challenges habitual ways of being. Arguably, if managers have little opportunity for reflection within their own working schedule, it is less likely that they will readily adopt a supervision style which is open and curious. The importance of reflective supervision is not in question but there is risk of another fracture between the espoused and the actual if it is valued in name alone.

Exploring the purpose of reflection in supervision and the constraints which impinge may be a useful starting place. This is not to imply there is an ideal approach but is a way of delving below the surface of what an individual supervisor is striving for. One intent may be to foster a practitioner's development and autonomy by refraining from offering advice; encouraging them to consider a situation in more depth, to reflect on alternative options and their implications. In this instance the reflective activity is undertaken primarily by the supervisee while the supervisor may, or may not, be open to changing their views on what is an appropriate course of action. Various adaptations of a reflective learning cycle (Davys & Beddoe, 2010; Kolb, 1984) are used in supervision to structure a sense-making process in which both supervisor and supervisee can participate. This opens up space between action and reaction where thoughtful attention is given to an issue before deciding how to move forward. A critical reflective approach may go further and focus more specifically on power relationships; positions of privilege and disadvantage, with the aim of challenging dominant ideologies and questioning the status quo. This critical gaze could be directed at structural inequalities affecting the lives of people who use services but equally might include aspects of organisational policy. In this instance, a supervisor may experience tension in the reflective process between their values and their management role.

A further possibility is reflection striving for greater depth of understanding rather than setting a course of action. This is particularly challenging in task-focused and accountability-driven cultures but has a valid place within supervision. Negative capability (Cornish, 2011; Grint, 2010) is the capacity to sit with un-knowing and it may be important for practitioners to "stay in uncertainty for longer" (Taylor & White, 2006, p. 944). Although it can provoke discomfort or even hostility, there are situations where it is necessary to reflect on what is going on at an unconscious level.

> Is this unknown because the worker is afraid to ask? Is this unknown because the worker is defending him, or herself….. Is this unknown because someone wants it to remain unknown? (Goddard & Hunt, 2011, p. 425)

The capacity to tolerate uncertainty calls for trust in the process and knowledge of self. Grint (2010) argues that, in the face of complexity, the art of the leader is to ask better questions rather than collude with the desire for a simple answer. However, not every supervisor may feel confident to hold that space of open inquiry and not every supervisee will be receptive to a dialogic approach (Bohm, 1996; Schein, 2013).

Whatever kind of reflective supervision is practised, there is a need to pay attention to inner as well as outer process. Hawkins and Shohet's (2012) seven-eyed model represents the multi-layered awareness which can inform supervision. This extends

beyond Schön's (1983) reflection-in-action and requires a supervisor to be alert and responsive to many simultaneous cues. Such high expectations can be paralysing, particularly for an inexperienced supervisor, and the greatest value of the model may be its reminder of the complexity of the supervisory process; raising awareness of how much is going on below the surface and how rich, but potentially confusing, the sources of insight are beyond what is spoken. In supervision-triad work within a post-qualifying module, participants role play scenarios and reflect on the interaction: what worked well and what could have been done differently. The perceptions of supervisor, supervisee and observer may diverge, which itself is informative, but of particular note is how much happens within these brief interactions. Focusing a lens on the detail of what goes on; what choices are made and how the supervisee is enabled or blocked in their exploration of an issue can be a fascinating revelation. It is also evident that, for many people, examining the process rather than the content of a session is an unfamiliar activity. There is good understanding of the part played by body language and active listening, but in-depth analysis of subtle shifts in mood or the impact of particular words or gestures seems less within reach. It can feel like tangible resistance to exploring the dynamics at play and an inexorable pull towards discussing a more concrete problem.

Opportunities to practise skills; to experiment with new approaches and to get critical feedback are surprisingly rare given the significance of supervision. Not only do many supervisors take on the role with limited training or preparation (Cousins, 2004; Patterson, 2015), there are also restricted opportunities for continuing development apart from what is learnt on the job. If supervision is to address depth rather than surface (Howe, 1996) the reflective supervisory needs of managers deserve greater priority. The structure for achieving this, whether individual, peer, group or other approaches, is less critical than commitment to a culture of reflection which permeates the whole of an organisation leading to practice which is aligned with policy aspirations.

Froggett (2000) highlights the impact of mirroring within social work "whereby the dynamics of the relationship between worker and client are unconsciously replayed in the supervisory relationship where they can become available for subsequent reflection" (Mattinson, 1975, cited in Froggett, 2000, p. 30). A reverse mirroring process means that supervisor–supervisee interactions may, in turn, affect direct practice. A supervisor's own supervision can help them identify their vulnerabilities, triggers and blind spots so they can engage more effectively with complex process dynamics. Examples might range from working with a supervisee whose assertive stance undermines the supervisor's sense of personal authority triggering an overly deferential or domineering response to supporting a worker regain perspective on a practice situation which has evoked painful emotions. It includes being mindful of the defence mechanisms which function at individual and organisational levels; having a compassionate understanding of these protective responses but being alert to their impact on the core task and the people whom the organisation is supposed to serve. A systems awareness challenges us to recognise that, whatever is present in the group, the organisation, the wider system is also present in ourselves. It is valuable, therefore, that supervisors are familiar with the defensive responses stirred up by work which is anxiety-provoking and have strategies in place to recognise and engage with these.

Conclusion

The focus of this article is the supervision of supervisors, a topic under-explored in the literature and at risk of being undervalued in practice. Despite the significance of their supervisory role including impact on direct work with people using services, there is a curious disjuncture in the attention paid to

training, supporting and developing first-line supervisors. The suggestion is not that managers' supervision should replicate what they provide to practitioners. While the article is structured around established themes from supervision theory, it seeks to explore what kind of support can enhance managers' supervisory practice with the intent of benefiting both frontline staff and the people they work with. Paying attention to the significant transition from practice into a management role is a first step and developmental models can help to chart the journey into new terrain. Supervisors who are committed to balancing the managerial with the professional can better resist the pressure of surveillance over reflection (Beddoe, 2010) if their own support and development needs are not side-lined by administrative priorities. Their capacity to offer holistic containment (Ruch, 2012) is enhanced when they have space to process the emotional dimensions of their work and when an active learning culture is fostered for managers and practitioners alike.

The metaphor of a golden thread is often chosen when organisations strive to align strategy, values and practice. Supervision offers a valuable strand within that thread when there is a congruent and consistent approach; when actions match words and when policy aspirations are mirrored in people's lived experience.

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ORIGINAL ARTICLE
QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The supervision of registered social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand: A national survey

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Registered social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand are expected to participate in supervision in accordance with the Social Workers Registration Board's policies. This article reports baseline findings on the supervision of registered social workers, comparing their supervision with the Board's policy and guidelines.

METHODS: A postal survey of 278 registered social workers was conducted to establish a baseline regarding their supervision. IBM SPSS 24 was used to analyse the data. Descriptive analysis, one-way ANOVA and post hoc tests were applied to explore variances in means for the independent variables of registration type, gender, age, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, recognised qualifications, and experience as social worker across 11 scales concerning the respondents' supervision.

FINDINGS: The findings report demographic information about the supervisees as well as a description of the supervision they participated in. This includes detail about various aspects of supervision, including forms, overall emphasis, logistics, types of contact, climate, methods and processes, experiences of their supervisor's approaches and models, session processes and content and their overall satisfaction and evaluation.

CONCLUSIONS: While most registered social workers' supervision is in accordance with the Board's expectations and Code of Conduct, further work is needed to ensure all registered social workers participate in appropriate supervision that meets these expectations. Concerns are raised about the cultural responsiveness of supervision in relation to supervisees and clients. Suggestions are made concerning further research in relation to the influence of gender, culture, sexual orientation, experience, qualifications, and registration status within supervision.

KEYWORDS: supervision, social work, registration

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Social work supervision is a professional process that social workers engage in to improve their practice with clients and their professional development as practitioners (O'Donoghue, 2010). The first national survey of the supervision of social workers was conducted in 2004 (O'Donoghue, 2008, 2010; O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2005, 2006). This survey occurred prior to the introduction of social worker registration in December 2004 (O'Donoghue, 2013). The establishment of registration by the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) has influenced the supervision of social workers by: a) requiring 2000 hours of supervised practice post-qualifying for

provisionally registered social workers to progress to full registration; b) registered social workers having to declare that they are participating in supervision and be able to provide a supervision contract if requested when applying for an annual practising certificate or renewing their competency; and c) requiring registered social workers to access appropriate supervision at least monthly (O'Donoghue, 2010; SWRB, 2015a). The Board's Code of Conduct includes expectations that supervisors will ensure their supervision is culturally relevant if the supervisee is Māori and culturally relevant, safe, and responsive for Māori clients (SWRB, 2016). Other expectations in the Code related to supervision include: registered social workers seeking supervision and guidance in regard to staying within scope; actively participating in supervision and critically reflecting on their practice (SWRB, 2016). The study reported in this article aims to establish a baseline in regard to the supervision of registered social workers and to compare and contrast their supervision with SWRB policy and guidelines. The importance of a baseline for the profession is that it enables the possibility for a future comparison of the state of supervision through replicating the survey. Internationally, only one national survey of social workers supervision has been replicated and that was Kadushin's survey of members of National Association of Social Workers (NASW) in 1973 and 1989 (Kadushin, 1974, 1993).

Instrument design and data collection

The survey questionnaire was an updated version of an instrument used in 2004 (O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue et al., 2005). The updates included: changing the gender options from binary to multi-choice; the addition of sexual orientation as a variable; an updated list of supervision approaches; and the addition of an overall satisfaction scale alongside overall evaluation. The questionnaire consisted of multi-choice questions which sought information on the respondents' background and 5-point semantic differential and likert type scales which measured: the participation in forms of supervision; the emphasis of supervision; the experience of types of supervision contact; the supervision climate; focus, methods and processes; aspects of supervision sessions; approach used; the content of sessions related to practice and organisational matters, and overall satisfaction and evaluation. The internal reliability of the scales in the 2014 questionaire were tested using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, with 10 of the 11 scales (see Table 1) showing scores that indicated an adequate level of internal consistency (i.e., >0.5) with seven of these achieving a level greater than 0.7 which is generally accepted as a good indication of internal reliability (Helms, Henze, Sass, & Mifsud, 2006). The participation in forms of supervision scale whist obtaining a low internal reliability score did not have any

Table 1. Internal Reliability

Scale	Cronbach's Alpha Coefficient
Participation in forms of supervision	.425
The emphasis of supervision	.612
The experience of types of supervision contact	.522
Statements concerning the supervision climate	.934*
Focus of supervision	.690
Methods and processes	.741*
Aspects of supervision sessions	.893*
Model or approach used	.862*
Content of sessions (supervisee's practice)	.883*
Content of sessions (organisational matters)	.797*
Overall satisfaction and evaluation	.770*

*Indicates internal reliability

implications with regard to use of the data collected for this question, because it corresponds to Schmitt's (1996, p. 352) criterion of a measure that "has other desirable properties, such as meaningful content coverage...", with the content in this case being participation in a range of forms of supervision across a 12-month period.

Arguably, the questionnaire had content, criterion and face validity, because it addressed the content and criteria pertaining to social work supervision and its constitutive elements as described in the supervision literature (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015). It also built on the constructs from a previous instrument (De Vaus, 2014). The sampling and data-collection procedure involved selecting a sample of 708 registered social workers using a set of randomly generated numbers from the 4388 registered social workers who held annual practising certificates on the publicly available register in 2014. The questionnaire was posted to the participants in December 2014 and followed up with a reminder in January 2015 with data collection finishing in February 2015. Twenty questionnaires were returned unclaimed. From the 688 questionnaires deemed to have been received, 278 questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 40.4%. The overall sampling error was calculated to be 5.7% at the 95% confidence level, which is within the parameters of 4% and 8% at the 95% confidence level, which is deemed acceptable (Field, 2013). The completed questionnaires were checked, coded and data was directly entered into IBM SPSS 24 (http://www.ibmspss.com) for analysis. Missing data were addressed by leaving the cells in IBM SPSS 24 blank and by reporting the number of respondents throughout the article (Pallant, 2013).

Data analysis

The analysis involved descriptive statistics in the form of count, percentage and means. Following the descriptive analysis, a one-way ANOVA was applied to compare the mean results from the scales with the independent variables derived from the respondents' characteristics and where significant differences were identified, Tamhane T2 post hoc tests were applied to measure the differences and to identify which groups had differences that were statistically significant. Tamhane T2 tests are used when the variances are unequal and samples differed, which was the case with the respondents' demographic characteristics. The eta squared coefficient ($\eta 2$) was used to measure the effect size. The effect is deemed small at 0.01, medium at 0.06 and large at 0.14 (Pallant, 2013, p. 264). The alpha level was set at 0.05.

The study was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The main ethical question explored the rationale for gathering sexual orientation data. The ethics committee was advised that Watkins (2011, p. 63) noted that "with regard to sexual orientation and supervision, there continues to be a noticeable gap in the empirical literature." It was also explained to the committee that, in a previous study, several supervisees and a supervisor identified that differences in sexual orientation affected their supervision relationships (O'Donoghue, 2010). The limitations of the survey are those that apply to any survey and concern the reliance on the respondents' reports, social desirability bias, missing data bias, and the small sample size of some respondent characteristic groups (De Vaus, 2014).

Respondents' personal and professional characteristics

The respondents' personal characteristics are detailed in Table 2. It is difficult to ascertain how representative their characteristics are of the wider social worker population due to a lack of reliable workforce data at the time of the survey. The comparisons made with 2013 New Zealand Census Social Work sub-group have limitations. For example, the comparison for gender suggests females were over-represented in the survey sample

and males were underrepresented. Another limitation is that the census question was binary and did not include a specific response for people who are gender diverse (Statistics New Zealand, 2017a).

The comparison for age bands is also challenging because the grouping between the survey and the census differ. That said, when the survey age groups results are combined with 12.4% (*n* = 31) of 274 respondents under 40 years, nearly two-thirds 65.7% (*n* =180) were between 40 and 59 years of age, just over one-fifth 21.9% (*n* = 60) were between aged 60 and 69, there seems to be a degree of alignment with the census. For ethnicity, the main differences between the survey and the census concern those who identify as Indian and Other. In the survey sample 'other' consisted of 14 (5%) of British origins, among this group, five were English, one was Scottish and the other Welsh. The remaining 8.7% included six who were European, (i.e., Dutch, Swiss, German, French and a combination of identities), five Australians, four Filipinos and four from Africa, the rest consisted of individuals of North American, Japanese, Chilean, Jewish, Hawaiian/German, and Fijian Indian heritage. An alternative comparison to census was the SWRB 2014/15 annual report, which showed both

Table 2. Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics		Respondents		2013 census Social Work sub-group	
		N	%	N	%
Gender	*Female*	231	83.1	13464	73.5
	Male	41	14.7	4869	26.5
	Diverse	6	2.2		
Total		278	100		
Age	*20-29*	3	1.1	(15- 24yrs)1191	6.4
	30-39	31	11.3	(25-44yrs) 6708	36.6
	40-49	83	30.3	(45-64yrs) 9363	51.1
	50-59	97	35.4	(65yrs & over)	
	60-69	60	21.9	1074	5.9
Total		274	100		
Ethnicity	*Māori*	53	19.1	2,700	14.7
	NZ European/ Pākehā	155	55.8	10,218	55.7
	Pacific Peoples	20	7.2	1,494	8.2
	Indian	12	4.3	–	–
	Other	38	13.6	3,918 *	21.4*
Total		278	100		
Sexual Orientation	*Same-sex*	25	9.9	–	–
	Bisexual	8	3.2	–	–
	Heterosexual	219	86.9	–	–
Total		252	100		

*People of Indian ethnicity are included in this group.

similarities and differences between the sample and registered social workers with 20.01% Māori, 67.05% European Pākehā, Pacific 5.31%, Indian 2.4%, Asian, 2.38%, African, 1.45%, Middle Eastern 0.26%, Hispanic 0.11%, and Other 1.02% (SWRB, 2015b). Turning to the sexual orientation data, it is important to note that it is not asked for in the New Zealand Census and that estimates of the prevalence of sexual orientations are unreliable statistically and problematic in terms of definition as well as being a political issue (Henrickson, Neville, Jordan, & Donaghey, 2007; Statistics New Zealand, 2017b). Despite the limitations outlined above concerning the wider social work workforce data, it is argued that the respondents were reasonably representative sample of social workers in regard to their personal characteristics.

The respondents' professional characteristics are detailed in Table 3. At the time of the survey there were no data available from the SWRB to establish how representative the sample is of the professional characteristics presented below. In regard to recognised qualifications the 'other' group held overseas qualifications. Having outlined the respondents' personal and professional characteristics the focus turns to their experiences and views of their supervision.

Respondents' experiences and views of their supervision

The results reported concern the respondents' experiences and views as supervisees in regard to the forms of supervision they participated in, the overall emphasis, logistics, types of contact, the

Table 3. Professional Characteristics

Professional Characteristics		Respondents	
		N	%
Type of Registration	*Full*	264	95.3
	Provisional	11	4
	Temporary	2	0.7
Total		277	100
Experience in years	*1-5*	31	11.3
	6-10	49	17.9
	11-15	62	22.6
	16-20	44	16.0
	21-25	38	13.9
	26-30	32	11.7
	>31	18	6.6
Total		274	100
Recognised Qualification	*Section 13 (on the basis of prior social work experience)*	7	2.5
	Diploma	71	25.7
	Bachelors	107	38.8
	PG Dip	35	12.7
	Masters	49	17.8
	Other	7	2.5
Total		276	100

supervision climate, focus, methods and processes. The respondents' views and experiences of supervisors' use of ideas from supervision models or approaches, the features and contents of sessions and their overall satisfaction and overall evaluation with their supervision are also presented. As discussed previously, these areas encompass the main areas in the supervision literature and align with the SWRB Policy and Code (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015; SWRB, 2015a, 2016).

Forms of supervision

The respondents rated on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *none* and 5 = *high*) their level of participation in each of 12 forms of supervision over the last 12 months. The 12 forms encompass the differing ways supervision is construed and practised in Aotearoa New Zealand (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012).

Table 4 details the number of responses, the mean, and the percentage of those participating in each form as well as those who reported high participation. The average range of participation was from 4.05 to 1.72, with the respondents mostly participating in individual, clinical/professional, internal and peer forms of supervision. The 'other' category consisted of a range of comments, which included references to specialist supervision, (e.g., spiritual supervision, or for clients with particular conditions or issues such as personality disorder or alcohol drug addiction, or academic supervision of advanced degree study), or the characteristics of their supervision (e.g., multi-disciplinary team, or with peers either inside or outside the office, or via internet and phone). One-way ANOVA tests were conducted to compare the effect of the independent variables of the respondents' characteristics with the dependent variables of forms of supervision. From these tests,

Table 4. Forms of Supervision

Form of Supervision	N	Supervisee Mean	% Supervisee participation (i.e., 2-5)	% Supervisee high participation (i.e., 5)
Individual	243	4.05	93.4	51.0
Clinical/Professional	259	3.83	91.9	40.5
Internal	252	3.71	86.5	40.9
Peer	248	3.32	82.3	25.4
Managerial/ Administrative	233	2.79	68.2	20.6
External	240	2.56	46.7	28.3
Team	236	2.45	59.3	10.6
Group	229	2.21	50.7	8.3
Cultural	233	2.10	54.1	8.2
Student or Fieldwork placement	228	2.05	41.7	10.1
Cross-disciplinary/ Interprofessional	224	1.72	31.2	6.7
Other	17	2.59	52.9	23.5

*Level of participation ranged from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*high*)

significant mean differences were found in relation to gender, ethnicity, experience, and recognised qualification. The gender difference concerned participation in individual supervision ($F (3, 239) = 3.918, p<.01$), with females (*M* = 4.15, *SD* = 1.189, *n* = 203) having a higher mean than males (*M* = 3.4, *SD* = 1.397, *n* = 35). The effect of this difference was small ($\eta2 = .047$). It is possible that this difference, given its small effect size, may be derived from the differences in sample sizes between the female and male respondents.

The significant ethnicity differences concerned cultural supervision and group supervision. For cultural supervision ($F (4, 228) = 6.088, p<.001$), Pacific peoples (*M* = 3.16, *SD* = 1.642, *n* = 19) had a higher mean than New Zealand (NZ) European/Pākehā (*M* =1.81, *SD* = 1.072, *n* = 124) with the effect size being medium ($\eta2 =.096$). A similar difference was found for group supervision ($F (4, 224) = 3.575, p<.01$) with Pacific peoples (*M* = 3.21, *SD* = 1.273, *n* = 19) having a higher mean than NZ European/Pākehā (*M* = 1.99, *SD* = 1.311, *n* = 126) with a medium effect size ($\eta2 = .06$). The significant differences between Pacific peoples and NZ European/Pākehā for both forms of supervision are not surprising and reflect the development of models of cultural supervision for Pacific peoples (Autagavaia, 2001; Su'a Hawkins & Mafile'o, 2004) as well as the development of Pacific social work and social services in Aotearoa New Zealand (Dalhousie, 2010).

The differences regarding experience in social work concerned participation in internal supervision ($F (6, 242) = 3.472, p<.001$), where respondents with 1-5 years' experience (*M* = 4.36, *SD* = .78, *n* = 12) had significant higher means for participation in internal supervision than respondents with 16–20 years (*M* = 3.32, *SD* = 1.572, *n* = 28) and 26–30 years' experience (*M* = 2.96, *SD* = 1.644, *n* = 19). These differences had a medium effect size ($\eta2 = .079$) and indicate that beginning practitioners have, on average, a higher participation in internal supervision than their more experienced colleagues.

The difference pertaining to recognized qualification concerned participation in managerial/administrative supervision ($F (5, 226) = 3.051, p<.01$) with those who were registered under section 13 of the Social Workers Registration Act (2003) on the basis of prior social work experience (*M* = 4.57, *SD* = .787, *n* = 6), having a higher mean than those with diplomas (*M* = 2.9, *SD* = 1.524, *n* = 66), bachelor's degrees (*M* = 2.64, *SD* = 1.502, *n* = 96), postgraduate diplomas (*M* = 3.1, *SD* = 1.729, *n* = 31) and master's degrees (*M* = 2.57, *SD* = 1.417, *n* = 46). The effect size of these differences was small ($\eta2 = .049$) and it may be plausible that this result is due to the small sample size within the section 13 group. Nonetheless, the section 13 group's participation in supervision may warrant further research to ascertain if there are any differences in their participation from those who are formally qualified and had completed supervised placements.

Overall emphasis of supervision

The respondents rated the overall emphasis of their supervision on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*), as it concerned the extent to which their supervision involved the management of their work, their practice with clients, their well-being and development as a worker, and their workplace environment or another aspect which they were to specify. The mean responses ranged from 3.89 to 3.36, with the management of their work (*M* = 3.89, *n* = 273) and practice with clients (*M* = 3.88, *n* = 274), being the most highly rated. The supervisee's well-being and development as a worker (*M* = 3.65, *n* = 275) and their environment of their workplace (*M* = 3.36, *n* = 274) with slightly lower means had slightly less overall emphasis with the respondents' supervision. 'Other' (*M* = 3.57, *n* = 30) consisted of items concerned with supervision and management of other colleagues (e.g., supervision of other social workers, management of staff), professional development, cultural matters (e.g., cultural well-being and culture and religion), macro

issues (policy development and impact on clients) and personal matters (e.g., self-care, and home personal matters). No significant mean differences were identified in regard to the respondent characteristics.

Logistics involved

Several questions were concerned with the logistics involved in supervision, including the number of supervisors with whom they currently had a supervision relationship, the type of supervision agreements or contracts, the frequency of supervision contact and the average length of supervision sessions. Just under half of 275 respondents (49.8%, *n* = 137) had one supervisor, while 49.5% (*n* = 136) had more than one supervisor among these the largest group was the third of respondents (33.5%, *n* = 92) who had two supervisors. Two respondents (0.7%) who stated 'other', did not have a supervisor. Both were fully registered. To ascertain the average number of supervisors, the median was calculated and found to be two.

The respondents were asked to indicate the type of agreement or contract they currently had in place. Most respondents (90%, *n* = 250) had a supervision agreement of some kind. The majority (73.6%, *n* = 204) had written agreements, 10.8% (*n* = 30) had oral agreements. Some respondents who had more than one supervisor indicated that they had more than one kind of agreement with 5.8% (*n* = 16) having both oral and written agreements and two respondents had either no agreement or a written agreement. Another two respondents reported their agreements as 'other' but did not specify this and 8.3% (*n* = 23) reported none. The 23 respondents who did not have an agreement were fully registered.

Questions about the average frequency of the respondents' supervision contact revealed that the majority (56.2%, *n* = 155) had monthly contact. Over a fifth of respondents (22.8%, *n* = 63) had fortnightly supervision. Overall, 88.4% (*n* = 243) had supervision at least monthly or more. Other which was 11.6% (*n* = 32) included a range of experiences related to infrequent supervision which included from six-weekly and bimonthly, to very infrequently and rarely having supervision. Amongst this group of 32 respondents, all but one were fully registered, with one being provisional registered.

For most respondents (93.2 %, *n* = 258) the average length of their supervision sessions supervision sessions was between 30 and 89 minutes. Of these 49.8% (*n* = 138) were between 30 and 59 minutes and 43% (*n* = 119) were between 60 and 89 minutes, with one other who noted that length within this period depended on the agenda. Among the remaining 7.2% (*n* = 20), 5.4% (*n* = 15) had sessions that were between 90 and 120 minutes, 1.1% (*n* = 3) had sessions that were between 0 and 30 minutes in length.

Types of supervision contact

The respondents indicated on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*) their experience of a range of types of supervision contact. The means ranged from 3.68 for checking in concerning work plans and activity to 1.96 for formal group sessions (see Table 5). There were significant mean differences found in regard to ethnic groups and in regard to sexual orientation. The ethnic identity differences were for observation ($F (4, 260) = 4.879$, $p = .001$) and formal group sessions ($F (4, 260) = 6.252$, $p<.001$) in both cases Māori had a higher mean ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.358$, $n = 50$; $M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.398$, $n = 50$) than NZ European/Pākehā ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.141$, $n = 148$; $M = 1.7$, $SD = 1.186$, $n = 148$). The differences were medium for both observation and formal group sessions with the effect sizes being, $\eta 2 = .07$ and $\eta 2 = .088$ respectively. This result suggests that Māori respondents are observed more and participate in more formal group supervision sessions than NZ European/Pākehā and appears to be an area for further research regarding why this is so. The significant mean difference related to sexual orientation involved the item checking in concerning

*Table 5. Types of Supervision Contact: Frequency of Experience**

Type of supervision contact	Supervisee Mean N	Supervisee Std. Deviation
Checking in concerning work plans and activity	3.68 272	1.088
Case consultations	3.67 272	1.111
Formal individual meetings and sessions	3.56 270	1.291
Ad hoc informal open door consultations	3.55 266	1.288
Reviews/debriefings of specific work or situations	3.26 265	1.175
Co-working	2.59 269	1.308
Formal team sessions	2.14 264	1.342
Observations (either live or recorded)	2.09 265	1.292
Formal group sessions	1.96 265	1.311
Other	2.85 13	1.772

*Frequency ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

*Table 6. Supervision Climate Statements: Level of Agreement**

Climate Statements	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
I can safely discuss ethical issues in supervision	276	4.26	1.071
My supervision is always open and honest	277	4.16	1.072
The power dynamics are well managed	277	4.14	1.157
The relationship with my supervisor is constructive	276	4.10	1.087
I trust my supervisor	278	4.08	1.164
I can safely share my emotions in supervision	277	3.96	1.245
My supervisor has more expertise in supervision than me	275	3.78	1.347
My supervisor has more expertise in practice than me	277	3.62	1.363
I have a choice of supervisor	276	3.04	1.705

*Level of agreement ranged from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

work plans and activity ($F (2, 244) = 4.200$, $p = .016$) with participants who identified as heterosexual ($M = 3.76$, $SD = 1.1$, $n = 215$) having a significantly higher mean than those who identified as same-sex ($M = 3.08$, $SD = 1.139$, $n = 24$). The differences in the mean scores was small ($\eta 2 = .033$). This appears to indicate that checking in occurs, on average, more frequently amongst heterosexual respondents than their same-sex attracted colleagues. This result needs to be considered with caution due to the large differences in sample sizes between the two groups. Nonetheless, it does raise a question for further research regarding the influence sexual orientation differences have in supervision.

Views concerning supervision climate

The respondents rated their level of agreement with nine statements concerning their supervision climate. The climate statements were concerned with the supervisees' views regarding how permissive and supportive their supervision was relative to safety, trust, choice, and relational and power dynamics. The results detailed in Table 6 indicate that, on average, supervision was viewed as being positive, constructive and safe.

There were significant mean differences according to experience and type of registration. The differences for experience concerned supervisory expertise in both practice and supervision. For expertise in practice ($F (6, 266) = 7.951$, $p < .001$) those with 1–5 years' experience ($M = 4.58$, $SD = .72$, $n = 31$) had higher means than all other groups except 6–10 years (i.e., 11–15 ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.385$, $n = 61$), 16–20 ($M = 3.32$, $SD = 1.427$, $n = 44$), 21–25 ($M = 3.26$, $SD = 1.389$, $n = 38$), 26–30 ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.216$, $n = 32$) and >31 years ($M = 3.06$, $SD = 1.589$, $n = 18$). The differences in the mean scores was large ($\eta 2 = .152$). The results for expertise in supervision ($F(6, 265) = 6.912$, $p < .001$) were similar with 1–5 years ($M = 4.65$, $SD = .839$, $n = 31$) having significantly higher means than all other

groups (i.e., 6–10 (M = 4.3, SD = 1.01, n = 49), 11–15 (M = 3.89, SD = 1.17, n = 61), 16–20 (M = 3.26, SD = 1.399, n = 43), 21–25 (M = 3.66, SD = 1.438, n = 38), 26–30 (M = 3.25, SD = 1.437, n = 32), >31 years (M = 3.17, SD = 1.543, n = 18)). The differences in the mean scores was medium (η2 = .135). The mean differences reveal that those with less than five years' experience are more likely, on average, to acknowledge their supervisors' expertise both in practice and supervision than those with greater experience. The mean differences for type of registration concerned having a choice of supervisor and expertise in supervision. For choice of supervisor (F (2, 272) = 4.058, p = .018), those with full registration (M = 3.09, SD = 1.711, n = 262) had a higher mean than those who were provisionally (M = 1.91, SD = .944, n = 11) and temporarily registered (M = 1, SD = 0, n = 2). The effect of this difference was small (η2 = .029). For expertise in supervision (F (2, 271) = 3.546, p = .03) those with provisional registration (M = 4.82, SD = .405, n = 11) had a higher mean than those with full registration (M = 3.73, SD = 1.36, n = 261). The effect of this difference was also small (η2 = .026). These differences which show that provisionally registered social workers have less choice of supervisor and perceive their supervisors have more expertise in supervision than them, were expected. That said, this finding ought to be viewed with caution due to small effect size and the small sample of those who were provisionally and temporarily registered—further research in relation to the differences between these groups experiences is advisable.

Supervision focus, methods and processes

Turning to the focus of supervision (Table 7), it is evident that the primary focus was safe and ethical practice and that the area focused on the least was the supervisee's learning and development.

*Table 7. Focus of Supervision: Level of Agreement**

Statement: **We focus on**	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
… safe and ethical practice	274	4.04	.977
…client's issues	274	3.94	.983
…the supervisee's needs	276	3.78	1.063
…agency requirements	276	3.73	1.010
…the supervisee's learning and development	277	3.61	1.083

*Level of agreement measured as for Table 4 above.

*Table 8. Supervision Methods and Processes: Level of Agreement**

Statement	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Our supervision is anti-oppressive	274	3.91	1.070
Our supervision is strength-based	276	3.89	1.065
Our supervision is outcome focused	275	3.77	.983
Our supervision uses a problem solving process	275	3.76	2.578
In supervision we have a shared agenda	276	3.75	1.068
Our supervision is task focused	275	3.72	.966
In supervision we reflect on the client-worker interactions	273	3.62	1.088
In supervision we link theory and practice	274	3.17	1.218

*Level of agreement measured as for Table 4 above.

Moving on to the methods and processes occurring in supervision (Table 8), the means across the eight statements ranged from 3.91 for our supervision is that anti-oppressive to 3.17 for the statement concerned with linking theory and practice. There were significant differences for ethnic groups and recognised qualification. The differences between ethnic groups were in relation to the statements concerning a supervision being task focused (F (4,270) = 3.120, p = .016) and having a shared agenda (F (4, 271) = 3.174, p = .014). For supervision being task focused, Pacific people (*M* = 4.2, *SD* = .768, *n* = 20) had a higher mean than NZ European/Pākehā (*M* = 3.59, *SD* = .935, *n* = 153). The effect of this difference was small (η2 = .044). The differences pertaining having a shared agenda were that 'other' ethnic groups (*M* = 4.21, *SD* = .834, *n* = 38) had a higher mean New Zealand European/Pākehā (*M* = 3.63, *SD* = 1.08, *n* = 153). The differences were also small (η2 = .045). These differences need to be viewed with caution due to the small effect sizes and the differences in sample size between groups. Nonetheless, the results do raise the questions for further research regarding ethnic differences in the methods and processes of supervision.

The significant difference between recognised qualification groups (F (5, 269) = 2.447, p = .034) also concern having a shared agenda. In this case that those with Section 13 (*M* = 4.86, *SD* = .378, *n* = 7) had a higher mean than those who had a diploma (*M* = 3.54, *SD* = 1.205, *n* = 71), bachelors (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = .941, *n* =106), postgraduate diploma (*M* = 3.83, *SD* = .923, *n* = 35) and masters (*M* = 3.69, *SD* = 1.122, *n* = 49) qualifications. The differences in the mean scores was small (η2 = .043). As indicated previously, this result needs to be considered with caution due to the small effect size and the small sample size of section 13 respondents.

Use of ideas from supervision approaches and models

The respondents rated on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*) their supervisor's use of aspects or ideas from a range of supervision models/approaches. The results are detailed in Table 9. The means

Table 9. Use of Aspects/ideas from Supervision Approaches and Models*

Approaches/Models	N	Supervisee Mean	% Supervisee Used to some extent (i.e. 2-5)	% Supervisee A/A (i.e. 5)
Strength-based	268	3.97	95.9	35.8
Solution-Focused	271	3.92	97.4	31.0
Reflective	271	3.90	95.9	36.2
Task-Centred	270	3.80	96.3	27.4
Adult learning	262	3.24	86.6	19.8
Eclectic	260	3.22	83.8	15.4
Narrative	262	3.05	82.8	15.3
Cultural	264	2.55	73.5	11
Feminist	258	2.29	64.3	6.2
Kaupapa Māori	262	2.12	57.3	5.7
Pasifika-based	258	1.53	33.3	2.3
Other	19	3.11	68.7	21.1

* Use ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

ranged from 3.97 for 'Strength-based' to 1.53 for 'Pasifika-based'. There were very small differences in mean between the four most common approaches (i.e., strength-based, solution focused, reflective and task-centred). Apart from reflective, the other three most commonly experienced approaches were drawn from social work practice models. The items specified under 'other' included several practice approaches, namely, Dialectical behaviour Therapy, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy/mindfulness, Person-centred, Ngā Takepu, Analytical, Existential, Systems focused (Family Therapy) and medical models.

There were significant mean differences for ethnicity. These differences concerned the use of *Kaupapa* Māori and Pasifika approaches to supervision. The differences in the use of *Kaupapa* Māori (F (4, 257) = 6.074, $p < .001$) were that Māori (M = 2.65, SD = 1.508, n = 51) had a higher mean than NZ European/Pākehā (M = 1.84, SD = 1.01, n = 146). This difference which had a medium effect size ($\eta 2$ = .086) was expected and mirrored the result from the 2004 survey (O'Donoghue, 2010). The differences in the use of Pasifika-based approaches (F (4, 253) = 11.384, $p<.001$) were that Pacific peoples (M = 2.74, SD = 1.522, n = 19) had higher a mean than both Māori (M = 1.33, SD = .689, n = 49) and NZ European/Pākehā (M = 1.41, SD =.742, n = 144). These differences had a large effect size ($\eta 2$ = .153). Overall, these differences suggest that the Māori and Pacific supervisees, on average, had more experience of their respective culturally relevant approaches or models than NZ European/Pākehā, which is to be expected.

Features and content of supervision sessions

Using a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*), the respondents indicated the extent to which a range of features (Table 10) occurred in their supervision sessions.

The means ranged from 4.07 for discussion to 1.41 for karakia (spiritual incantation or prayer). Most of the means were three or higher with only evaluation and karakia being the only aspects with means below three. There were significant differences

Table 10. Occurrence of Aspects of Sessions*

Aspect of sessions	N	Supervisee Mean	Supervisee Std. Deviation
Discussion of item(s)	275	4.07	.974
Action Planning	275	3.86	1.009
Decision-making	272	3.79	.954
Checking- in	274	3.71	1.156
Preparation	270	3.59	1.110
Summarisation and review	274	3.48	1.244
Agenda setting	273	3.42	1.186
Prioritisation of items	273	3.37	1.266
Closure	274	3.25	1.416
Evaluation	273	2.99	1.321
Karakia (Spiritual Incantation or prayer)	263	1.41	1.011

*Occurrence ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

for ethnicity and experience. For ethnicity, the difference concerned the occurrence of karakia (F (4, 258) = 9.492, p<.001) with Māori (*M* = 2, *SD* = 1.471, *n* = 50) having a higher mean than NZ European/Pākehā (*M*=1.2, *SD* =.708, n=147) Indian (*M*=1.08, *SD*=.289, n=12) and 'other' (*M* = 1.23, *SD* = .77, *n* = 35). The effect size was medium (η2 = .128). This difference was expected since there was a similar finding concerning of occurrence of karakia the in 2004 survey (O'Donoghue, 2010). The difference related to experience was for prioritisation of items (F (6, 262) = 3.222, p = .005) with those with 6–10 years (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = 1.155, *n* = 49) having a higher mean than 16–20 years (*M* = 2.79, *SD* = 1.264, *n* = 43). The effect size of these differences was medium (η2 = .069). This was an unexpected finding which raises question for further research regarding whether there are differences between supervisees' experience and the occurrence of prioritising items in their sessions.

The respondents indicated (on a 5-point scale, where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*) how frequently a range of items were discussed in their supervision sessions (Table 11). The means for ranged from 4.26 for complex and challenging cases to 2.58 for the supervision relationship. The other commonly discussed items which scored 3 or more on the scale related to the supervisee's concerns, caseload, workload, ethics, successes, their team, boundaries and stress. The 'other' items specified generally aligned with those listed with a couple of exceptions being 'depends', 'annual leave' and 'my role as a supervisor'. The only significant mean difference involved sexual orientation and performance management (F (2, 247) = 3.854, p = .022) which was higher mean among bisexual respondents (*M* = 3.75, *SD* = .886, *n* = 8) than for same-sex (*M* = 2.44, *SD* = .1.193, *n* = 25) and heterosexual (*M* = 2.74, *SD* = 1.167, *n* = 217). The effect of these differences was small (η2 = .03). This finding

Table 11. Items that are Commonly Discussed in Supervision Sessions

Items	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Complex or challenging cases	274	4.26	.939
Supervisee's concern or matters	273	3.83	1.075
Caseload review	274	3.64	1.200
Workload	275	3.63	1.061
Professional Development	275	3.55	1.124
Ethical issues	273	3.50	1.088
Success Stories	274	3.47	1.110
Team issues	275	3.32	1.071
Boundaries	266	3.15	1.062
Stress	273	3.14	1.141
Problems with Management	274	2.93	1.162
Problems with the Organisation	274	2.93	1.111
Supervisor's concerns or matters	274	2.89	1.116
Personal issues	273	2.89	1.175
Problems with colleagues	272	2.88	1.117
Cultural matters	270	2.79	1.224
Performance Management	274	2.75	1.189
The supervision relationship	270	2.58	1.228
Other	19	3.42	1.610

*Frequency ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

was surprising and is to be considered with caution due to the small effect size and small sample of respondents (*n* = 8) who identified as bisexual.

Overall satisfaction and overall evaluation

The respondents rated on a scale (where 1= *not at all* and 5 = *completely satisfied*) the number that best described their overall satisfaction as supervisees. The mean from 278 respondents was 3.73 (*SD* = 1.006). Over two-thirds (66.9%) were very satisfied or completely satisfied (rating 4 and 5 on the scale) with their supervision as a supervisee. When the results for 1 and 2 on the scale were combined 12.2% were not at all satisfied and less than satisfied. There were 20.9% who were satisfied or rated it as 3 on the scale. The respondents also rated their overall evaluation of the supervision they participated in as supervisees on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *poor* and 5 = *excellent*). Just under two-thirds of 275 respondents (64.4%) evaluated their supervision as excellent or close to excellent. Those who evaluated their supervision either as poor or close to poor (i.e., 1 and 2 on the scale) were 12.4%. Whereas 23.3% rated their supervision as good or 3 on the scale. The mean of 3.7 (*SD* = .999) is close to very good, but lower than the mean of 4.065 from the 2004 survey. From this previous survey, the percentage of those who were poor or close to poor was 4.5% and those who were excellent or close to excellent was 74.6% (O'Donoghue, 2010). The difference between the two survey results are that those who rated supervision as poor, or close to poor, were higher in the current survey by 7.9%, whereas those who rated it as excellent, or close to excellent, were lower by 10.2%. In other words, in this survey there are more who reported poor supervision and less who rate excellent supervision.

The reasons for these differences may be due to differences between the samples of ANZASW members and Registered Social Workers. Alternatively, the differences may be due to different expectations of supervision by the present-day respondents in comparison to those who responded in the previous survey.

Summary and discussion

The baseline established in regard to registered social workers supervision from the results is that they participated in range of forms of supervision over the 12 months prior to the survey, with individual, clinical/professional, internal and peer forms of supervision being the most common. The overall emphasis of their supervision was primarily on the management of their work and their practice with clients, with their well-being and development as workers and the environment of their workplace having slightly less overall emphasis. Almost half had one supervisor, while the other half had two or more supervisors. This indicates a splitting of the organisational and professional aspects of supervision amongst their supervisors. Two registered social workers did not have supervisors, and did not comply with the SWRB expectations or the Code of Conduct regarding participating in supervision (SWRB, 2015a, 2016). Most had a supervision agreement, with the majority having written agreements. There were 23 registered social workers without a supervision agreement and 30 who had oral agreements. Arguably, these social workers' ability to comply with any request made by the SWRB for their supervision agreement when renewing their practising certificate or competency is somewhat challenged (SWRB, 2015a). The frequency of registered social workers' supervision was that most had supervision at least monthly or more often. There were however, 32 (11.6%) social workers whose supervision was infrequent and did not meet the SWRB's expectation of accessing supervision at least monthly. One of this group was a provisionally registered social worker and undertaking their 2000 hours of supervised practice. The average length of registered social workers' supervision sessions was between 30 and 89 minutes and the most common types of contact that they were involved concerned checking in on their plans and activity, case consultations, reviews

of specific situations through formal meetings and ad hoc, open-door consultations.

The climate within which supervision was conducted was safe for supervisees to discuss ethical issues and share emotions, due to open, honest, trusting and constructive relationships, in which the power dynamics were well managed. The focus of supervision was on safe and ethical practice, clients' issues, their own needs, their agency's requirements and learning and development. The methods and processes registered social workers experienced in supervision were anti-oppressive, strength-based, outcome focused, used a problem-solving process, a shared agenda and were task focused. They experienced the linking of theory and practice to a lesser extent than the other methods and processes.

The ideas from supervision models and approaches that registered social workers experienced as used by their supervisors were mainly from practice and supervision models and approaches, namely, strength-based (Thomas & Davis, 2005), solution focused (Thomas, 2013), reflective (Davys & Beddoe, 2010), and task-centred (Caspi & Reid, 2002). It was notable that culturally based (Cultural (Su'a-Hawkins & Mafile'o, 2004), Kaupapa Māori (Eruera, 2012), Pasifika-based (Autagavaia, 2001) and Feminist (Simmons, 2001) approaches and models were the least experienced by registered social workers. The low-level experience of the culturally based approaches raises questions concerning the extent to which supervision meets the SWRB's expectation that it is culturally responsive and cognisant of the cultural worldview of the supervisees and the clients discussed in supervision (SWRB, 2015a, 2016).

For registered social workers as a group, the items that occurred most often in their sessions were discussion, action planning, decision-making, checking in, preparation, prioritisation and closure. Evaluation within sessions occurred to a lesser extent and this was not surprising as this paralleled the 2004 survey findings (O'Donoghue, 2010). When analysed by frequency, 84.2% of 273 registered social workers' evaluations occurred within their sessions to some extent, and, for 39.2%, this occurred a lot or almost always. This finding differed from that of Davys, May, Burns, & O'Connell (2017) who reported that 27% of the supervisees in their study reported evaluating on a session-by-session basis. The reasons for this difference may be due to the differences in the samples and how the questions were framed.

The most commonly discussed item in supervision was complex and challenging cases, this was followed by matters pertaining to supervisees, their practice with clients and within their team. Cultural matters, with a mean of 2.79, was the third lowest and raises questions concerning the low presence of a cultural lens in supervision (Hair & O'Donoghue, 2009). Overall, the majority of registered social workers were satisfied with their supervision and evaluated it positively. It is nonetheless of concern that just over 12% (n = 34) of these registered social workers were dissatisfied and evaluated their supervision as poor or close to poor. It is also of concern that this percentage is higher than that in the 2004 survey. One possible explanation may be found in the differences in the samples. The results also identified significant mean differences in relation to ethnicity, experience as a social worker, recognised qualification, sexual orientation, type of registration and gender. These differences are summarised in relation to the respective independent variable in Table 12.

It is notable that the largest group of differences concerns ethnicity and to some extent these results reinforce the finding from O'Donoghue (2010) concerning how the indigenous, bicultural and multicultural discourses influence the Aotearoa New Zealand social work supervision context. In addition, they are further evidence of the importance of having culture in the forefront of supervision practice and the need for further work in regard to decolonising supervision (Ruwhiu, 2019; Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004).

Table 12. Significant Mean Differences Summary by Variables

Variables	ANOVA	Mean Differences p<.05	SD	Effect size Eta squared
Ethnicity • *Cultural supervision*	(F (4, 228) = 6.088, p<.001)	Pacific Peoples 3.16 NZ Euro/*Pākehā* 1.81	Pacific Peoples 1.642 NZ Euro/*Pākehā* 1.072	Medium .096
• *Group supervision*	(F (4, 224)= 3.575, p<.01)	Pacific peoples 3.21 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.99	Pacific peoples 1.273 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.311	Medium .06
• *Observation*	(F (4, 260) =4.879, p=.001)	Māori 2.46 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.82	Māori 1.358 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.141	Medium .07
• *Formal group sessions*	F (4, 260)= 6.252, p<.001)	Māori 2.38 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.7	Māori 1.398 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.186	Medium .088
• *Our supervision is task focused*	F (4, 270) = 3.120, p=.016)	Pacific peoples 4.2 NZ Euro/Pākehā 3.59	Pacific peoples .768 NZ Euro/Pākehā .935	Small .044
• *In supervision we have a shared agenda*	(F (4, 271) = 3.174, p=.014)	Other ethnic groups 4.21 NZ Euro/Pākehā 3.63	Other ethnic groups .834 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.08	Small .045
• *Kaupapa Māori*	(F (4, 257)= 6.074, p< .001)	Māori 2.65 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.84	Māori 1.508 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.01	Medium .086
• *Pasifika-based*	(F (4, 253) = 11.384, p<.001)	Pacific peoples 2.74 Māori 1.33 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.41	Pacific peoples 1.522 Māori .689 NZ Euro/Pākehā .742	Large .153
• *Karakia*	(F (4, 258) = 9.492, p<.001)	Māori 2 NZ Euro/Pākehā 1.2 Indian 1.08 Other 1.23	Māori 1.471 NZ Euro/Pākehā .708 Indian .289 Other .77	Medium .128

Variables	ANOVA	Mean Differences p<.05	SD	Effect size Eta squared
Experience in social work • *Internal supervision*	(F (6, 242) = 3.472, p<.001)	1-5 years 4.36 16-20 years 3.32 26-30 years 2.96	1-5 years .78 16-20 years 1.572 26-30 years 1.644	Medium .079
• *My supervisor has more expertise in practice than me*	(F (6, 266) =7.951, p<.001)	1-5 years 4.58 11-15 years 3.69 16-20 years 3.32 21-25 years 3.26 26-30 years 2.94 >31 years 3.06	1-5 years .72 11-15 years 1.385 16-20 years 1.427 21-25 years 1.389 26 -30 years 1.216 >31 years 1.589	Large .152
• *My supervisor has more expertise in supervision than me*	(F(6, 265) = 6.912, p<.001)	1-5 years 4.65 6-10 years 4.3 11-15 years 3.89 16-20 years 3.26 21-25 years 3.66 26-30 years 3.25 >31 years 3.17	1-5 years .839 6-10 years 1.01 11-15 years 1.17 16-20 years 1.399 21-25 years 1.438 26-30 years 1.437 >31 years 1.543	Medium .135
• *Prioritisation of items*	(F (6, 262) = 3.222, p=.005)	6-10 years 3.71 16-20 years 2.79	6-10 years 1.155 16-20 years 1.264	Medium .069
Recognised qualification • *Managerial/ administrative supervision*	(F (5, 226) = 3.051, p<.01)	Section 13 4.57 Diploma 2.9 Bachelors 2.64 PG Diploma 3.1 Masters 2.57	Section 13 .787 Diploma 1.524 Bachelors 1.502 PG Diploma 1.729 Masters 1.417	Small .049

Variables	ANOVA	Mean Differences p<.05	SD	Effect size Eta squared
Shared Agenda	(F (5, 269) = 2.447, p=.034)	Section 13 4.86 Diploma 3.54 Bachelors 3.83 PG Diploma 3.83 Masters 3.69	Section 13 .378 Diploma 1.205 Bachelors .941 PG Diploma .923 Masters 1.122	Small .043
Sexual Orientation • *Checking in concerning work plans and activity*	(F (2, 244) = 4.200, p = .016)	Heterosexual 3.76 Same-sex 3.08	Heterosexual 1.1 Same-sex 1.139	Small .033
• *Performance management*	(F (2, 247) = 3.854, p = .022)	Bisexual 3.75 Same-sex 2.44 Heterosexual 2.74	Bisexual .886 Same-sex 1.193 Heterosexual 1.167	Small .03
Type of Registration • *I have a choice of supervisor*	(F (2, 272) = 4.058,p = .018)	Full 3.09 Provisional 1.91 Temporary 1	Full 1.711 Provisional .944 Temporary 0	Small .029
• *My supervisor has more expertise in supervision than me*	(F (2, 271) = 3.546, p = .03)	Provisional 4.82 Full 3.73	Provisional .405 Full 1.36	Small .026
Gender • *Individual supervision*	(F (3, 239) = 3.918, p<.01)	Female 4.15 Male 3.4	Female 1.189 Male 1.397	Small .047

The mean differences in regard to experience were, for the most part, expected and also highlight the need for further research regarding how supervision changes relative to a social workers' years of practice experience. Likewise, the differences concerning recognised qualification, sexual orientation, type of registration and gender, whilst small in effect, nonetheless identify key areas for further research regarding social work supervision in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally. It is noted that previous studies were undertaken internationally in the 1980s and 1990s concerning gender within social work supervision (Chernesky, 1986; Hipp & Munson, 1995; Matheson, 1999). Since then the construction of gender has evolved over the past 20 years and further research would be timely.

Conclusion

This article has presented some initial findings of a national survey of registered social workers in Aotearoa New Zealand with the aim of establishing a baseline in regard to their supervision and to compare and contrast their supervision with SWRB policy and guidelines (SWRB, 2015a, 2016). The results reveal that, overall, most registered social workers' supervision is in accordance with the Board's expectations and code. Registered social workers are also, on average, mostly satisfied and evaluate their supervision as very good. That said, there needs to be further work undertaken to ensure all registered social workers access appropriate professional supervision. This means improving the situation for those who are dissatisfied and experience poor supervision, so that they have better supervision. The SWRB also needs to ensure that all registered social workers have monthly supervision and have a written agreement or contract in place.

The findings and discussion have also raised questions concerning the cultural responsiveness of supervision to the cultural worldview of supervisees and clients, as well as the need to decolonise supervision and put culture at the forefront not as an add-on (Ruwhiu, 2019; Walsh-Tapiata & Webster, 2004). Finally, the study has raised a number of further research areas regarding how diversity and differences are experienced among registered social workers in supervision. It is hoped that the ideas for further research exploring social differences such as gender, culture, sexual orientation, experience, qualifications, and registration status will be followed up both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

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Courageous conversations in supervision

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Courageous conversations, commonly identified as conversations which are associated with some form of emotion, are features of many social workers' daily routine. In supervision, such conversations are typically required to address issues of supervisee professional competence, ethical issues or the supervision relationship and/or process. These conversations, which are challenging, are at times avoided and, at other times, may be poorly handled.

APPROACH: Following identification of the obstacles which may impede addressing challenging issues in professional practice, this article focuses the supervisor's role in courageous conversations. The importance of building a supervision environment which can support robust conversations is highlighted. Here the contracting process, where the expectations of supervision are negotiated and the power inherent in the supervision relationship can be identified, is considered foundational. The skills and attributes needed by the supervisor to manage these difficult encounters are explored and three kinds of interventions are identified as helpful: relational, reflective, and confrontational. A framework for a courageous conversation is provided which highlights the need for clarity about the motivation, purpose and desired goals. Finally, a structure for the proposed conversations is presented.

IMPLICATIONS: With an understanding of the dynamics and of the skills required, supervisors can better prepare themselves for courageous conversations. When supervision relationships are based on negotiation and shared understanding about power, difference and expectations, hard issues can be raised and honestly confronted and at the same time the integrity of all involved can be maintained.

KEYWORDS: Supervision; courageous conversations; professional expectations; preparation; interventions

> "The art of conversation is the ability to create a dialogue that others will willingly join." (Whyte, 2004, p. 20)

In this definition, where a conversation can be considered as an exchange of ideas or views between two (or more) people, Whyte (2004) captures both the essence and the challenge of courageous conversations. To engage in such an exchange, both parties need to be open to hearing and considering the positions and views of the other. When the topic at hand is challenging, when it concerns conflicting views and values and when there is an element of power in the relationship, it can be hard for either party to remain listening and open to the dialogue. Past experiences of poor and unsafe communication, lack of confidence that change is possible and lack of skills in this sort of exchange are all reasons why challenging and courageous conversations are avoided or go wrong. In supervision, attention to the establishment of a relationship where the expectations, needs and the parameters of authority are clear and negotiated can lay the foundation

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for constructive courageous conversations. In addition, it can be helpful for the supervisor to review his or her approach to these conversations. What skills does he or she bring, how will they be utilised and what is the overall strategy to address these challenging situations?

Obstacles to courageous conversations in professional practice

Courageous conversations occur at all stages of professional and career development and attitudes and confidence for these conversations may have been shaped by early experiences. When anti-discrimination and anti-oppression are the foundational premises of practice (Brown & Bourne, 1996; Falender & Shafranske, 2014; Hair, 2014; Hawkins & Shohet, 2012; Tsui, O'Donoghue, & Ng, 2014), experiences of courageous exchanges may begin in the educational setting. In these early conversations the values and practice ethics of the profession may well challenge and come into conflict with the personal values and beliefs of students. At the same time, the power and authority of the academic staff or supervisor, derived from their role and expertise, can be inhibiting factors which potentially silence students. Reporting on a review of conversations about "isms, power, privilege, and oppression", Werman, Adlparvar, Horowitz, and Hasegawa (2019, p. 251) record the perceptions of both social work students and faculty members from a graduate school of social work in New York. Despite the faculty's expressed high level of confidence in their ability to facilitate these sensitive conversations, the students in this study reported "feeling unsafe and unsupported in their classrooms and fearful about speaking up to faculty" (p. 261). The memories of such experiences may well shape the attitudes and subsequent behaviour of these students as they move into professional practice.

Following qualification, courageous conversations in the workplace often involve confronting colleagues and peers about their behaviour and the literature highlights the obstacles which can get in the way of this happening. Grenny (2009), studying relationships between healthcare professionals in the United States, identified seven particularly difficult conversation topics, aptly named the "seven zones of silence" (p. 424). These topics included: broken rules, mistakes, lack of support, incompetence, poor teamwork, disrespect and micromanagement (Grenny, 2009, pp. 242–243). Despite 75% of respondents in the study having experienced rudeness, insult and condescension, the respondents reported that it was difficult, or impossible, to confront the person responsible for the behaviour. The study found that there was less than a 7% chance of this occurring. Three key obstacles to addressing this behaviour were named as "lack of ability, belief that it is not their job and low confidence that it will do any good" (Grenny, 2009, p. 424). Failure to address any of these issues, as the study illustrates, only extended the dysfunction.

Other studies have identified obstacles to initiating courageous conversations such as fear of offending, or causing distress to, another person (Brown et al., 2011; Grant, Schofield, & Crawford, 2012), fear of being blamed or being unable to handle a possible emotional response (Lamiani et al., 2011, p. *e*57), fear of the negative effects on the relationship, and fear of compounding the problem (Grant et al., 2012). In these sorts of situations Meyer et al. (2009, p. 352) note that a typical response is to "delay, avoid, or delegate".

All of these obstacles can shape the way in which challenging situations are addressed in supervision. Quarto (2003) found that inexperienced supervisors, concerned to prove themselves as effective, were more likely to assume authoritative control rather than seek to understand the opinion of the supervisee. When faced with differences of opinion about case conceptualisation and the influence of the supervisees' own issues on their work, Bang and Goodyear (2014) report

that "supervisors dismissed supervisees' thoughts and feelings" and, in response, supervisees "experienced negative emotions and became less involved in supervision" (Bang & Goodyear, 2014, p. 372). Other unhelpful interventions "characterised by confrontational criticism, direct attribution of blame, unclear agendas, and instructive rather than interactive learning processes" have led to what has been described as "problematic supervision" (Grant et al., 2012, p. 528).

Courageous conversations in supervision

Difficult issues do arise in supervision, and need to be addressed by the supervisor. These issues typically concern one of three, often interconnected, areas: practice competence, professional boundary and ethical violations, and relationship issues (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 197). It is useful to note the alignment of these three areas with Grenny's (2009) "seven zones of silence" discussed earlier. Conflict, or fear of conflict in these conversations, is frequently an element which may evoke the "delay, avoid or delegate" response (Meyer et al., 2009).

At times the supervision conversation may be a consequence of existing conflict while, at other times, the conversation itself may challenge ideas, values or behaviour and so may provoke conflict. If the conversation is concerned with issues of ethics, competence or values, a reluctance from the supervisor to proceed with the conversation may also be a reflection of the possible impact on existing relationships as well as the consequences of such conversations on future employment. As Bang and Goodyear (2014) observe, however, in supervision it is not the conflict which is so important but rather it is the way in which the people concerned handle and respond to that conflict. When conflict is managed well and resolved, relationships deepen and strengthen; conversely when conflict is not handled well the relationships may falter and sour. Employing Nelson and Friedlander's (2001) term "non-productive conflict" for the situations where conflict is poorly handled and not resolved, Bang and Goodyear (2014) describe the distrust, self-doubt and the powerlessness which supervisees experience in these situations.

Building from the start—the supervision contract

It is well established in the supervision literature that the supervision relationship is the basis for good and effective supervision (Beinart & Clohessy, 2017; Bernard, 2006). It is therefore helpful to consider how the foundation for possible courageous conversations between a supervisor and a supervisee can be prepared at the beginning of the supervision relationship.

This relationship begins, for many supervision partnerships, through the negotiation of the supervision contract (Davys & Beddoe, 2010). A supervision contract or agreement, a requirement of many professional bodies, is included by Ellis et al. (2014) in their list of criteria for "minimally adequate clinical supervision" (p. 439). It is worth noting here the difference between a standardised formulaic supervision contract which is presented to the supervisee for signature (which can thus be checked off as a compliance measure), and a supervision contract which is negotiated and developed through discussion of the needs and expectations of both parties. In Aotearoa New Zealand the supervision policies of both the professional social work body, the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW, 2015) and the regulating body, the Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB, 2015), require supervision to be based on a negotiated, written agreement. The ANZASW policy stipulates that the contract negotiation also provides for conflict resolution. While it may appear contradictory to introduce the idea of conflict and disagreement at the beginning of a relationship, early discussion and agreement about how difference and conflict will be handled in the relationship can provide clarity and transparency which,

in turn, develops trust. "Trust" according to Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998, p. 395) "is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behaviour of another."

Three components of the contracting process provide the foundation for effective courageous supervision conversations. The first is the identification of the mandated professional behaviour expected of both the supervisor and the supervisee. The second is the negotiation of the ways in which diversity, difference and conflict will be acknowledged and addressed in any particular supervision relationship. The third is the agreement on how feedback will be given and received in the supervision relationship by both the supervisor and the supervisee.

Professional behaviour is mandated through both professional and organisational policy. Referencing this professional and organisational accountability in the supervision contract provides a definitive, non-negotiable baseline for conduct and behaviour along with reference to the mechanisms for addressing any infringements of that conduct and behaviour. Currently in Aotearoa New Zealand there is no unified regulatory or professional accountability for social workers. At the time of writing, social workers have the choice of whether to be registered with the SWRB under the Social Workers Registration Act 2003, and they have a choice as to whether to be a member of the professional body, ANZASW. Social workers at present may therefore be accountable to the professional standards and Code of Conduct of the SWRB or the Code of Ethics of the ANZASW (or both) or they may have no formal line of professional accountability. This choice will soon be removed. Following the passing into law of the Social Workers Registration Legislation Act 2019, all social workers will be required to be registered with the SWRB and will thus be accountable to the requirements of that authority.

The SWRB Code of Conduct (2018) details and provides guidance on 11 principles which provide "minimum professional standards of integrity and conduct" and is "specific about what actions are appropriate and inappropriate" (p. 2). In the accompanying guide, social workers are advised that "if confronted by professional misconduct, you have an ethical duty to report it to your manager, employer, to the SWRB, or to the appropriate authority" (SWRB, 2018, p. 23). In summary, "delay, avoidance or delegation" are not considered by the SWRB to be valid actions.

In addition to professional social work standards, social workers who are employed by an organisation or institution will be subject to the policies and protocols of their organisation or institution and any legislation which relates to their work in that context. These professional and organisational documents serve courageous conversations in a number of ways. From the very beginning of the supervision relationship, the participants are reminded that they are accountable to overarching codes of conduct which have named processes for addressing infringements of those codes, and, they are reminded that, in some situations, they have an ethical duty to take action. With this clarity, rather than arguing over personal values, the supervisor and supervisee have the freedom to discuss issues and situations from within a professional framework. "Communicating clear expectations for competence need not involve conflict. The supervisor should continually strive to maintain an attitude and spirit of collaboration and support for and with the supervisee" (Cohen-Filipic, & Flores, 2014, p. 306).

The second component addressed in the supervision contract, which builds the supervision relationship and strengthens the platform for courageous conversations, is the manner in which diversity and power between the supervision partners is addressed. This process, named by Hernández and Rankin (2008) as relational

safety, can be described as "the co-construction of a dialogical context in which [supervisees] and supervisors are able to raise questions, challenge points of view, ponder issues, confront opinions, articulate ideas, and express concerns" (p. 255).

The supervision relationship, as noted earlier, is a power relationship (Hernández & McDowell, 2010). For supervisors, positional power accompanies the role of supervisor where both professional and organisational accountability are explicit (Hair, 2014). When, as is common in social work, supervisors hold dual roles of supervisor and line manager (Beddoe, 2010), additional power, sometimes referred to as reward or coercive power (Hawkins & Shohet, 2012) is present, and this can further shift the power imbalance. Finally, the knowledge and experience of the supervisor brings expert power. In a study of power relationships in social work supervision Hair (2014) found that social work supervisees want supervisors "who are transparent about their positional power" (p. 113) and who, through a shared process of knowledge exchange and critical reflection, engage with the supervisee in the deconstruction of expert power. When both supervisee and supervisor are clear about the rules of the supervision relationship, when power, privilege, diversity and oppression are acknowledged and where there is agreement about how these can, and will, be raised, discussed, challenged and reflected on, the supervisee can be more confident about how he or she will engage.

The third component of the supervision contract which can influence courageous conversations is the manner in which feedback will be given and received by both supervisee and supervisor. "Feedback is an essential element in supervision" (Hewson & Carroll, 2016, p. 127) and effective feedback is that which occurs as a collaborative exchange between the recipient and giver of feedback (Hewson & Carroll, 2016). In preparation for feedback in supervision, the questions to consider can thus include: What does feedback mean in this context? How is it defined? Does feedback raise issues for consideration and reflection or is feedback intended as a requirement for change? How does the supervisee like to receive feedback? How can the feedback exchange (giving and receiving) be negotiated to ensure that it is heard and considered? How will the supervisor get feedback? How will they evaluate their supervision relationship and process? What could get in the way?

These three components of the contracting process: identifying the professional baseline of conduct, exploring the mechanisms for conversations of difference and power, and negotiating a collaborative process for giving and receiving feedback, firmly position supervision as a process of openness, enquiry and learning as opposed to one of evaluation and judgement. A climate has been established where trust can grow and where there are guidelines to support difficult conversations.

Supervisor attributes for effective courageous conversations in supervision

As anticipated in the discussion of the negotiation of the supervision contract, courageous conversations are likely to be more successful when they are conducted in an environment where there is trust and where there are broad agreed parameters to shape the conversation. From a survey of 128 individuals who had graduated from, or were currently enrolled in, doctoral programmes in psychology or other related programmes and who reported on the best and the worst supervisors they had experienced, Ladany, Mori, and Mehr (2013) found that effective supervision "encouraged autonomy, strengthened the supervisory relationship, and facilitated open discussion" (p. 28).

In effective supervision, the attributes of the participants, particularly the supervisor, are important. "Self-awareness, a willingness to acknowledge personal responsibility,

an openness to other perspectives, good communication skills and a professional approach to practice" have been noted (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 195). Nelson, Barnes, Evans, and Triggiano (2008) found that supervisors who were regarded as competent at managing conflict were seen to be: "open to conflict and interpersonal processing, willing to manage shortcomings, developmentally orientated, and willing to learn from mistakes. They believed in creating strong supervisory alliances, discussing evaluation early on, modelling openness to conflict and providing timely feedback" (p. 172). Respect and humility (Brown et al., 2011), the ability "to embrace uncertainty and complexity" (Browning, Meyer, Truog, & Solomon 2007, p. 909), and a willingness to seek consultation and supervision (Grant et al., 2012; Nelson et al., 2008, Veach et al., 2012) also feature in the literature as important attributes.

The courageous conversation: preparation

As in many matters of competent professional practice, self-awareness can be regarded as the first step to addressing tricky and difficult issues. Until a situation is noticed and valued, it cannot be addressed. The supervisor therefore needs to be alert to the cues and the triggers which indicate that there is possibly an issue. Henderson (2009, p. 19) notes that a feeling of having "to walk on eggshells" signals to her that there is an issue which she needs "to take courage to name" (p. 19). Bang and Goodyear (2014), when considering conflict in the supervision relationship, similarly require the supervisor to be aware of the conflict and further, believe that the power accorded to the supervisor in the supervision process "gives them greater responsibility for resolving it" (p. 354).

Preparation is important and, having identified that there is an issue, three questions can help to clarify the dimensions of this issue and shape how it can be addressed: What is the issue? What is the desired outcome for the individuals concerned? What is the desired outcome for the relationship? The following table expands these questions to help to clarify a way forward.

Table 1 *Preparing for a Challenging Conversation*

- What is the issue which needs addressing?
- Is there more than one issue?
- Why is the issue important?
- Why is it challenging for me to address this issue with this person?
- What are my feelings about this issue?
- What are my feelings about the person concerned?
- What are my feelings about me and my role in this situation?
- How might those feelings affect the conversation?
- Can I articulate the issue?
- Do I have examples of behaviour or events which illustrate the issue?
- What is the message I wish to communicate?
- What is the outcome I am seeking from this conversation?
- What is my motivation for having this conversation?

Source: Beddoe & Davys (2016, p. 197). With kind permission of Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The courageous conversation: the skills

Regardless of the issue, a conversation is a dialogue between at least two people where there is an opportunity for each to present their position and to be heard. This definition possibly best encapsulates the difference between courageous conversations, other assertive and challenging exchanges and disciplinary *telling offs*. As noted, when negotiating the supervision contract, and when considering the attributes needed by supervisors for successful courageous conversations, the emphasis is on creating a safe place for understanding and for dialogue. "To have an authentic conversation" Koenig (2013, p. 28) advises, it is necessary to be open to the views of the other person and not to impose your opinions and argument. The manner in which a supervisee is invited to this conversation may be the difference between

them perceiving it as a lecture or as an opportunity to be heard.

Grant et al. (2012), in an exploration of how experienced supervisors managed difficulties in supervision, identified four groups of interventions which were employed by the supervisors: relational, reflective, confrontational and avoidant. The first three of these comprised a hierarchy of interventions which moved from relational exchange, to reflective exploration and challenge, and finally, to confrontational interventions.

Relational interventions, Grant et al. describe as being focused on the "supervisory relationship, the supervisee relationship with the client and the supervisee relationship with self" (Grant et al., 2012, p. 532). The strategies used in these interventions included focused attention on the supervisee's issue(s), the provision of support (practical and emotional), and affirmation and constructive feedback. The supervisors were willing to acknowledge their actions and mistakes, named issues early, negotiated ways to address them and provided a model for the desired behaviour (Grant et al., 2012).

When conversations are considered to require courage, regardless of the supervisor's skill, they can be accompanied by anxiety. Anxiety can have a number of effects, one of which is that the speaker becomes rushed and listening is overtaken by the desire to talk. Frequently too, the person invited to engage in a conversation has had less time to consider the issue. Koenig (2013) recommends a pause: "Be spacious. You may have been thinking about this conversation for a long time. However, the other person may be surprised and need space to take in what you are inviting them to look at" (p. 29).

Rock (2006) provides a useful model for these occasions which he names "speaking with intent". Speaking with intent entails "being succinct, being specific and being generous" (p. 85). Being succinct requires the speaker to be clear about what he or she wants to say and to deliver the message simply and in a manner which the listener can assimilate. Being specific includes appropriate detail for the listener to understand the message. Finally, being generous ensures that the other person understands what the speaker is saying, matching language and providing examples.

The use of "I statements" by the supervisor in these conversations clarifies ownership of thoughts and experience and leaves space for the supervisee. The supervisee can be invited to share his or her story and perspective and the supervisor can listen. Listening generously can be, at these times, one of the greatest challenges for supervisors (Beddoe & Davys, 2016, p. 199).

A framework for these conversations is presented in Table 2.

Table 2: *Framework for the Conversation*

Before the conversation:

- Advise the supervisee of the need for the conversation
- Check when is a good time for that person

During the conversation:

- Be clear about what the issue is for you
- Articulate it as clearly and simply as you can
- Be specific, give examples and use 'I' statements
- If appropriate share how you are feeling about the issue and/or the conversation
- Ask the supervisee how he or she is feeling
- Identify the outcome you are wanting from the conversation
- Take responsibility for own behaviour and admit to any mistakes
- Ask for the supervisee's side of the story
- Ask open questions
- Wherever possible validate the supervisee
- Listen generously
- Clarify and summarise
- Listen some more ….
- Identify a way forward and agree to the process

Source: Beddoe & Davys (2016, p. 200). With kind permission of Jessica Kingsley Publishers

The second group of interventions, reflective interventions (Grant et al., 2012, p. 533), moves the focus of the conversation towards facilitating the supervisee to consider his or her situation in more depth. Reflection, as described by Hewson and Carroll (2016), involves "paus[ing] to notice and then consider the meaning of what you have noticed" (p. 10). Through reflective questions the supervisor takes an active, and at times, a possibly more challenging role. The supervisee's ideas, motivation, feelings and knowledge may be noticed and explored and the supervisor may offer information and conceptual frameworks to assist exploration and understanding. At the same time, Grant et al. (2012) note the need for the supervisor to be aware of, and to manage, his or her own response to the supervisee's possible defensiveness or resistance.

In this hierarchy of interventions, confrontational interventions, the third type identified by Grant et al. (2012), were used by the supervisors "when attempts to address difficulties through reflective or relational interventions were unsuccessful" (p. 534). Ranging from tentative to direct confrontation, these interventions were more often used when inappropriate behaviour and/or attitudes were the focus of the conversation. At this level of intervention, additional actions, for example referral for therapy or remedial education were sometimes included. When the behaviour or situation was of particular concern, and especially when it breached professional or organisational codes, notification of the situation to management or to appropriate professional bodies occurred. These conversations are most likely to reference those professional standards and codes identified during the drawing up of the supervision contract and to acknowledge that, in some situations, specific action steps are prescribed. For many supervisors taking this ultimate step of notifying a higher or a disciplinary authority is not easy or pleasant and this is the time when their own supervision, consultation and support are most important.

The fourth type of interventions identified by Grant et al. (2012) were avoidant interventions: "struggle on and await external intervention", "withhold" (affirmation), "withdraw, ignore or deny" (pp. 535–536). Consistent with the discussion earlier in this article, the participants in the study noted that avoidant interventions stemmed from lack of confidence, lack of skill and from fear of upsetting the supervision relationship and were typical of their early supervision practice. As the participants developed skill and competence as supervisors, these interventions were no longer used.

Conclusion

For many social workers advocating for the rights of a client is easier than advocating for one's self or standing up to colleagues and peers or addressing difficult situations with a supervisee. Courageous conversations, when well managed in supervision, however, can model competence in dealing with the more person-centred conflict which occurs between professionals. Well-managed courageous conversations can deepen relationships, develop practice and professional awareness, provide learning for all involved and, importantly, can build confidence.

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Professional supervision and professional autonomy

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Supervision is a well-established component of practice in the health and social care professions. In recent years, however, relentless changes in the nature of professional roles within these contexts have led to corresponding variations in how professional practice supervision is configured and delivered.

METHOD: This article examines how professional supervision and its future are seen by an international group of experts in social work supervision. The evolving perceptions of social work supervision's role, and the relationship to professional autonomy in the social sphere are explored with reference to the authors' earlier research.

FINDINGS: The tension between supervision as a surveillant tool of management and a practice of critical reflection is acknowledged in literature as posing a threat to one aspect of professional autonomy and agency.

IMPLICATIONS: The authors pose an alternative, theoretically grounded, approach based on the traditions of critically reflective supervision to assist the recognition and management of the balance between support and surveillance or managerial organisational dimensions. Meta-theoretical understanding of professional supervision in the frame of human agency will help both practitioners and supervisors to construct sustainable and proactive social work. Instead of despairing about the loss of autonomy, the professionals may go through significant societal and professional transformations as subjects of their own expertise and professional agency.

KEYWORDS: supervision; social work; critical reflection; managerialism; professional autonomy and agency

Through professional supervision, practitioners engage in a relationship with a supervisor enabling both a place and space to refine and develop professional identity, knowledge and skills and for reflectively examining the challenges faced in everyday practice. Supervision itself has a long history and is a well-established component of the health and social care professions. In recent years, however, relentless changes in the nature of professional roles within these contexts have led to corresponding variations in how professional practice supervision is configured and delivered (Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2009). As a contested practice, the linking of supervision and managerial surveillance in social work is not new (Beddoe, 2010); this tension is also considered in Karvinen-Niinikoski's (2004) discussion on critical reflection and supervision.

These challenges are increasingly associated with the dominance of

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New Public Management (NPM) practices and their influence on the management of social work services (Beddoe et al., 2014). Manthorpe et al. (2013, p. 3) note the presence of a kind of dyadic approach in discussions of supervision in social work, where supervision is grasped either as largely introspective (a therapeutic model) or as its antithesis, an instrumental tool for surveillance and the soft exercise of power and authority. Autonomous professionals are presented as reflective professionals with demands for reflexivity in their agency and for relational expertise. In social work they report work stress associated with feelings of losing their professional autonomy and commonly experience a sense of management intrusion into clinical decision-making (Lymbery, 1998). With the advent of new models of public management, and technologies of control such as evidence-based practice and clinical governance, managerial bureaucracies are asserting greater control of the professions than ever (Coburn, 2006). In response to these changes the expansion of supervision can be understood as a likely forum for the maintenance and development of unique professional expertise.

Tensions between professional autonomy and managerial accountability are also reflected in the changing positions of professions more broadly (Tsui & Cheung, 2004). The links between NPM and professionalism in the public service context of western post-industrial societies has been examined by Evetts (2009). Evetts was interested in clarifying to what extent a new and different type of professionalism is developing and depicts an emerging mixture of two ideal types of professions: the organisational and the occupational. The first type is manifested in a discourse of control used increasingly by managers in workplaces. The latter is based on practitioner autonomy, discretionary judgment and assessment, particularly in complex cases, and resonates with perceptions of supervision in social work settings.

Concerns about professional autonomy are widely expressed by professionals and researchers in the welfare professions. Within the field of social work this is a constant issue arguably connected to the expansion of NPM in neoliberal regimes and the reconfigurations of welfare services associated with them. For social workers in particular, anxieties about professional autonomy appear particularly salient and associated with a fear of professional freedom being constrained in the face of the controlling nature of NPM practices and attendant bureaucracy. In turn this can be experienced as an undermining of the profession's basic values. This call for professional autonomy seems relentless and imbued with a deterministic resignation. It is also suggested that processes that have become visible in sociological studies on welfare professions (for example, Evans, 2010) which acknowledge that the position of professionals is being changed within the organisational re-arrangement of welfare services are also a reality for social work professionals.

Within this climate of anxiety, the safeguarding of professional autonomy, expertise and identity (Evans & Harris, 2004) becomes a significant agenda item for professionalisation interests and projects. In this respect, for many professions supervision has been an important medium for strengthening professional identity, identifying coping strategies for personal survival and growth, facilitating the utilisation and transfer of knowledge, as well as being a guarantee of professional quality and credibility. Negotiating new positions within this changing professional context with its new power structures and service demands is not easy but it does raise the question of how a somewhat defeatist cry for professional autonomy could evolve into a more empowering approach. One alternative, within the social work profession, is found in efforts to strengthen professional autonomy through professional supervision and, in doing so, securing both the quality of

professional work and the wellbeing of practitioners.

In this article we examine how professional supervision and its future are seen by an international group of experts in social work supervision. The aim is to explore evolving perceptions of social work supervision's role, and to what extent these reflections relate to professional autonomy as a central feature of the developmental tensions discussed earlier. The topic has a background in the authors' shared interest in exploring supervision research on an international scale. For this purpose, a Delphi study was conducted to establish an international dialogue about the visions and prospects of social work supervision and its scholarship and research (Beddoe, Karvinen-Niinikoski, Ruch, & Tsui, 2016). The study posed questions on topics such as what social work supervision would look like in 10 years' time and which aspects of it are most worthy of scholarly research. Drawing on data from the Delphi survey and an emerging meta-theoretical understanding of professional supervision as a vehicle for promoting critical professional agency, we will discuss some tensions found in the material in relation to professional supervision and development. These dyadic, even circular, reflections reflect how professionals position themselves in changing contexts and the extent to which they experience workplace constraints as threats to their work. Placing supervision in a frame of theoretical understanding of human agency (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Eteläpelto, Vähäsantanen, Hökkä, & Paloniemi, 2013) and thus opening a meta-theoretical understanding of supervision, could help the profession undergo significant transformation while remaining subjects of their own expertise.

Central concepts: autonomy, discretion, agency and supervision

The concepts of professional autonomy and supervision are intertwined with a further two topical, and inextricably interconnected, concepts: professional agency and discretion.

Professional autonomy

Professional autonomy (Brante, 2011) is a concept emerging from the professionalisation processes within modern society and theories of professions and professional power (Abbott, 1988). The field of the professions is, according to Abbott, a place of continuous struggle for professional jurisdiction: the owning of the expertise in a particular realm of service. Other theorists of the professions emphasise the safeguarding of professional power with professional autonomy as one central feature (Freidson, 2001). Autonomy is a core concept for classical professionalisation theories (Abbott, 1988) and might be the most salient issue for any profession. Following Abbott's theory, owning this autonomous professional status can be seen as competing for professional and societal power and for legitimacy and jurisdiction of field expertise. The salience of autonomy could also be read as professional freedom that is particularly susceptible to collapse with the expansion of controlling NPM policies and their attendant bureaucratic rules (Evans, 2013; Evetts, 2009).

In the face of rapid structural, societal and political change and shifting epistemological understandings and knowledge policies, professional monopolies have been challenged (Knorr-Cetina, 2007). Consequently, for some decades, the traditional pillars of professional power systems—expertise (knowledge and know-how), institutions (socio-legal structures for exercising expertise) and professional status (power over expertise)—have been progressively undermined and weakened and professional autonomy is experienced as being under threat (Chandler, Berg, Ellison, & Barry, 2017; Evetts, 2009)in many professions, including social work. These threatening processes are identified in neoliberal systems of governance and NPM practices that build on new kinds of control, direction and power systems involving process models and standardisation, invariably based on computerised systems and accountability regimes. Here health and social care professionals face new challenges and risk a

diminution of their autonomy. What remains, conceptually, from this loss is today often discussed as professional discretion (Evans, 2010).

Professional discretion

Professional discretion (Evans, 2010, 2013) refers to the relationship between professional agency and organisational rules and to the tension between policy and day-to-day professional practice as a key question in policy and practice. This, in turn, causes problems for professional ethics and, of course, for professional autonomy (Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2009). The concept stems from Lipsky's classical work on 'Street level bureaucracy' (1980) which states that "policy implementation in the end comes down to the people who actually implement it"—an issue that immediately resonates with understandings of supervision, professional autonomy and agency. Professional discretion is also a concept that challenges the professional cry for the lost autonomy of the professional subject. It resists the configuration of professionals as simply the passive recipients of instructions and structural restrictions and seeks to position them as individuals who possess transformative and responsible professional agency.

Professional agency

Agency, in the context of concerns regarding professional autonomy, can be understood as a mediating concept situated between professional discretion and freedom and the contextual and organisational control contributing to a loss of autonomy and even threatening the core values of professional social work. Agency is also a core concept when discussing critical reflection, professional identity and the subjective position of professionals and, in this sense, it stands as a central concept for theories of supervision. Professional agency is strongly associated with critical reflection and thus lies at the heart of discourses on supervision, adult and professional learning (Eteläpelto et al., 2013; Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2009).

According to Eteläpelto et al. (2013), since the 1970s, or alternatively, from 2000 and Mezirow's and Freire's critical pedagogy, Giddens' structuration theory and Archer's critical realism, there has been a growing interest in agency in various scientific fields. The combination of agency and personal identity has continued through feminist post-structuralism into socio-cultural approaches, such as the theory of expansive learning and understandings of the subject positioning of individual agency. By analysing these conceptual developments and drawing from their empirical research Eteläpelto et al. (2013, p. 62) sum up a subject-centred, socio-cultural approach to professional agency. They conclude that professional agency means that vocational subjects and/or communities are entitled to make choices and use their discretion in ways that impact on their work and/or professional identity. Through their personal and professional capacities individuals hold certain agentic resources and engage discursively with all these factors maintaining temporal connections from the past through to the future.

Rediscovered in discourses on coping with the pressures of diminishing autonomy, for example in social work under the NPM regimes (Kam, 2014), professional agency can be considered as a core concept in recapturing the concept of professional autonomy and connects closely with the concept professional discretion (Eteläpelto et al, 2013; Evans, 2010). Professional contexts' agency can arguably be seen as an achievement/aim, in which both discretion and the dynamic challenges of working life are met in processes of regeneration and transformation. Control and understanding of professional agency, however, is complicated and raises tensions between practitioners and management (Beddoe, 2010). This has been reflected in the concerns of Nordic social work professionals and academics experiencing continuous restriction of jurisdiction and professional autonomy (Røysum, 2010). In Evetts' (2009) analysis of the managerial confusion and tension governing the two emerging ideal

types of professionalism (organisational and occupational), it could be suggested that the primary concern focuses on agency (that is, on being an active societal actor) and its constraints on professionals. Thus the link between autonomy and agency becomes central for supervision which, in NPM regimes, is also regarded as a sophisticated tool for governance and control.

Agency and discretion are complex concepts, pivotal to the efforts of supervision to help social workers understand their own agency as reflexive professionals in challenging working conditions in a complex society. Agency and its link to the expression of professional identities can also be seen as a central element in theoretical understandings of supervision in reaching a meta-theoretical understanding of the functional mechanisms of supervision.

Professional supervision

As an essential part of professional and occupational practice, supervision is a key factor in the promotion of practice excellence, productivity and practitioner retention (Koivu, 2013). In emotionally demanding human professions like social work, supervision can provide a necessary containment of emotional relationships and pressures and thus may also perform occupational health functions (Adamson, 2012). In social work, a contested profession from the outset (Houston, 2002), supervision has a long tradition as a process employed to safeguard professional autonomy and expertise and, further, to resist threats to its professional jurisdiction (Tsui, 2005). The centrality of professional and personal growth to the classical aim of supervision is founded on the theoretically grounded ideas of continuous professional development, as well as on more or less hidden ideas of safeguarding professional autonomy (Tsui, 2005). Concerns to protect professional autonomy are manifest in the Nordic context by a strong emphasis on ensuring that the supervisor is external to the employing welfare service organisation (Karvinen-Niinikoski & Salonen, 2005).

Traditionally supervision has focused on promoting high quality professional services by supporting the learning, management and development of professional practice amongst individuals and groups of practitioners in human services professions. An expansion of professional or "clinical supervision" (Koivu, 2013) has stemmed from recent research on work-related wellbeing and transformative leadership that emphasise the importance of employee engagement in a participative ethos for fostering innovative potential and promoting productivity (Yliruka & Karvinen-Niinikoski, 2013).

Human services work is considered to be emotionally burdening and cognitively challenging because professional values are an essential part of professional expertise providing legitimacy and justification for the professional field in question. In daily practice these values and interests are blurred and require, for clarity, reflective practice. Supervision has traditionally provided a mechanism to promote professional reflection and enhance the quality of services. In recent decades the "preoccupation with … systems of accountability" can be attributed in large part to the "critique of professional practice" …and a "crisis of trust in professionals" (Davys & Beddoe, 2010, pp. 13–14). This crisis, according to Evetts (2009, pp. 258–262) is a major factor behind changes to professionalising processes and the associated tensions. Within this climate of anxiety about trustworthiness, the safeguarding of professional autonomy, expertise and identity (Evans & Harris, 2004) has become significant for professional projects.

Circular reflections and concerns about professional autonomy and supervision

Our interest in discussing the relationship between professional autonomy and supervision was roused by often reported concerns about threats to professional autonomy and worsening working conditions in social work, expressed both in research and professional debates

in social work and supervision. The concerns found in the literature (Beddoe et al., 2016) informed the design of the Delphi survey which sought to obtain internationally comparative knowledge about contemporary understandings of social work supervision and perceptions of research gaps in this domain. Our aim in the first phase of the Delphi study on supervision (Beddoe et al., 2016) was to learn about expert opinions and visions about the present state of social work supervision and to gain ideas about the focus of future supervision research.

This study, was designed as a multi-phase project involving the delivery of two open-ended questionnaires to experts and important stakeholders, such as those with academic expertise in supervision and those whom we might define as "expert users", for example, individuals involved in supervision as expert practitioners, practice teachers, trainers and those who might be influential in developing and implementing supervision policies within social service organisations. In the replies to this survey reflections were offered by 53 participants from five continents and 15 countries providing a generous data set, though somewhat skewed towards Anglophone countries. Delphi sampling is not intended to be representative but is a means for recruiting knowledgeable, committed participants into a process that pools ideas and creates potential for sophisticated reflections. The analysis of the challenges facing the practice of social work supervision was conducted via thematic coding. Organisational and political factors loomed large as significant influences on how supervision was (or was not) promoted and supported. The impact of service budget cuts under recessionary government policies were also frequently mentioned, along with the impact of a pervasive risk-averse climate (Beddoe et al., 2016).

A somewhat surprising feature of the Delphi study results was how strongly and critically respondents expressed their concerns about the loss of, and threats to, professional discretion and autonomy in social work supervision. These concerns stretched beyond simply threats to professional identity and encompassed fear of the demise of professional supervision as a forum for critical reflection and a site for discussing social work practice related ethical matters. Reflections illuminating these concerns emerged in response to future focused questions on social work supervision and its significance in practice governance. The answers to these reflected themes around autonomy and proved to be quite circular: drawing both on expressions of the role of supervision in promoting professional strength and fear of supervision becoming a forum for losing power.

One participant captures this circularity: "I fear it's a circular debate and we might be in the same space again and again." Behind this circularity sits tension and uncertainty about how supervision will be used: for "management/ competence or reflective learning" or to enhance a "strong but diverse profession mandated to be registered and well educated, critical and expansive thinkers and experimenters.... A group that is bold and able … creative, experimental … and radiating hope and innovation…", instead of leaving the profession to stay as "a divided non-professional group who has subsumed or gone beyond social control and re-apportioning dwindling resources". These alternatives reflect social work preoccupations with social justice and the dispositions needed to meet the challenges social workers "face in societies in a local, regional and global sense of the work". These are, in many senses, the core values attached to professional autonomy in social work, and perceived as under threat.

Supervision is also described in optimistic terms, one participant hoping that "social work supervision would be recognised as an important social work practice domain" benefiting both "clients and supervisees".

It is also advocated that "social work supervision is conducted more rigorously, making use of what we know works for staff, service users and organisations from the evidence base". There is also a hope that there will be "the momentum towards reflective practice" that would mean "that reflective supervision is highly valued and prioritized within the provision of social work services". Most optimistically this was expressed as: "the profile of social work supervision is developing. I would like to see it develop further. Supervision and reflection are essential to the ongoing existence of social work practice in this sense. It is the space away from pressures of practice and mechanistic culture that has developed in the last 30 years". Most important, however, is being supported and valued for coping with the demanding and difficult work: "[s]ocial workers need support to resist and creatively challenge the neoliberal intensification of blaming the person, family or community for things the economic systems produce" and that "[s]upervision must encompass the ability to look beyond the individual and connect the dots to systemic cause and effect … basically social work supervision mirrors and supports social work practice".

When asked about the future, many participants seemed rather resigned: "if nothing is done intentionally, supervision could become nothing more than a tool for administrative surveillance". It is seen to be "pretty well the same—it is not the political climate for much change"; or "more pressed for time; poorer quality" with no improvement; or "not prioritized—worse"; or "sadly, I do not think there will be a significant shift". The worsening visions are placed "in the context of social welfare organisations due to increasing concern about management, quantitative output and manpower cut[s]". Similar concerns could be discerned 'between the lines' when asked about the most important and urgent questions for research in supervision. There is an interest in refocusing "the practice and discipline value of supervision, understanding that balancing administrative needs will continue to be an ongoing challenge … [for example] How do supervisors use their power so that social workers' knowledge and skills are valued and developed?" Parallel to seeing supervision as support to professional autonomy there is the concern about the risk to professional agency and autonomy of having a supervisor as an outsider to one's own profession (Beddoe & Howard, 2012; Hojer & Bradley, 2009). For example, one participant commented: "[I am] not clear how increased regulation will address the need for competent supervision, especially when many other disciplines are represented in the ranks of supervisors."

The reason for this resignation, hesitation and sadness seems to reflect a loss of professional self-determination and autonomy. For one informant this involved supervision aligning itself with neo-liberalistic trends and narrower definitions of social work and supervision: "I fear that social work's push for professionalism and accreditation in supervision and practice … is unintentionally dove tailing with, and supporting neo-liberal, managerial, consumerist influences that continue to narrow, shape, re-define what seem reasonable of possible within social work and social work supervision. … I fear that as social workers we are contributing to devaluing the core of our work". A particularly gloomy vision was that, "at worst a divided non-professionalised group who have been subsumed or persuaded by politics of individual blame shame and greed and are unable to go beyond social control and re-apportioning dwindling resources on a 'deserving' qualifying criteria that keeps people in boxes and places of non-participation and disenfranchisement".

One is left pondering how circular the argumentation is, repeating the risks of losing autonomy and hoping for professional supervision to have the strength to build support for sound social work practice.

Discussion: how to cross the circular cycles of professional concerns

The narrative of perceived challenges to professional autonomy alongside hopes for improving the positioning of the profession via the future development of supervision which emerges from this study suggests that the concept of supervision is understood and indeed utilised in many different ways in various contexts (Beddoe, 2015). Alluding to this issue of context and location in approaches to supervision, a research participant commented that, "supervision in social work needs to engage with local and global knowledge to assist social workers wherever they are to maintain their focus on meeting the practical and emotional needs of the individuals, families and communities they serve, in an economic climate where this is increasingly difficult".

The cycle of threats and hopes regarding professional autonomy and values based social work practice suggest ambiguous responses to changing realities. This is understandable given the trends, described by Evetts (2009), towards the organisational and occupational professions having diminishing powers when considering the more positive future visions it is possible to identify a determination to become stronger, regardless of pressures and constraints. This leaves us with a question as to whether the missing and mediating cycle-breaking concept might actually be the professional agency so central to professional identity and professional emancipation.

As posed by Eteläpelto et al. (2013), professional agency is a powerful concept dealing with the professional's identity and capability for making choices and using discretional opportunities in ways that impact on their work and/or professional identity. This also means disrupting the circular structures and crossing the boundaries of professional discourses, be they singularly profession centred or multi-professionally relational as Edwards (2010) has it. Agency is a concept based on careful ontological analyses of the issues and tensions between individual action and structural constraints (Emirbayer & Mische, 1998; Eteläpelto et al., 2013); the dynamics inherent in the research can be construed as practitioners experiencing a loss of professional autonomy.

An understanding of professional agency is needed especially for creatively developing one's own work and working contexts, for learning at work and for negotiating professional identity (Eteläpelto et al., 2013). It is needed in order to see the options for taking professional responsibility and action. The theoretical understanding of agency might help solve the helplessness syndrome of social work expressed in the circular argumentation above. It is very much what one tries to promote when tackling the circular concerns of losing professional autonomy. Understanding one's own agency and its relation to both professional discretion and autonomy might help emancipating social work to cope with the changing professional structures in changing societies (Kam, 2014).

Conclusion

These reflections on supervision and its future raise questions about the logic of a persistent circular professional discourse that is creating and perpetuating resigned attitudes around social work. There remains a strong belief, however, in supervision as an emancipatory support for professional self-respect and identity. It is the potential loss of professional autonomy that may be seen as a major tension. This is also seen in the fear of losing supervision as a reflective professional sphere where a genuine social work professional and ethical ethos can be fostered. These tensions and fears appear similar to those factors lying behind the "tension model of changing professionalization" presented by Evetts (2009). The same kinds of discussions have been identified also in the late concerns of losing 'the social' from social

work (Røysum, 2010) and even the loss of the social itself (Kam, 2014). The tension model also provides a concept with which to analyse and understand human actors' positions and discretional opportunities in professional practice, in between individual and structural factors and constraints, the factors that are considered as opposite poles in the reflections on the future of social work and supervision.

There is also a strong alternative, and theoretically grounded, approach based on the traditions of "critically reflective supervision" helping to recognise and manage the fine balance between support and surveillance or managerial organisational dimensions. Meta-theoretical understanding of professional supervision in the frame of human agency will help both practitioners and supervisors to construct sustainable and proactive social work. Instead of despairing about the loss of autonomy, the professionals may go through significant societal and professional transformations as subjects of their own expertise and professional agency.

Note:

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Registered social workers who are supervisors: A national survey

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Aotearoa New Zealand registered social workers who supervise are expected to provide supervision in accordance with the Social Workers Registration Board standards. This article aims to establish baseline about supervisors and their supervision.

METHODS: A national postal survey of 278 registered social workers supervision gathered data about the background, experiences and views of 138 supervisors. The quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS 24. One-way ANOVA and post hoc tests were applied to explore variances in means for the independent variables of type of registration, area of practice, gender, age, ethnic identity, sexual orientation, recognised qualifications, experience as social worker, experience as a supervisor, and supervisory training and education across six scales concerned with the respondents' provision of supervision.

FINDINGS: The findings provide baseline demographic information about the supervisors, as well as descriptions of their supervisory practice. This includes information regarding the forms, logistics, types of contact, the approaches and models used, session processes and their overall satisfaction and evaluation of the supervision they provide.

CONCLUSIONS: The article concludes that most supervisors provided supervision that is typical of individual, clinical or professional supervision and was aligned with professional standards. Questions were raised concerning the predominance of non-Māori supervisors and the cultural relevancy, safety and responsiveness of supervisors to Māori. Suggestions are made regarding the development of the supervisory workforce. Areas for further research are identified regarding the differences in supervisory practice related to fields of practice, ethnicity, experience, qualifications and training.

KEYWORDS: supervision, social work, supervisors, cultural responsiveness

Introduction

This article aims to establish baseline data regarding the background of registered social workers who are supervisors and to compare their supervision with Social Workers Registration Board (SWRB) policy and guidelines. The data presented in this article are from 138 supervisors who completed a postal survey about the supervision of registered social workers in 2015.

Background

The expectations and standards for supervisors who are registered social workers are derived from SWRB policies, standards and Code. The SWRB (2015) policy prefers that supervisors are

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registered social workers who are trained in professional supervision and practise according to established professional standards. Supervisors are expected to understand the Board's policy and principles pertaining to supervision. The principles are detailed in clause three of the policy and are as follows:

- The over-riding priority of professional supervision is to promote and protect the interests of the client.
- Professional supervision promotes safe and accountable practice.
- Professional supervision promotes inclusive practice underpinned by Te Tiriti o Waitangi, responsiveness to Māori, and sound ethical principles.
- Professional supervision promotes active recognition of the cultural systems that shape the workers practice.
- Professional supervision encompasses a respectful, strengths-based approach which affirms people's dignity, capacity, rights, uniqueness and commonalities.
- Professional supervision provides a forum to ensure accountability to the agency, to clients and the profession.
- Professional supervision is available for all practising social workers.
- Professional supervision is regular and uninterrupted and based on a negotiated contract.
- Professional supervision is located within a learning environment where professional development is valued and encouraged.
- Professional supervision will be consistent with the requirements associated with level of experience (SWRB, 2015, pp. 2–3).

Clause six, concerning the criteria for supervisors, qualifies the principles listed above and states that supervisors should "be able to provide supervision that is relevant to the supervisee's spiritual, traditional and theoretical understandings, cultural worldview, experience, skills and requirements for accountability" (SWRB, 2015, p. 4). The SWRB's Code of Conduct (2016) also contains specific guidance for supervisors. The first relevant instructions are principles 2.6 and 2.7 which require supervisors to ensure their supervision is culturally relevant, safe and responsive with Māori supervisees and clients (SWRB, 2016). Principle four, which is concerned with the registered social worker being competent and responsible for their professional development, provides further guidance, by way of the minimum requirements of monthly supervision of an hour's duration, the active, responsible, open and honest participation by the social worker, and the requirement that a registered social worker provides evidence of regular supervision and a supervision contract when renewing their annual practising certificate or competence (SWRB, 2016, p. 13). Principle eight, which is concerned with working openly and respectfully with colleagues, instructs supervisors that sexual relationships, sexual interactions and sexual behaviour with supervisees or social work students are unacceptable because of "the obvious and direct power imbalance" (SWRB, 2016, p. 23). While principle ten, concerning keeping accurate records and using technology effectively, requires supervisors in principle 10.8 to adhere "to the standards that apply in face to face practice" (SWRB, 2016, p. 26). Finally, supervisors who are registered social workers are also expected to participate in supervision and abide by all of the clauses of the Code of Conduct (SWRB, 2016). For the most part, the SWRB's guidelines establish what is expected of a supervisor regarding training, competencies, principles, and practices. The guidelines do not however, provide any detail about the level or type of supervision training that supervisors should have completed. Neither do they state that

qualifications in supervision are required for supervisors.

In Aotearoa New Zealand, an extensive social work supervision literature base has been established over the past 20 years which provides supervisors with practice wisdom, theory and research (Beddoe, 2016; O'Donoghue, 2018; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012). The research details the views of social workers and supervisors about what is good and best about their supervision (Davys, 2002; O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2006), how to improve their supervision (O'Donoghue, 2008, 2010), how evaluation occurs (Davys, May, Burns, & O'Connell, 2017), the influence of culture and cultural approaches (Eketone, 2012; O'Donoghue, 2010), Māori approaches (Eruera, 2005; Murray, 2017), inter-professional and cross-disciplinary supervision (Beddoe & Howard, 2012; Howard, Beddoe, & Mowjood, 2013; Hutchings, Cooper, & O'Donoghue, 2014), reflective supervision in community-based child welfare (Rankine, 2017), the recording of supervision (Gillanders, 2009), strength-based supervision (Thomas, 2005), and spirituality within supervision (Simmons, 2006). To date, there has not been a national survey that has specifically explored the backgrounds, experiences and views of registered social workers who are supervisors. A previous national survey undertaken in 2004, of members of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers (ANZASW), prior to the implementation of registration asked respondents to: 1) identify the supervision roles they undertook either as supervisee, supervisor or both; 2) identify the supervision training they had and the year provided; and 3) evaluate their provision of supervision on a five-point scale (O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue, Munford, & Trlin, 2005). That survey did not contain a specific section for supervisors that examined their experience or specific details of their provision of supervision. There is a research gap regarding these areas and therefore a need for a national survey that seeks information about registered social workers who are supervisors.

Survey design

The questionnaire used in the postal survey was an updated version of the instrument used in 2004 (O'Donoghue, 2010; O'Donoghue et al., 2005). The updates related to the collection of supervisor data were the addition of a specific supervisors' section in the questionnaire. The questions in this section were developed from the supervision literature and previous research (Kadushin & Harkness, 2014; O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2015). There were 12 questions (one binary-choice, five multi-choice and six scales) which asked supervisors about their supervisory practice. The binary-choice question concerned whether the respondent was a supervisor or not. Those who responded "yes" to this question were then asked to complete the remainder of the questionnaire. The five multi-choice questions concerned: the respondents' experience as a supervisor; the training and qualifications they had completed in supervision; the number of supervisees with whom they had a current supervision relationship; the average number of supervision sessions provided over the period of a month; and the type of supervision agreement or contract they had in place with their supervisees. The six scales were five-point semantic differential, likert-type scales which measured: the supervisor's level of provision of specific forms of supervision over the 12 months prior to the survey; the frequency of provision of particular kinds of supervision contact; the frequency of use of specific supervision approaches; the occurrence of specific aspects within the supervision sessions and the supervisors' overall satisfaction and overall evaluation of their supervision.

Data collection and analysis

The sampling and data-collection procedure involved selecting a sample

of 708 registered social workers using a set of randomly generated numbers from the 4388 registered social workers who held annual practising certificates on the publicly available register in 2014. The first posting occurred in December 2014, a reminder was posted in January 2015 and data collection was concluded in February 2015. Twenty questionnaires were returned unclaimed. From the 688 questionnaires deemed to have been received, 278 questionnaires were returned giving a response rate of 40.4%. From the sample 278 respondents, a sub-group of 138 supervisors completed the supervisors' questions. The completed questionnaires were checked, coded and data were directly entered into IBM SPSS 24 (http://www.ibmspss.com) for analysis. Missing data were addressed by leaving the cells in IBM SPSS 24 blank and by reporting the number of respondents (Pallant, 2013). The analysis involved descriptive statistics in the form of count, percentage and means. Following the descriptive analysis, a one-way ANOVA was applied to compare the mean results from the scales with the independent variables derived from the respondents' characteristics and, where significant differences were identified, Tamhane T2 post hoc tests were applied to measure the differences and to identify which groups had differences that were statistically significant. Tamhane T2 tests are used when the variances are unequal and samples differed, which was the case with the supervisors' characteristics. The eta squared coefficient (η2) was used to measure the effect size. The effect is deemed small at 0.01, medium at 0.06 and large at 0.14 (Pallant, 2013, p. 264). The alpha level was set at 0.05. The study was approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee. The limitations of this survey are those that apply to any survey and concern the reliance on the respondents' reports, social desirability bias, missing data bias and the small sample size of some respondent characteristic groups (De Vaus, 2014).

Table 1. Personal Characteristics

Personal Characteristics		***Supervisors***		***All Respondents***	
		N	**%**	**N**	**%**
Gender	Female	121	87.7	231	83.1
	Male	14	10.1	41	14.7
	Diverse	3	2.2	6	2.2
Total		138	100	278	100
Age	20-29	1	0.7	3	1.1
	30-39	10	7.4	31	11.3
	40-49	43	31.6	83	30.3
	50-59	49	36.0	97	35.4
	60-69	33	24.3	60	21.9
Total		136	100	274	100
Ethnicity	Māori	22	15.9	53	19.1
	NZ European/ Pākehā	91	65.9	155	55.8
	Pacific Peoples	8	5.8	20	7.2
	Indian	3	2.2	12	4.3
	Other	14	10.2	38	13.6
Total		138	100	278	100
Sexual Orientation	Same-sex	13	10.1	25	9.9
	Bisexual	2	1.5	8	3.2
	Heterosexual	114	88.4	219	86.9
Total		129	100	252	100

Supervisors' characteristics

The supervisors' personal, professional and supervisory characteristics are presented in three tables. The supervisors' personal and professional characteristics in Tables 1 and 2 are compared with all respondents from the wider sample, whereas Table 3, which concerns supervisory characteristics cannot be compared with all respondents as these characteristics were from questions that were answered only by supervisors. No claims are made regarding whether this sample is representative of registered social workers who are supervisors, because the SWRB did not have any information available about supervisors. Table 1 shows that the percentage of supervisors who were female was 4.6% higher than the

all-respondents group, whereas the percentage of supervisors who were male was 4.6% lower than the wider sample. In relation to age, the supervisors group had higher percentages in the 40 years and older groups and lower percentages amongst those who were younger than 40. This pattern suggests that age (seniority) is related to the supervisor role. In terms of ethnicity, those who identified as 'other' were of British, European, Australian, Filipino, African, North American, Japanese, Chilean, Jewish, Hawaiian/German, and Fijian Indian heritage. In the Table it is apparent that the percentage of Māori, Pacific peoples, Indian and Other supervisors is lower than the wider survey sample, whereas, the percentage of New Zealand (NZ) European/Pākehā supervisors is 10.1% higher. This pattern raises questions about the extent to which the supervisory workforce is representative of the diversity found amongst registered social workers and client populations. It also raises questions regarding why NZ European/Pākehā have a higher percentage of supervisors than in the wider sample. Is this result due to sampling error? Or institutional racism? Or unconscious bias? For sexual orientation, the differences between the percentages for supervisors and all respondents are small and not indicative of an obvious pattern.

The professional characteristics displayed in Table 2 show that nearly all of the supervisors were fully registered and there were a higher percentage of supervisors who had 16 years or more experience in social work than the all-respondents group. Conversely, the percentages for supervisors with 15 years or less experience were lower than the wider group. This pattern suggests that greater experience is related to the supervisor role. In regard to recognised qualifications, the percentage of supervisors with Section 13 (recognition of past experience for purposes of registration), bachelor's, master's degrees and other qualifications was slightly higher than the wider sample, whereas those with diplomas and postgraduate diplomas had a slightly lower percentage than the all-respondents group. Turning to areas of practice, it was surprising to find that, amongst the three largest areas, the percentage of supervisors in health and non-government organisations (NGOs) was higher than the percentage in the all-respondents group and that the percentage in the statutory area of supervisors was lower than that of all respondents.

Table 2. Professional Characteristics

Professional Characteristics		Supervisors		All Respondents	
		N	%	N	%
Type of Registration	Full	137	99.3	264	95.3
	Provisional	0	0	11	4
	Temporary	1	0.7	2	0.7
Total		138	100	277	100
Experience in years	1-5	12	8.7	31	11.3
	6-10	12	8.7	49	17.9
	11-15	27	19.6	62	22.6
	16-20	29	21.0	44	16.0
	21-25	21	15.2	38	13.9
	26-30	22	15.9	32	11.7
	>31	15	10.9	18	6.6
Total		138	100	274	100
Recognised Qualification	Section 13 (Past Experience)	6	4.3	7	2.5
	Diploma	31	22.5	71	25.7
	Bachelors	55	39.9	107	38.8
	PG Dip	16	11.6	35	12.7
	Masters	26	18.8	49	17.8
	Other	4	2.9	7	2.5
Total		138	100	276	100
Area of Practice	Health	53	38.4	96	34.5
	Statutory	43	31.2	109	39.2
	NGO	34	24.6	61	22.0
	Education and Training	6	4.4	10	3.6
	Private Practice	2	1.4	2	0.7
Total		138	100	278	100

Table 3. Supervisory Characteristics

Supervisory Characteristics		*Supervisors*	
		N	%
Supervisory experience in years	1-5	53	38.4
	6-10	36	26.1
	11-15	21	15.2
	16-20	14	10.1
	21-25	8	5.8
	26-30	4	2.9
	>31	2	1.4
Total		138	100
Supervision training or qualification	None	17	12.3
	Short-course	41	29.7
	Paper(s) or module(s)	21	15.2
	Certificate in supervision	37	26.8
	Grad Diploma	4	2.9
	Post Grad Diploma	13	9.4
	Other	5	3.6
Total		138	100

A possible explanation for these differences may be that supervisors in statutory social work are appointed to a specific supervisory position, whereas in the health and NGO sector, the role of a supervisor can be performed by a peer colleague. This means that more social workers can be supervisors in the health and NGO fields (O'Donoghue & Tsui, 2012).

The supervisory characteristics in Table 3 are supervisory experience in years and supervision training or qualification. In regard to supervisory experience, nearly two-thirds of the 138 supervisors (64.5%, $n = 89$) had 10 or less years' experience as a supervisor. While just over a third (36.4%, $n = 49$) had 11 or more years of supervisory experience. Most of the 138 supervisors (87.7%, $n = 121$) had completed some form of training or qualification in supervision. The 3.6% ($n = 5$) who had undertaken 'other' training described this as an overseas practice teaching award, a certificate in first-line management, internal CYPS training and half a postgraduate diploma. The 12.3% ($n = 17$) of supervisors who reported no supervision training nor held qualifications in supervision are contrary to the preference expressed in the SWRB's policy (see clause six), for supervisors who have completed professional supervision training (SWRB, 2015, p. 4).

As a group, the supervisors represented a cross-section of areas of practice, they were mostly female and older in age than their colleagues. There was a higher proportion of NZ European/Pākehā than the wider survey sample and a lower proportion of Māori, Pacific peoples, Indian and other ethnicities. They were predominately heterosexual, with a higher percentage holding a degree in social work, section 13, and other qualifications than all survey respondents.

The supervisors were also more experienced as social workers, and their supervisory experience, whilst varied, showed that the majority had less than 10 years' experience. Most met the SWRB (2015) preference in regard to completing some form of education and training in supervision.

Supervision provided

The supervisors' experiences and views about the supervision they provided across a range of areas are explored in this section. The section starts with the forms of supervision provided.

Forms of supervision

The supervisors rated on a five-point scale (where 1 = *none* and 5 = *high*) their level of provision for each of 12 forms of supervision over the last 12 months. The means ranged from 4.25 to 1.82, with individual, clinical/professional being the most common forms of supervision provided and cross-disciplinary the least (see Table 4). The 'other' category referred to ad hoc open-door policy. From the one-way ANOVA, significant mean differences for areas of

practice, ethnicity and experience as a social worker were identified. The areas of practice difference was for external supervision (F (4, 117) = 4.270, p<.01) with private practice (*M* = 5, *SD* = 0, *n* = 2) having a higher mean than health (*M* = 2.66, *SD* = 1.821, *n* = 47), NGO (*M* = 2.5, *SD* = 1.689, *n* = 28) and statutory (*M* = 1.59, *SD* = 1.229, *n* = 39). Health also had a higher mean than statutory. The effect size of this difference was medium (η2 = .127). This difference, despite the small sample for private practice, is not surprising since external supervision is usually the main form of supervision a private practitioner offers (O'Donoghue, 2010). The difference between health and statutory was surprising and perhaps is due to some supervisors from hospital-based services providing supervision to social workers in primary health organisations (PHOs). The significant mean differences for ethnicity concerned cultural supervision (F (4, 120) = 15.786, p<.001) with Māori (*M* = 3.3, *SD* = 1.625, *n* = 20) having a higher mean than 'other' (*M* = 1.69, *SD* = 1.109, *n* = 13) and NZ European/Pākehā (*M* = 1.48, *SD* = .838, *n* = 81). Pacific Peoples (*M* = 3.5, *SD* = 1.414, *n* = 8) also had higher mean than NZ European/Pākehā. The effect size of these differences was large (η2 = .345). These differences were expected and reflect the development of cultural supervision as specific form of supervision provided by Māori and Pasifika supervisors to support the cultural safety and development of Māori and Pasifika practitioners, as well as to assist Pākehā and Palagi colleagues working with Māori and Pasifika clients (Autagavaia, 2001; Eketone, 2012; Murray, 2017; O'Donoghue, 2010; Su'a Hawkins & Mafile'o, 2004).

There were two significant mean differences concerning experience as a social worker. The first concerned managerial/administrative supervision (F (6, 115) = 4.906, p<.001) where supervisors with 26–30 years' experience (*M* = 4.06, *SD* = 1.259, *n* = 18) had a higher mean than 16–20 years (*M* = 2.34, *SD* = 1.446, *n* = 29) and 1–5 years (*M* = 1.63, *SD* = 1.408, *n* = 8). The effect size of this mean difference was large (η2 = .204). This result indicates that those with 26–30 years provide more management supervision than their less experienced colleagues and raises the question of whether there is relationship between seniority in terms of experience and line management supervision. The other difference concerned the provision of external supervision (F (6, 115) = 2.328, p<.05) with supervisors with greater than 31 years' social work experience (*M* = 3.57, *SD* = 1.453, *n* = 14) having a significantly higher mean than those with 1–5 years' experience (*M* = 1.44, *SD* = 1.333, *n* = 9). The effect size was medium (η2 = .108). This difference was expected and indicates that on average social workers with greater than 31 years are more likely to provide external supervision than those starting their careers.

Table 4. Forms of Supervision

Form of supervision	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	% participated (i.e. 2-5)	% high participation (i.e. 5)
Individual	125	4.25	1.175	92.0	82.4
Clinical/ Professional	131	3.76	1.329	87.8	66.4
Internal	125	3.66	1.597	78.4	66.4
Student or Field Work placement	127	3.13	1.638	70.1	47.2
Peer	130	3.11	1.469	75.4	45.3
Managerial/ Administrative	122	2.91	1.532	69.7	42.7
Team	125	2.36	1.510	53.6	29.6
External	122	2.34	1.694	41.8	30.3
Group	122	2.19	1.445	47.5	22.2
Cultural	125	1.94	1.318	43.2	16.8
Cross-disciplinary	119	1.82	1.338	33.6	17.7
Other	3	2.33	2.309	33.3	33.3

*Level of participation ranged from 1 (*none*) to 5 (*high*).

Logistics involved

The supervisors responded to questions about the number of supervisees, the

average number of supervision sessions provided over a month and the type of agreement or contracts they had in place. The number of supervisees (*n* = 137) ranged from one to up to 20. Over two-thirds (70.1%, *n* = 96) supervised between one and five supervisees. The three highest percentages were for supervising one (19.7%, *n* = 27), five (16.8%, *n* = 23) and four (16.1%, *n* = 22). The median number of supervisees was four. The average number of sessions ranged from one to five through to over 20 per month. Over half of 135 supervisors (51.1%, *n* = 69) reported that, on average, they had between one and five supervision sessions a month. Close to a third (31.1%, *n* = 42) had between six and 10 sessions while a tenth (10.4%, *n* = 14) had between 11 and 15 sessions. The remaining 7.4% (*n* = 10) consisted of 5.2% (*n* = 7) that had between 16 and 20 sessions, and those who reported other (2.2%, *n* = 3) reported more than 20 sessions. There were differences across areas of practices with regard to distribution of the average number of sessions, with 70.5% of 51 health supervisors having an average of 1–5 sessions per month, compared with 48.5% of 33 supervisors in NGOs and 30.2% of 43 supervisors in the statutory area. The provision of 6–10 sessions per month, was 23.5% health, 36.5% NGO and 37.2% statutory. While, the distribution of those who provided 11 sessions or more per month was 6% health, 15.1% NGO, and 32.5% statutory. Overall, a larger proportion of supervisors in statutory social work provided more supervision sessions in a month than their colleagues. Most supervisors (96.3% of 135 supervisors) had agreements, 85.9 % (*n* = 116) had written supervision agreements, 7.4 % (*n* = 10) had oral agreements and four supervisors did not have agreements. Four other supervisors indicated they had a mix of both oral and written agreements with their supervisees while another reported having a mix of no agreements and written agreements across their supervisees. The four supervisors who did not have agreements included two from NGOs, one from health and the other from the statutory area. The supervisors who had either oral or no agreements had arguably contributed to a potentially problematic situation for their supervisees in which their ability to produce evidence of a supervision contract when renewing their practising certificate, was somewhat compromised (SWRB, 2016).

*Table 5. Types of Supervision Contact: Frequency of Experience**

Types of supervision contact	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Checking in concerning work plans and activity	135	4.24	.857
Case consultations	134	4.16	.894
Formal individual meetings or sessions	131	4.16	.975
Reviews/ debriefings of specific work or situations	133	3.97	.953
Ad hoc informal open door consultations	131	3.76	1.408
Co-working	134	2.66	1.403
Observations (either live or recorded)	131	2.42	1.324
Formal team sessions	130	2.24	1.397
Formal Group sessions	128	2.20	1.422
Other	5	4.20	.837

*Frequency ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*)

Types of supervision contact

The supervisors indicated on a 5-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*) their provision of a range of types of supervision contact. The means ranged from 4.24 for checking in concerning work plans and activity to 2.2 for formal group sessions (see Table 5). The five highest means were all reflective of an individual clinical or professional approach to supervision. The responses to 'other' mainly concerned supervision in specific settings and phone consultations.

Significant mean differences were identified for areas of practice, the first of these was for checking in concerning work plans and activity ($F(4, 130) = 3.556$, $p = .009$), with private practice ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$, $n = 2$) having a higher mean than NGO ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .663$, $n = 33$), statutory ($M = 4.3$, $SD = .832$, $n = 43$) and health ($M = 4.16$, $SD = .857$, $n = 51$). The effect size was medium ($\eta 2 = .099$). The next was formal group sessions ($F (4, 123) = 3.407$, $p = .011$), where education

and training ($M = 4$, $SD = 1.095$, $n = 6$), NGO ($M = 2.39$, $SD = 1.585$, $n = 31$), statutory ($M = 2.07$, $SD = 1.191$, $n = 41$), and health ($M = 2.02$, $SD = 1.407$, $n = 48$), had significantly higher means than private practice ($M = 1$, $SD = 0$, $n = 2$). The effect size was also medium ($\eta 2 = .1$). Formal team sessions ($F (4, 125) = 2.666$, $p = .035$), was similar with NGO ($M = 2.67$, $SD = 1.594$, $n = 33$), statutory ($M = 2.41$, $SD = 1.264$, $n = 41$), and health ($M = 1.82$, $SD = 1.236$, $n = 49$) having higher means than private practice ($M = 1$, $SD = 0$, $n = 2$). The effect size was medium ($\eta 2 = .079$). These differences may be due to the small sample size for private practice. That said, this finding raises questions for further research concerning whether supervisors in private practice provide different types of contact in supervision to their colleagues in other areas of practice. The mean difference for ad hoc, informal, open-door consultations ($F (4, 126) = 4.070$, $p = .004$) was that statutory ($M = 4.38$, $SD = 1.118$, $n = 42$) had a significantly higher mean than health ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.347$, $n = 49$). The effect size was medium ($\eta 2 = .114$). This difference was not expected and indicates a difference in practice across the sectors, which requires further research.

In summary, the area of practice differences suggests that, on average, private practice supervisors do more checking in concerning work plans and activity than supervisors in statutory, health and NGO settings. Whereas supervisors in education and training, NGO, statutory, and health engage in more formal group sessions than those in private practice and those in NGOs, statutory, and health engage in more formal team sessions than the supervisors in private practice. The mean differences for ad hoc, informal, open-door consultations show that statutory supervisors engage in more of these consultations than their colleagues in health.

Use of ideas from supervision approaches and models

The supervisors rated on a five-point scale (where 1 = *not at all* and 5 = *almost always*) their use of aspects or ideas from a range of supervision models/approaches. The means for the use of aspects or ideas from the selected models ranged from 4.43 for "strength-based" to 1.53 for "Pasifika-based approaches." Table 6 shows that ideas from clinical models and approaches (namely, strength-based, reflective, solution focused, task centred, eclectic, adult learning and narrative) were used more than approaches concerned with addressing diversity, oppression and colonisation (i.e., cultural, feminist, kaupapa Māori, and Pasifika-based). The items specified under 'other' included practice-based approaches such as motivational interviewing, cognitive behavioural therapy, person-centred, systems theory, action/reflection and Heron's model, as well as supervision and personal approaches, for example, Tapes, creative/art and the pounamu model.

There were significant mean differences among supervisors in relation to ethnicity,

Table 6. Use of Aspects/ideas from Supervision Approaches and Models*

Approaches/ Models	N	Mean	% Used to some extent (i.e., 2-5)	% A/A (i.e. 5)
Strength-based	136	4.43	99.3	52.2
Reflective	137	4.39	100	50.4
Solution-Focused	133	4.25	100	42.9
Task-Centred	134	3.93	97	30.6
Eclectic	127	3.68	92.1	26.8
Adult learning	129	3.60	89.1	25.6
Narrative	132	3.42	87.9	24.2
Cultural	131	2.75	79.4	9.2
Feminist	128	2.53	70.3	7.8
Kaupapa Māori	128	2.16	54.7	8.6
Pasifika-based	122	1.53	31.1	1.6
Other	5	3.80	100	0

* Use ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

recognised qualification and experience as a supervisor. The differences according to ethnicity concerned the use of a cultural approach or model ($F (4,126) = 6.975$, $p<.001$) and a narrative approach ($F (4, 127) = 4.891$, $p = .001$). In both cases Māori ($M = 3.86$, $SD = 1.037$, $n = 22$; $M = 4.41$, $SD = .908$, $n = 22$) had significantly higher means than NZ European/Pākehā ($M = 2.47$, $SD = 1.185$, $n = 86$; $M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.24$, $n = 85$) and those from other ethnic groups ($M = 2.46$, $SD = 1.127$, $n = 13$; $M = 2.79$, $SD = 1.626$, $n = 14$). The effect size for cultural was large ($\eta 2 = .181$), whereas the effect size for narrative was medium ($\eta 2 = .133$). The differences indicate that Māori supervisors are more likely to use a cultural approach or model and a narrative approach in their supervision than non-Māori supervisors. The result for the cultural approach was expected and aligns with the qualitative findings in O'Donoghue (2010, p. 265), who found that Māori supervisors supervised from a Māori worldview. Whereas, the finding in regard to the use of a narrative approach was unexpected and indicates an area of further research regarding the use of a narrative approach amongst Māori supervisors.

The differences for recognised qualifications also concerned the narrative approach ($F (5, 126) = 3.490$, $p = .005$), with those who held diplomas ($M = 3.53$, $SD = 1.224$, $n = 30$), bachelor's degrees, ($M = 3.74$, $SD = 1.152$, $n = 54$) postgraduate diplomas ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 1.437$, $n = 14$), and Master's degrees ($M = 3.31$, $SD =1.408$, $n = 26$) having a significantly higher mean than 'other' ($M = 1$, $SD = 0$, $n = 2$). The effect size was medium ($\eta 2 = .122$). The most likely explanation for this difference is the small number of those with other qualifications.

For experience as a supervisor, the mean difference was for the use of a solution focused approach ($F (6,126) = 2.420$, $p = .03$). Here, supervisors with 26–30 years ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$, $n = 4$) experience had a higher mean than supervisors who had 1–5 ($M = 4.31$, $SD = .781$, $n = 52$) 6-10 ($M = 4.3$, $SD =.585$, $n = 33$) and 11–15 years experience ($M = 3.76$, $SD = .944$, $n = 21$). The effect size for this difference was medium ($\eta 2 = .103$). This difference may also be due to the small number within the 26–30 year group.

Aspects of supervision sessions

Using a five-point scale (where 1= *not at all* and 5= *almost always*), the respondents indicated the extent to which a range of aspects (Table 7) occurred in their supervision sessions. The means ranged from 4.40 for discussion to 1.66 for karakia (prayer).

There were significant differences for areas of practice, ethnicity, social work experience and supervisory experience and supervisory training. The area of practice differences were for karakia, discussion, summarisation, and closure. For karakia ($F (4, 126) = 5.200$, $p = .001$), NGO ($M = 2.27$, $SD = 1.257$, $n = 33$) had a higher mean than health ($M = 1.44$, $SD = 1.013$, $n = 50$) and statutory ($M = 1.34$, $SD = .794$, $n = 41$). The effect size was large ($\eta 2 = .142$). For discussion ($F (4, 131) = 2.672$, $p = .035$), private practice ($M = 5$, $SD = 0$, $n = 2$) had a higher mean than NGO ($M = 4.64$, $SD = .549$, $n = 33$), health ($M = 4.42$, $SD = .667$, $n = 52$), and statutory ($M = 4.19$, $SD = .699$, $n = 43$) and NGO had higher a mean than statutory. The effect size was medium ($\eta 2 = .075$). The differences for summarisation ($F (4, 130) = 5.384$, $p<.001$) were that NGO ($M = 4.27$, $SD = .801$, $n = 33$) and health ($M = 4.08$, $SD = .837$, $n = 52$) had higher means than statutory ($M = 3.44$, $SD = .959$, $n = 43$) with a large effect size ($\eta 2 = .142$). For closure ($F (4, 126) = 3.503$, $p = .01$) NGO ($M = 4$, $SD = 1.107$, $n = 32$) had a higher mean than statutory ($M = 3.07$, $SD = 1.473$, $n = 41$) with a medium effect size ($\eta 2 = .1$). These differences indicate a higher occurrence of karakia in NGO supervisors' sessions, which may due to more Māori supervisors in NGOs ($n = 10$) than statutory ($n = 7$) and health ($n = 2$). For discussion, the differences show a higher occurrence of discussion amongst the sessions provide by private practice supervisors than the other areas listed. This finding may be due to the

small number of private practice supervisors. The finding regarding supervisors in NGOs having a greater occurrence of discussion, summarisation and closure in their supervision sessions than statutory reflects differences in the supervisory practices amongst the supervisors in the two respective sectors. Likewise, the previously identified differences concerning ad hoc and informal consultations which occurred more amongst statutory supervisors is another clear supervisory practice difference.

The ethnicity differences were for karakia (F (4, 126) = 15.388, p<.001) with Māori (*M* = 3, *SD* = 1.414, *n* = 22) having significantly higher means than 'other' (*M* = 1.5, *SD* = .941 *n* = 14), NZ European/ Pākehā (*M* = 1.33, *SD* = .697, *n* = 85) and Indian (*M* = 1 , *SD* = 0 *n* = 2). The effect size of this difference was large (η2 = .328). This difference aligns with the greater use of cultural approaches or models by Māori supervisors. It is also similar to the finding in the 2004 survey (O'Donoghue, 2010). The difference identified for social work experience concerned prioritisation (F (6, 127) = 2.322, p = .037) with those with >31 years' experience (*M* = 4.4, *SD* = .737, *n* = 15) having higher means than 16–20 years (*M* = 3.38, *SD* = 1.321, *n* = 29). The effect size was medium (η2 = .099). This difference was unexpected and raises questions for further research regard whether there are differences in the occurrence of prioritisation within supervision sessions due to the supervisor's social work experience.

The supervisory experience mean differences were for discussion, decision-making and action planning. The differences for discussion (F (6, 129) = 2.790, p = .014) were that 26–30 years (*M* = 5, *SD* = 0, *n* = 4) and >31 had higher means (*M* = 5, *SD* = 0, *n* = 2) than those with 1–5 (*M* = 4.44, *SD* = .574, *n* = 52), 6–10 (*M* = 4.43, *SD* = .655, *n* = 35) and 11–15 (*M* = 3.95, *SD* = .921 , *n* = 21) years. The effect size was medium (η2 = .115). For decision-making (F (6, 128) = 3.297, p = .005) 26–30 years' supervisory experience (*M* = 5, *SD* = 0, *n* = 4) had higher means than 1–5 (*M* = 3.92, *SD* = .837, *n* = 52), 6–10 (*M* = 4.34, *SD* = .539, *n* = 35) and 11–15 years (*M* = 3.67, *SD* = .966, *n* = 21). The effect size was medium (η2 = .134). For action planning (F (6, 129) = 2.404, p = .031) 26–30 years (*M* = 5, *SD* = 0 , *n* = 4) had a higher mean than those who had 1–5 (*M* = 4, *SD* = .907, *n* = 52), 6–10 (*M* = 4.29, *SD* = .572, *n* = 35), 11–15 (*M* = 3.71, *SD* = 1.007, *n* = 21) and 16–20 years (*M* = 4.21, *SD* = .579, *n* = 14). The effect size of this difference was also medium (η2 = .101). Taken as a whole, these mean variations indicate that supervisors with 26–30 years' experience were likely to have a greater occurrence of discussion, decision-making and action planning within their sessions than those with less supervisory experience. Due to the small number within the 26–30 year group, this difference may be related to sample size. Nonetheless, the finding indicates a need for further research regarding the influence supervisory experience has on the occurrence of these aspects within the supervision session. The supervisory training difference was for karakia (F (6,124) = 2.965, p = .01) with those who undertook a paper or module (*M* = 2.45, *SD* = 1.395, *n* = 20) having a higher mean

Table 7. Occurrence of Aspects of Sessions

Aspect of sessions	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
Discussion of item(s)	136	4.40	.671
Checking- in	135	4.33	.845
Action Planning	135	4.11	.823
Decision-making	135	4.07	.794
Agenda setting	135	4.04	1.003
Summarisation and review	135	3.93	.924
Prioritisation of items	134	3.86	1.012
Preparation	136	3.78	.964
Closure	131	3.63	1.278
Evaluation	135	3.41	1.122
Karakia	131	1.66	1.087

*Occurrence ranged from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*almost always*).

than those who completed a short course ($M = 1.26$, $SD = .595$, $n = 39$). The effect size of this difference was medium ($\eta2 = .125$). This finding was unexpected and appears to reflect the differences in percentages of Māori who had completed supervision training ($n = 22$) with 38.1% ($n = 8$) completing a paper or module and only 2.1% ($n = 1$) completing a short course. That said, the finding does raise questions concerning the extent to which supervision education and training contributes to occurrence of cultural practices, such as karakia, within supervision.

Overall satisfaction and overall evaluation

The supervisors rated their overall satisfaction with the supervision they provided on a scale where 1= *not at all* and 5= *completely satisfied*. Amongst 137 respondents, the mean was 3.66 ($SD = 0.647$). Those who were very satisfied or completely satisfied (4 and 5 on the scale) were 62.1% ($n = 85$). Those who were less than satisfied (2 on the scale) were 2.9% ($n = 4$) and 35% ($n = 48$) of the respondents were satisfied (3 on the scale). The supervisors also provided an overall evaluation of the supervision they provided by rating this on a scale where 1= *poor* and 5 = *excellent*. The mean was 3.66 ($SD = 0.633$, $n = 137$) with 60.6% ($n = 83$) rating their supervision as excellent or close to excellent (4 and 5 on the scale). Only 1.5% ($n = 2$) rated their supervision as close to poor (2 on the scale), while 38% ($n = 52$) rated it as good (3 on the scale). The overall supervisor evaluation result for excellent or close to excellent was lower by 18.6% than the 2004 survey of ANZASW members. Possible reasons for this difference may be the differences between the samples of ANZASW members and Registered Social Workers with the ANZASW sample having a lower percentage of respondents from the statutory sector than the current survey (cf. 7.7% than 31.2%). Alternatively, the differences may be due to different expectations of supervisors by the present-day respondents in comparison to those who respondent in the previous survey.

Summary and discussion

The survey has revealed that the supervisors were from a cross-section of areas of practice, mostly female, and older in age than their colleagues. They were predominately NZ European/Pākehā and heterosexual. There was a lower proportion of Māori, Pacific peoples, Indian and Other ethnicities than amongst all respondents of the survey. The supervisors had a higher percentage of degrees in social work, and more were registered under section 13 than the wider sample. They were also more experienced as social workers, and their supervisory experience, whilst varied, showed that the majority had less than 10 years' experience with only 10% being very experienced in that they had more than 20 years' experience. Most had completed some education and training in supervision. This profile raises questions regarding the future supervisory workforce development, in particular, how can the supervisory workforce be developed to be more aligned with: a) the demographics of registered social workers; and b) the client demographics. Allied to this is the challenge to increase Māori and Pacific supervisory capacity in the profession and in each area of practice. This is an important professional issue, particularly given that the survey demographics indicate that there is a NZ European/Pākehā predominance amongst supervisors. Another challenge for the profession concerns supervisory education and training whilst most completed some form of education and training it is noted that 12.3% ($n = 17$) had no supervision training or qualifications and do not meet the preference expressed by SWRB (2015) regarding professional supervision training. These results show a need for the SWRB to collect information about supervisors and their training and qualifications in supervision, so that the Board can examine the question of whether the preference within its policy is realistic or realised and to plan for the development of the

supervisory workforce as part of a post-qualifying framework for registered social workers. The collection of this information by the SWRB could also contribute to the revision of the SWRB's supervision policy. This work is important as social work in Aotearoa New Zealand heads towards a scope of practice model of registration with the future possibility that a specific scope for supervisory practice could be on the horizon.

Turning to the supervisors' supervision practice, the results show that the supervisors provided a range of forms of supervision over the 12 months prior to the survey, with individual, clinical/professional, internal, student/fieldwork placement and peer being the most common forms. They had a median number of four supervisees and the average number of sessions provided ranging from one to five through to over 20 a month. Most supervisors provided between 1 and 10 sessions a month. It was notable that the provision of supervision sessions differed across areas of practice with a larger proportion of supervisors in the statutory area providing more supervision sessions in a month than their colleagues in other areas of practice. Most of the supervisors had supervision agreements with their supervisees. The four who did not have agreements and the 10 who had oral agreements do not comply with the spirit of SWRB (2016) guidelines and, arguably, have not met their duty of care to their supervisees who are then at possible risk should the SWRB request their supervision contract when they are due to renew their practising certificate. The types of supervision contact most frequently provided were indicative of individual clinical or professional supervision approach. There was a prevalence of difference types of contact across areas of practice with the most notable of these being the greater use of ad hoc informal open-door consultations by statutory social work supervisors. The supervisors' used ideas from clinical models and approaches, primarily, strength-based, reflective, solution-focused practice, more than approaches and models that responded to diversity, oppression and colonisation. This raises questions for further research regarding how supervisors are responsive to social and cultural differences in both their supervisees and clients. Moreover, it also raises questions concerning how supervisors ensure that their supervision meets the SWRB (2016) Code of Conduct requirements that supervision is culturally relevant where the supervisee is Māori and culturally relevant, safe and responsive to Māori clients. These questions are also supported by the finding that karakia occurred least in supervision sessions with nearly two-thirds (65, 6%, $n = 86$) of 131 supervisors recording *not at all* and most of this group (94.2%, $n = 81$) being non-Māori. The aspects of the supervisors' sessions that occurred most were discussion of items, checking in, action planning and decision-making. Evaluation within sessions occurred to a slightly lesser extent and this was not surprising since this paralleled the 2004 survey findings (O'Donoghue, 2010). When analysed by frequency, evaluation occurred within their sessions to some extent for 96.2 % of 135 supervisors, and it occurred a lot, or almost always, for 52.6%. This differed from that of Davys et al. (2017) who noted that 36.7% of the supervisors in their study reported evaluating on a session-by-session basis. The reasons for this difference may be due to the differences in the samples and how the questions were framed. Nonetheless, the results highlight that the questions regarding how evaluation occurs, what it involves, and the accuracy and appropriateness of the evaluation require further research (Sewell, 2018). Overall, the majority of supervisors were satisfied with their supervision and evaluated it positively. It is of concern that the percentage of those who evaluated their provision of supervision as excellent and close to excellent (4 and 5 on the scale) was 18.6 % lower than in the 2004 survey. Whether the reason for this was due to the differences in the sample or time periods is unknown. This finding also reinforces the importance of further research in regard to evaluating supervision.

Significant mean differences in relation to area of practice, ethnic identity, social work experience, supervisory experience, recognised qualifications and supervisory education and training were also identified. These differences are summarised in relation to the respective independent variable in Table 8. The most differences were for areas of practice. These differences, when considered as group, indicate that across areas of practice there are differences in the forms of supervision, types of supervisory contact, and occurrence of aspects within the supervision session. These differences are evidence of diverse supervisory practices. In addition, they also indicate that the supervision provide by private practitioners, NGOs, health and statutory supervisors is influenced by their practice setting. The differences show that there are many

Table 8. Significant Mean Differences Summary by Variables

Variables	ANOVA	Mean Differences p<.05	SD	Effect size Eta squared
Area of Practice • External supervision	F (4, 117) = 4.270, p<.01	Private Practice 5 Health 2.6 NGO 2.5 Statutory 1.59	Private Practice 0 Health 1.821 NGO 1.689 Statutory 1.229	Medium .127
• Checking in concerning work plans and activity	F(4, 130) = 3.556, p = .009	Private Practice 5 NGO 4.42 Statutory 4.3 Health 4.16	Private Practice 0 NGO .663 Statutory .832 Health .857	Medium .099
• Formal team sessions	F (4, 123) = 3.407, p = .011	Education & Training 4 NGO 2.39 Statutory 2.07 Health 2.02 Private Practice 1	Education & Training 1.095 NGO 1.585 Statutory 1.191 Health 1.407 Private Practice 0	Medium .1
• Formal team sessions	F (4, 125) = 2.666, p = .035	NGO 2.67 Statutory 2.41 Health 1.82 Private Practice 1	NGO 1.594 Statutory 1.264 Health 1.236 Private Practice 0	Medium .079
• Adhoc informal open door consultations	F (4, 126) = 4.070, p = .004	Statutory 4.38 Health 3.24	Statutory 1.118 Health 1.347	Medium .114

<table>
<tr><td>• Karakia</td><td>F (4, 126) = 5.200,
p = .001</td><td>NGO
2.27
Health
1.44
Statutory
1.34</td><td>NGO
1.257
Health
1.013
Statutory
.794</td><td>Large
.142</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Discussion of items</td><td>F (4, 131) = 2.672,
p = .035</td><td>Private Practice
5
NGO
4.64
Health
4.42
Statutory
4.19</td><td>Private Practice
0
NGO
.549
Health
.667
Statutory
.699</td><td>Medium
.075</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td>F (4, 131) = 2.672,
p = .035</td><td>NGO
4.64
Statutory
4.19</td><td>NGO
.549
Statutory
.699</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><th>Variables</th><th>ANOVA</th><th>Mean Differences
p<.05</th><th>SD</th><th>Effect size
Eta squared</th></tr>
<tr><td>Area of Practice
• Summarisation</td><td>F (4, 130) = 5.384, p<.001</td><td>NGO
4.27
Health
4.08
Statutory
3.44</td><td>NGO
.801
Health
.837
Statutory
.959</td><td>Large
.142</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Closure</td><td>F (4, 126) = 3.503, p = .01</td><td>NGO
4
Statutory
3.07</td><td>NGO
1.107
Statutory
1.473</td><td>Medium
.1</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ethnic Origin
• Cultural supervision</td><td>F (4, 120) = 15.786,
p<.001</td><td>Māori
3.3
Other ethnicities
1.69
NZ European/Pakeha
1.48</td><td>Māori
1.625
Other ethnicities
1.109
NZ European/Pakeha
.838</td><td>Large
.345</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td></td><td>Pacific Peoples
3.5
NZ European/Pakeha
1.48</td><td>Pacific Peoples
1.414
NZ European/Pakeha
.838</td><td></td></tr>
<tr><td>• Cultural approach or model</td><td>F (4,126) = 6.975, p<.001</td><td>Māori
3.86
NZ European/Pakeha
2.47
Other ethnicities
2.46</td><td>Māori
1.037
NZ European/Pakeha
1.185
Other ethnicities
1.127</td><td>Large
.181</td></tr>
<tr><td>• Narrative approach or model</td><td>F (4,127) = 4.891, p = .001</td><td>Māori
4.41
NZ European/Pakeha
3.28
Other ethnicities
2.79</td><td>Māori
.908
NZ European/Pakeha
1.24
Other ethnicities
1.626</td><td>Medium
.133</td></tr>
</table>

• Karakia	F (4, 126) = 15.388, p<.001	Māori 3 Other ethnicity 1.5 NZ European/Pakeha 1.33 Indian 1	Māori 1.414 Other ethnicity .941 NZ European/Pakeha .697 Indian 0	Large .328
Experience as a social worker • Managerial/administrative supervision	F (6, 115) = 4.906, p<.001	26-30 years 4.06 16-20 years 2.34 1-5 years 1.63	26-30 years 1.259 16-20 years 1.446 1-5 years 1.408	Large .204
• External supervision	F (6, 115) = 2.328, p<.05	>31 years 3.57 1-5 years 1.44	>31 years 1.453 1-5 years 1.333	Medium .108
• Prioritisation of items	F (6, 127) = 2.322, p = .037	>31 years 4.4 16-20 years 3.38	>31 years .737 16-20 years 1.321	Medium .099
Variables	***ANOVA***	***Mean Differences p<.05***	***SD***	***Effect size Eta squared***
Experience as a supervisor • Solution focused approach or model	F (6,126) = 2.420, p = .03	26-30 years 5 1-5 years 4.31 6-10 years 4.3 11-15 years 3.76	26-30 years 0 1-5 years .781 6-10 years .585 11-15 years .944	Medium .103
• Discussion	F (6, 129) = 2.790, p = .014	26-30 years 5 >31 years 5	26-30 years 0 31 years 0	Medium .115
		1-5 years 4.44 6-10 years 4.43 11-15 years 3.95	1-5 years .574 6-10 years .655 11-15 years .921	
• Decision-making	F (6, 128) = 3.297, p = .005	26-30 years 5 1-5 years 3.92 6-10 years 4.34 11-15 years 3.67	26-30 years 0 1-5 years .837 6-10 years .539 11-15 years .966	Medium .134

• Action planning	F (6, 129) = 2.404, p = .031	26-30 years 5 1-5 years 4 6-10 years 4.29 11-15 years 3.71 16-20 years 4.21	26-30 years 0 1-5 years .907 6-10 years .572 11-15 years 1.007 16-20 years .579	Medium .101
Recognised qualifications • Narrative approach or model	F (5, 126) = 3.490, p = .005	Diploma 3.53 Bachelors 3.74 PG Diploma 2.71 Masters 3.31 Other Qualifications 1	Diploma 1.224 Bachelors 1.152 PG Diploma 1.437 Masters 1.408 Other Qualifications 0	Medium .122
Supervisory Education & Training • Karakia	F (6,124) = 2.965, p = .01	Paper or module 2.45 Short Course 1.26	Paper or module 1.395 Short Course .595	Medium .125

practices of supervision, rather than a unified social work supervision practice (Beddoe, 2015). They also indicate an area for further research in relation to the similarities and differences of social work supervision across the fields of practice. The differences related to ethnicity reinforce the points raised regarding the predominance of non- Māori amongst the supervisors, the need to build Māori and Pasifika supervisory capacity and raise questions concerning how supervisors met the SWRB Code of Conduct (2016) expectations of being culturally relevant to Māori supervisees and culturally safe and relevant for Māori clients. The differences identified concerning experience as a social worker, or as a supervisor, recognised qualifications and supervisory education and training raise questions for further research pertaining to the extent that these differences influence supervisory practice.

Conclusion

This article has established a baseline regarding registered social workers who are supervisors as well as exploring the alignment between their provision of supervision and the SWRB policy and guidelines (SWRB, 2015, 2016).

The results revealed that, as far as could be ascertained, the supervisors' provision of supervision relative to forms, types of contact, use of ideas from supervision approaches and models and occurrence of aspects of the supervision sessions, displayed the hallmarks of individual clinical or professional supervision. Most supervisors met the SWRB requirements regarding written supervision agreements and the regular provision of sessions. A majority of supervisors were satisfied and evaluated their provision of supervision positively.

Nonetheless, questions remain related to the extent that the supervision provided is culturally relevant for Māori supervisees as well as culturally safe and responsive to Māori clients. A related concern is the predominance of non-Māori supervisors and the need to increase the diversity of

the supervisory workforce by increasing the percentage of Māori and Pasifika supervisors. There was no available information from the SWRB concerning supervisors' characteristics and there seems to be little evidence available against which to test or review the provisions pertaining to supervisors in the Code of Conduct or Board's policy (SWRB, 2015, 2016). The Board has no basis upon which to assess whether the expectations, preferences and requirements contained in its policy and Code related to supervisors are being met. It is hoped that this article provides evidence for the SWRB to engage with the matters raised about the supervisory workforce and in relation to its expectations regarding supervisors as the profession heads towards a scope of practice model of registration and the possible development of a post-qualifying framework for registered social workers.

Finally, the article has identified variances in the provision of supervision related to area of practice, ethnicity, experience as a social worker and supervisor, qualifications and supervisory education and training. These differences provide areas for further research and it is hoped that they will be pursued both within Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

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Implementing the integrated model of supervision: A view from the training room

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ABSTRACT

The *integrated model* remains fit for purpose as a framework for supervision which is under significant pressure in an environment of austerity and heightened demand. It will only realise its potential if the power of *integration* is understood and the influence of *context* is sufficiently recognised. Successful implementation relies fundamentally on two things: the capacity of both supervisor and supervisee to engage in a relationship, and the availability of systemic support for both that relationship and what it is designed to do.

This viewpoint explains the model, how we use it as trainers and some of the challenges to effective supervision practice we hear being discussed. Social work in the United Kingdom (UK) seems to be grappling with retaining the *social* when so much focus is on individualised approaches or, as we see them, fragmentary, partial understanding of context. We have summarised this fragmentation as being symbolised by 4Rs, and it remains our view that these elements need to be, and can be, integrated within the supervisory model. In the UK there has been a resurgence in strengths-based approaches, most recently, restorative practice. Arguably, being restorative has always been part of supervisory intention: we think the model supports this quite explicitly. Much emphasis is currently given to the (sometimes misunderstood concept of) resilience of practitioners and we believe the extrinsic elements of this need reiterating. The ability to reflect on the impact practitioners have on others, particularly those using their services, remains key. Finally, the issue of recording needs re-examination.

KEYWORDS: Supervision; integrated model; context; relationship; system; reflection; resilience; restorative; recording; capacity

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This commentary is from two social work qualified trainers who have developed and delivered learning interventions to support supervisory practice in publicly and voluntary-funded services in health, social work and education over a 20-year period in the UK. The core of our work sits in the supervision model designed by Tony Morrison (2005) and developed in association with Jane Wonnacott (2012). It is important that we acknowledge our roles as Associates of Wonnacott's Consultancy, In-Trac, which gives us access to conversations with colleagues who have provoked our thinking. We think it is time to emphasise the continuing relevance of the model, and to propose that it is reinforced in two ways: through a reinvigoration of its core elements and principles and by reinforcement of the importance of context through cornerstones of organisational support. The model's colloquial title of "4x4x4" has led to the concept of integration becoming implicit. We suggest that we should return to the original title of the "Integrated Model" to make explicit its overall intended outcome.

This commentary explains the reinforced integrated model, how we use it in the training room and some of the recurring

challenges to effective supervision practice that we hear being discussed. Social Work in the UK is struggling to retain the *social* in a system lately focussed on philosophies that emphasise individual responsibilities and solutions. We believe there is a tendency for practice-level individualism to be mirrored in supervisory process and for professionals (and supervision dyads) to be decontextualised. We say organisational context matters and that this aspect of the model, in particular, currently needs additional emphasis. At a time of some emergence of *connecting* approaches in the UK, we have taken four related contemporary issues to demonstrate the continuing relevance of the model as a parallel process to practice and a mechanism for achieving better contextualisation. First, there has been increasing adoption of strengths-based approaches, most recently, restorative practices. Being restorative has always been a key function of supervision with an intention that supervisees leave restored to their best selves, clear on values, purpose and role. Secondly, the resilience of practitioners is currently much espoused; this is useful if the concept is not (mis) understood as an individual trait. Our third concern, reflection, is much in vogue across the helping professions, with increasing recognition that achieving insights is easier with input from someone else. Finally, we will look at the recurring concern with recording and the consequences of an apparent obsession with information capture.

The integrated model of supervision

The model is, first and foremost, an *integrated* one. In this iteration it has 16 components which need to be understood in relation to each other. Each four-part element has coherence and denotes, in turn, interests (four stakeholders); purposes (four functions); process (four aspects of reflection); and foundations (four cornerstones). Each element is necessary but not sufficient. These are depicted in the following diagram originally devised by Rothwell and extended, with the addition of the cornerstones, by Sturt. The metaphor of construction is useful in training and gives us a vehicle for building the model in a way that helps participants see the whole. This is not a new model; it is a reinforced version of that designed by Morrison (2005) and extended by, and with, Wonnacott (2012, 2014).

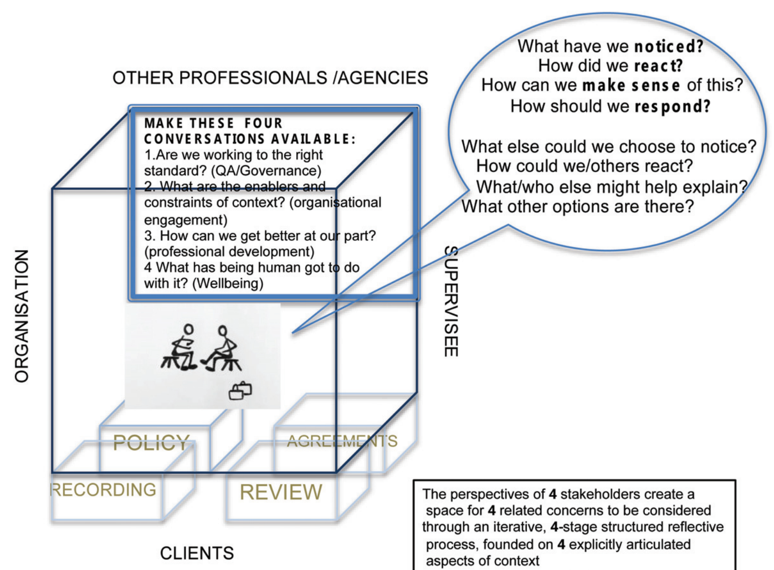

Figure 1. Constructing the integrated model of supervision (Rothwell & Sturt, nd).

The cuboid structure (four walls) illustrates the need for supervision to continuously hold multiple perspectives in mind: the person using services, the supervisee, the organisation and those in the wider professional and community system. The conception of four stakeholders works most effectively if we recognise their perspectives exist in relation to each other, collaborating and/or competing for space and airtime, for influence and interest in the business of supervision. Beyond this boundaried space, of course, others may influence and be influenced by supervision conversations. We use this to talk about walls closing in (dominating process) or crumbling; to explore *walls that speak* to make sure that voices (e.g., *the children's wall*) are included.

The poster on the wall reminds the supervisory pair of their agreed business: supervision may legitimately address management issues (quality assurance and governance); the joint responsibility of individual and organisation (mediation); development of practice and practitioner; and support their wellbeing. These four functions are held in tension, requiring explicit attention be paid to how both parties authorise each other to participate. Integrating them means that, for example, when a supervisor addresses performance with an eye to unmet standards, she must also be mindful of her human responsibilities to notice and manage the impact of shame or hurt, while also being prepared to debate the supervisee's professional stance. In training we explore the frictions and allegiances between the personal, professional and organisational identities of each individual. Disaggregating the functions, or splitting them between different relationships creates a tendency for splits to appear in the organisational system, unless this is specifically addressed through triangulated agreements.

A key strength of the integrated model is the attention it pays to context through the mediation function ("organisational engagement" in Figure 1). This is reinforced here by the conception of the foundational strength of the cornerstones: the supervision policy determining the organisational expectations and standards, the agreement negotiated between supervisor and supervisee about what will happen in the space, what needs to be recorded of the process and how it will be reviewed. The relationship has to be organisationally mandated and explicitly negotiated, supported and quality assured, otherwise it is in danger of becoming optional; a luxury busy professionals cannot afford or, worse, evidence of their emotional instability or lack of professional knowledge.

The fourth element is a four-stage structure for reflection ("the supervision cycle" Morrison, 2005; Wonnacott, 2012) which helps practitioners share an *account* of their practice, and themselves in practice, as well as a means by which they can notice their own choices (to perceive, react, consider and respond in certain ways) and so take responsibility.

The whole can be conceptualised as a safety-minded space created for communication about complex practice, a structure to which we can return when the going (inevitably) gets messy, ambiguous and anxiety provoking. Importantly, for this viewpoint discussion, this supervision space is not free-floating and context free. It is founded upon organisational mechanisms and assumptions which significantly influence its capacity to work effectively with the four contemporary concerns we have selected to illustrate its relevance.

The idea that supervision is concerned with restoration is not new (Kadushin, 1992; Morrison, 2005). Restorative practice (Wachtel, 2016) is fundamentally focussed on the restoration of social discipline in which both the *helped* and the *helper* are mutually accountable. The experience of the helped is a source of legitimate and fundamental information. While bringing their expertise and authority to bear, the helper does not presume to know better. This sets a direction of travel which is collaborative and such encounters demand a high level of connection and engagement. This is most effective when there is well established social capital, "a network of relationships [built on…] trust, mutual understanding, shared values and behaviour" (Wachtel, 2016, p. 1). Restorative practice embraces the challenge and complexity of human co-existence and conflict of needs; it presumes differences of opinion and the possibility of progress.

In the training room it is clear that many supervisors want to offer supervision that both supports and mirrors this kind of practice, but that very basic barriers exist, arguably because of the erosion of social capital in organisations subjected to a long period of austerity and the accompanying

ideology of individualism. This has impacted in fundamental ways on the experiences supervisors and supervisees have at work, just one of which is the loss of predictable and physically boundaried (i.e., non-transparent walls) spaces in which to carry out sensitive and demanding supervision. The "taken-for-granteds" of where, when and how supervisory encounters might take place have been disrupted, undermining the reliability of connecting in appropriately calibrated (trusting, mutually understanding) ways. The *off-siting* of supervision to other venues (cafes, homes, or online) contributes to disconnects between supervision and the organisational community. These shifts are accompanied and amplified by flexible, mobile practices (Ferguson, 2008), and increasingly porous organisational boundaries enabled by technological innovation (Disney et al., 2019), reinforcing the need for a confidential, safe space which holds and contains practice and practitioners.

Furthermore, central to restorative practice is an understanding that the expression of affect is what helps us function best (Wachtel, 2016). Inhibition of practitioners' opportunities to safely process the impacts on them of the danger, distress, anger, loss, grief and confusion of families takes its toll. Far from being restored back to functional and sensitive practice, the disconnect is reinforced as demands continue to be placed on them. Supervisors talk about being instructed to "just tell them," to consider "performance management" processes in response to deterioration in both wellbeing and practice, to question practitioners' capability and sometimes the "accuracy" of their accounts.

The integrated model cannot change this reality. But it can make explicit the decontextualisation of supervision as it becomes compromised or off-sited. The model calls all stakeholders into view, visually restoring the organisation's interest in, and noting its influence over, the supervisory conversation. From this position the supervisory pair can attend deliberately to the needs (and demands) of all stakeholders. This is not equal, but seeks to be equitable, and to articulate the prioritisation of some needs over others. So a (committed, passionate) supervisee is not expected to repeatedly self-sacrifice in the service of children while their organisation fails to manage the flow of demand, and others draw defensive boundaries around their contribution. They may choose to go the extra mile, but in the understanding that this will be recognised in the system and a balance restored. The balance of functions is invoked: standards (against legislated and policy requirements) are set, and the means to achieving them is explicitly understood to depend on a combination of the organisation's capacity to resource the work, the practitioner's capability, and the family's willingness. The practitioner's capability is itself a function of their current capacity to use structured reflection to notice the child and their circumstances, to engage emotionally, to grapple with meaning and so to respond effectively. Articulating this through supervisory exchange restores the balance of responsibility; restores the practitioner's relationship with themselves (self-esteem and self-efficacy) and others (secure base) and so enhances their resilience, and provides the means to identify ways of refining and improving the collective experience for everyone.

Supervisors describe, however, a system in which one stakeholder's demands (usually the organisation(s)') dominates to the exclusion of others too often and too much; where one function trumps others (usually management), and where incomplete or unbalanced narratives emerge, privileging one part of the process (usually *doing*) over others (usually *feeling and thinking*). The dominance of performance management culture has left practitioners wary of organisational responses to their needs, and reluctant or unable to discuss the impact of the work on them and, more importantly, to

accurately perceive the circumstances of the people they are trying to help.

Which has taken us to reflection. Supervisors tell us they are expected to provide opportunities for practitioners to reflect for a variety of reasons: processing emotional impact; developing thoughtful analysis; reaching defensible decisions; and improving outcomes for children. Alongside this, many supervisors must meet organisational demands to attend to every case held by practitioners in every supervision. Both the practical and emotional challenges are obvious. Somehow supervisors must convey a wish to develop autonomous professionalism while simultaneously undermining the practitioner's experience of being trusted. Our training room conversations suggest that too many organisations are complicit in patterns of presenteeism resulting from a focus on targets (usually time-based) often reinforced through naming and shaming rituals. Little wonder that supervision in such systems becomes focussed on quantifiable and tangible products. These are not new observations (see Munro, 2011) but they are depressingly current and recurring. What goes on in supervision is a reflection of the priorities of a wider context. Until the priorities (as reflected in what gets measured and rewarded) change, reflective process in supervision will remain limited or absent.

When the supervision cycle *is* practised, developing critical, reflective thinking, and facilitating opportunities that help practitioners to learn how to think about their work, they grow the skills of managing reflection by themselves; what Ferguson (2018, after Casement, 1985) labels "the internal supervisor." This might allow supervision to progress to a deeper, more reflexive, double loop (Argyris, 1991) process. The felt security that comes from these opportunities means that staff may manage their anxieties more effectively and so require fewer unplanned interactions. Over time, staff will internalise their expectation of contextual support and so develop trust that there is organisational commitment to maintaining their thinking capacity. While supervisors leave training enthused, our experience is that transfer and maintenance in the workplace is limited. While noticeable enthusiasm for group supervision with all the benefits it may bring is emerging, there is little evidence that organisations support and enable supervisors and staff to experiment and explore methods.

Supervision is about chains of connection through relationship; from organisation to supervisor to supervisee to child and back again. Relationships strengthen *resilience* (Grotberg 1995). Resilience, a slippery (and misused) phenomenon, reflects a person's positive adaptation despite experiences of adversity (Riley & Masten, 2005) and incorporates characteristics of both the individual and their environment. An individual's capacity to be resilient depends on being able to draw on both sources (Grant & Kinman, 2014). Supervisors feel responsible for staff wellbeing and are keen to fulfil their role in developing and sustaining resilience in their team members. But often, resilience is reduced to a measure of individual hardiness, the capacity to survive rather than the outcome of the complex interplay between the experience of being offered a secure base (the availability of people who genuinely bear their interests in mind,) and the capacity to draw on established beliefs about self-worth and self-efficacy.

Resilience has personal, professional and organisational aspects to it. In order to maintain and sustain resilience, practitioners need relationships from which they can draw strength. If organisations take no responsibility for enabling such relationships they run the risk that practitioners themselves become depleted, with diminished capacity to care and be curious about others. Being able to rely on relational support strengthens staff, team and organisational self-esteem,

and builds capacity sufficiently that staff respond positively to tasks they are asked to do. This happens because they know themselves to be competent from the nature of the relational contact, especially if that is explicitly negotiated as forming part of the emotional labour taking place in the space of supervision.

Our final brief thoughts are about recording supervision. This discussion mirrors those about records for those who use services and is contextualised by the common organisational demand for evidence that every case is discussed at every supervisory meeting. The experience of supervisors as technologically hamstrung data inputters makes it a common concern in training. Both supervisees and supervisors talk of turned backs and nonsensical, contradictory truisms about what recording reveals—that it gives an ultimate and accurate account that, if it is not recorded, it did not happen. The performance measure rarely clarifies issues of quality. We explore in training the need to negotiate and co-produce the recording, developing and deepening the relationship between supervisor and supervisee and so building the necessary trust for safe uncertainty about what is written. Accurately recording the nuances of this process so that it truly reflects the quality of the relationships, as well as stands up to external scrutiny, research or audit of the emerging recorded dialogue across the organisation and inspectorate, has proved challenging and remains disputed (Wilkins, Jones, & Westlake, 2018). The integrated model provides a set of principles: be explicit about perspectives; be clear about purpose; be explicit about exercising choice in what we see, feel, think and do. Once again, context matters: what is it that organisations—and regulators—want? What is it they can tolerate as evidence of thoughtful process?

These challenges convince us that the integrated model of supervision, when fully understood, continues to offer a framework to support helping professionals to think critically, experience containment and belonging and so to restore them to positions where they can bear witness to other people's lives.

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Burnout in social work:
The supervisor's role

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ABSTRACT

This article reflects on my supervisory practice in respect of burnout and is informed by current literature. It outlines how supervisors can best respond to prevent burnout, manage it if it occurs, and retain social workers in the profession following an experience of burnout.

KEYWORDS: Social work; supervision; burnout; retention

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Introduction

Social workers want to make a positive difference in peoples' lives and a world that is just. Our work context often includes emotionally intense work with people in need or crisis (or supporting those providing that service), along with consistently high, and unrelenting, organisational and professional expectations—or that is how it can feel at times. When we continually witness people experiencing inequality, deprivation, suffering and desperation, and we do not feel valued or supported despite our best efforts, even the most experienced, skilled and resilient social workers are susceptible to *burnout*.

We all know about burnout and the importance of self-care to prevent it. However, as a seasoned supervisor, I have worked with a number of social workers who have burned out. This has led me to reflect on my supervisory practice in respect to burnout. What can I learn from their experience? How does current literature inform supervisory practice in this area? How can I and other supervisors best respond? While this reflection validated many current practices, I also discovered some ideas to incorporate into my practice going forward. I conclude that, if we are informed and skilled around burnout, social work supervisors are best placed to support social workers in preventing it, managing it if it does occur, and supporting a return to work—and to the profession following a burnout—if this is what the social worker chooses to do. We understand the complexities and vulnerabilities of the social work role, and we have the vehicle of supervision.

Preventing burnout

Burnout is a commonly used term amongst social workers to describe a range of feelings, including tiredness, lethargy, negativity, and cynicism. It refers to job-related stress occurring over time that results in emotional exhaustion (feelings of being overwhelmed and worn out), cynicism (having become irritable, lost idealism, and withdrawn) and inefficacy (feelings of incompetence, lack of achievement and inability to cope) (Maslach, 2017). Rather than viewing burnout as an end-state, research is moving towards viewing burnout as a process (Maslach, 2017). This is useful because it suggests the possibility of intervening at any point when signs of stress or distress present and not waiting until a social worker hits the wall.

While my focus here is on the supervisor's role in supervision to prevent and manage

burnout, it must be noted that supervisors and managers within an organisation have a legal obligation under Health and Safety legislation to monitor working conditions and general stress levels, and to address any organisational factors causing harmful stress. Organisation-wide interventions that improve work conditions, such as the introduction of flexible or reduced working hours, can mean people are more engaged and better able to cope with the challenges of the work and are, thus, better preventative strategies.

However, it is usually a range of factors and circumstances emanating from the job, the individual and the environment that lead to a person experiencing burnout—this is the circumstance that I am referring to and for which supervision can be valuable.

A review of the resilience literature confirms the value of effective supervision in reducing stress and burnout, turnover intention and retention of social workers with effective supervision consisting of four key elements: the professional relationship; reflective process; professional development; and emotional support and safety for the social worker and their practice (Beddoe, Davys, & Adamson, 2014).

Effective supervision begins with the supervisory relationship. I have found taking time to get to know one another to establish and maintain a healthy supervision relationship based on trust, transparency and openness to learning is critical to fully achieving the purposes of supervision. This involves having a conversation and subsequently drawing up a written agreement about the purpose and shared understanding of supervision; expectations of the supervisor and supervisee; and how you are going to work together to build trust and safety that promotes transparency and a willingness to be open and vulnerable in supervision. Issues around confidentiality and privacy need to be clarified—particularly when you are also the line manager.

Having a supervision agreement, however, is not enough for supervisees to engage fully in supervision that enables meaningful support and learning. I have found a number of key areas useful to explore in gaining engagement in the supervision process. These include a sharing of relevant personal history, including how our differences and similarities might impact our supervision relationship, the supervisee's history and expectations of supervision, their stage of professional development and, of course, self-care. Some useful areas for exploration of self-care I have found include what sustains the supervisee in the work, what is important for their wellbeing, how they know when stress is having a negative impact on them and how I as the supervisor would know. I offer new supervisees the "Professional Wellbeing Self-Assessment" tool developed in Aotearoa New Zealand by another supervisor and myself for supervisees to reflect on and map their professional wellbeing across seven dimensions of their current professional life (Hirst & Nash, 2013). The value of having a written wellbeing plan that is regularly reviewed has been reinforced in this process.

It is important to ensure supervision is regular—an hour on a monthly basis minimum. While being regular does not ensure supervision is effective, regular supervision contributes to a social worker's wellbeing by enabling a regular check-in on wellbeing, providing an opportunity to address any distress early and reinstitute self-care strategies. It also maintains the supervisory relationship, reduces isolation and the potential for poor practice and the consequences of that. Supervisors have a role in educating social workers about the value of regular supervision for their long-term wellbeing, and actively encouraging regular attendance including ensuring any missed sessions are rescheduled.

Supervision's benefits are realised when supervision is about facilitating reflective practice not just about organisational requirements and caseload management.

Supervision can provide a safe and private space in which social workers can stand back and look at ourselves in our work: where it is okay not to know and to ask for help, to make mistakes and learn from them and to process emotions arising in the work. As Weld (2017) asserts, being curious and reflective enables us to develop both personally and professionally and can lead to more self-compassion and self-forgiveness when things do not go right.

The social workers I have worked with who have burned out shared similar stories. They had high expectations of themselves in terms of standards of practice and ethics, and felt frustrated and overwhelmed when workload and administrative demands compromised these. They were working longer hours than they were employed for. They had not had regular or effective supervision and lacked management support. Sometimes they had not been clear about their role and boundaries had become blurred. In some, a specific case triggered the burnout. In all cases their usual self-care strategies had fallen away. They had stopped exercising, were eating more junk food, or eating less, drinking more alcohol, were not sleeping well, and had reduced their family and social activities to cope. Their personal and professional relationships had become strained. They had not recognised the seriousness of the signs, often dismissing them as being "just how it is" working as a social worker in this environment. Burnout came as a shock, seeming to happen suddenly, leaving them confused, exhausted and anxious. Because of the impact on their physical and mental health, they were all determined for it not to happen again. Key strategies they employed included making supervision a priority, attending regularly and enlisting the support of their supervisor to address stress and remind them of their self-care strategies to keep them safe from another burnout.

Self-care strategies that keep us healthy and fit enable us to be more engaged and effective in our work.

Besides the Professional Wellbeing Self-Assessment tool already mentioned there are online tools available that enable us to check in on our personal and professional wellbeing, for example, the "Work on Wellbeing Assessment" (WoW, 2019) that consists of a collection of validated psychometric scales and scientifically informed questions from the psychology literature that assess various aspects of wellbeing.

Many social workers apply the Tapa Whā model in their practice (Durie, 1994). Evidence exists that the model's four elements of wellbeing are important in social workers' reporting high levels of their subjective wellbeing (Graham & Shier, 2010). While we have our own ingredients that make up each element for our wellbeing, ensuring all of these elements are integrated in our self-care strategies is important and something supervisors can encourage and monitor.

There is evidence that mindfulness increases a feeling of wellbeing and positively affects the service social workers provide to their clients (McGarrigle & Walsh, 2011). Mindfulness practice can be challenging for social workers who are busy and stressed but the benefits of learning to appreciate who we are now, what is working well, what is good enough, and the goodness there is in the world cannot be underestimated in terms of improving our wellbeing. This can give us the strength and energy we need to work for social change and social justice—a task that is never done and cannot be done alone.

Managing burnout

If stress that is detrimental to our wellbeing is prolonged it can result in social workers "running on adrenaline" and unable to "see the wood for the trees" often due to fatigue, insomnia, lack of nutrition and substance misuse. Being in this state can result in complaints about their attitude/ behaviour or performance, sometimes an

inability to get out of bed, go to work or face clients, physical illnesses, inability to make decisions, breakdown in relationships, resisting change, anxiety and/or depression. If this occurs, supervisees need to be advised (or directed) to see their GP for medical advice. In my experience, this often results in taking extended leave from work for sleep, rest, relaxation and a gradual return to activities such as exercise and healing to get their holistic wellbeing back on track. When the social worker is assessed as ready to return to work, a supervisor can advocate for a rehabilitative process that may involve part-time work or light duties until the social worker feels strong enough physically and emotionally to undertake their role fully. Supervisors also have a role in advocating for any organisational or environmental factors that contributed to the burnout to be addressed as part of a plan towards a full return to work.

Supervisees have benefitted from using supervision to debrief all the circumstances that led to them experiencing burnout to enable them to make sense of it and be able to develop a wellbeing plan that addresses all of the issues—job, environment and personal—that contributed. Going forward I intend to have available easy-to-read information about burnout, e.g., articles in the references section by Beddoe et al. (2014), de Montalk (2017) and Maslach (2017) and to design a poster that summarises the most common signs of stress in stages over time that could potentially lead to an experience of burnout. If a supervisee's stress is not alleviated, a therapeutic intervention may be required, such as ACT (Acceptance Compassion Therapy). This model includes tools relevant for supervisors to use in supervision and training can be readily accessed. I have rediscovered Brown and Bourne (1996), which outlines strategies supervisors can employ when working with supervisees experiencing stress and trauma.

Retaining social workers in the profession following burnout

Of course it is the decision of the social worker themselves as to their future employment; however, I have found those who have a planned return to work and engage in a process reflecting on their career to date including what brought them into social work and future options can enhance the likelihood of them remaining in their job and in social work. While we are not trained career counsellors, supervisors are well placed to explore a supervisee's fit with their current job and their career using reflective questions in supervision. This is particularly pertinent following an experience of burnout when social workers are often contemplating their future. Six areas of work life that can be used to assess a person's job-person fit have been identified (Maslach, 2017). If there is a perceived mismatch in these areas there is an increased likelihood of burnout and, conversely, the closer the perceived match the more likely the person will engage in the work. These areas are: workload, control, reward, community, fairness, and values—see Maslach (2017) for an explanation of each area. I intend to use these areas of work life as a new diagnostic tool to assess the suitability of a supervisee's current job.

It is common not to give much thought or planning to a career. While taking opportunities is valuable, giving some attention to career direction can also be helpful. An effective career plan is broader than work choices and needs to take a holistic approach including lifestyle choices, significant others and their preferences. A guided reflective process that begins with assessing the suitability of the current job, career to date, lifestyle preferences as well as work preferences for the future has proven helpful. Researching the work environment and preferences can follow, leading to decisions and action planning including supports and review. While such a process does not guarantee a social worker will choose to stay with their current employer, or in the profession, it does ensure that

decisions regarding their future are fully informed, considered and supported.

Conclusion

This reflection on practice and delving into relevant literature has reinforced how valuable and essential regular and effective supervision is in preventing burnout; and offers suggestions for the positive role supervisors and managers have in managing it if it does occur and for retaining social workers in the job and profession following an experience of burnout. It has resulted in my supervisory practice in respect of addressing burnout being enhanced.
I encourage other social work supervisors to also share their practice wisdom, so that our practice can be enhanced for the benefit of social workers and the profession.

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A manager's challenge: Is external supervision more valuable than increased training money for staff?

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ABSTRACT

INTRODUCTION: Supervision is regarded as an integral necessity for the development and maintenance of professional standards in social workers and is also common practice in other health professions. There is debate, however, about the relative strengths of external and internal supervision. External supervision is recommended but there is a significant financial cost in contracting external supervisors. Also, some argue that internal supervision better manages staff and simplifies communication.

METHODS: This article provides a case study of an agency considering changing its supervision systems and the relative benefits and risks that need to be considered.

FINDINGS: Each agency needs to consider how to get the best from staff development resources considering the time or finances available. External supervision can offer wider choice to staff with more ethical issues debated. However, this may limit other staff development funding.

CONCLUSION: It is recommended that every agency regularly review how to get the best supervision for its staff.

KEYWORDS: Supervision; external supervision; internal supervision

Supervision is an expected element of social worker development and has been written about in New Zealand since the late 19th century (Kane, 2001). However, it is also a contested concept and there is an ongoing debate about the relative benefits of internal supervision by line managers as against external supervision. There is also debate about how supervision is best used to develop and nurture competent social workers in the challenges of today's social work environments.

This article will describe a fictional agency, its situation and the debate amongst its managers on whether changing from monthly external supervision to only internal supervision will better serve their workers and clients. It will also describe the research findings.

The agency, "Care and Support Trust," is a fictional agency based on characteristics of a number of agencies I am familiar with and the manager's quotes in the article are based on viewpoints from different managers in different agencies I have worked with.

Care and Support Trust

Care and Support Trust is a mental health, non-government organisation which contracts with the District Health Board, Accident Compensation Corporation, and

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the Ministry of Social Development. It employs 70 frontline staff and has a CEO, three managers and three administration staff. It provides respite services, residential services and community support workers providing follow-up to people living in the community as well as employment consultant services. Currently, the staff within the residential service take part in monthly group supervision. The managers and community support work staff and employment consultants receive external individual supervision monthly. The managers have regular coaching sessions either fortnightly or monthly with staff as needed where caseloads are reviewed and personal development matters discussed. The agency is developing the next year's budget and is reviewing the value for money of the current supervision arrangements.

The current situation

Care and Support Trust receives $700,000 for its services. The expenses are broken down as follows:

Table: Care and Support Trust Costs

Expense	Cost	Percentage
Staff costs	$560,000	80%
Supervision	$35,000	5%
Vehicles	$21000	3%
Rent	$16,100	2.3%
Kiwisaver	$10,990	1.57%
Depreciation	$9,800	1.4%
EAP	$7,000	1%
IT	$7,000	1%
Phones	$3,920	0.56%
Training / Development	$3,500	0.5%
Rates	$1,190	0.17%
Miscellaneous	$20,500	2.93%
Surplus	$4000	0.57%

Managers are paid by salary and average 44 hours of work per week. To improve their financial viability, Care and Support Trust has removed two middle managers. This means that now each manager oversees a team comprising of its health professionals, Monday to Friday community support workers, peer support workers, medication support staff rostered 7 days a week and employment consultants. The aim of this is to provide an integrated approach to the varied clients' needs and means that managers are now working to the requirements of several different contracts and reporting systems, making their job more complex.

Management

The managers at Care and Support Trust are Bob Harvey, Sue Naughton and Mary Heke (all composites for illustrative purposes , not real people).

Manager Bob Harvey is a nurse with 15 years' experience working in mental health in the United Kingdom and New Zealand. He values providing care according to people's needs and the ability to alter the support arrangements so that people are offered flexible ranges of support unique to them. Bob uses his wide experience to relate stories of how he has seen this before and what worked. Staff leave sessions learning a lot from him and with clear expectations of what he wants to happen to resolve the issues presented.

Manager Sue Naughton is an experienced manager. She follows protocols and used to manage a rest home. Sue ensures people are following policies and works hard on understanding and explaining policies. Sue would like further training on coaching. She values people demonstrating initiative and compliance to policy and believes in quality management.

Manager Mary Heke is a registered social worker who follows the ANZASW supervision policy guidelines in her coaching. However, this means that extra one-to-one coaching is needed for mentoring and following up on organisational requirements. Mary wants increased staff training options and also wants to have

senior staff doing some of the coaching and mentoring. This would involve either developing the training herself which would involve 25 hours' work at an internal cost of $937.50, or sending staff to a day's training with a well-established centre at $495 + GST per person.

The proposal

The CEO John Naughton is looking for a financial solution that enables more choice and flexibility. The budget commits 95% of their funding and if unexpected costs occur then they can spend more than they receive, which happened last year for three months. In addition, the organisation has agreed with the union to provide employment assistance to staff and this will be an added cost. Staff currently get eight external supervision sessions per year at an average cost of $125 per session and an annual cost per person of $1,000.

Naughton has proposed removing external supervision except for health professionals and managers. This will reduce the number of staff getting external supervision by 28 and save $28,000. It will double the training and development budget and create a financial cushion of $28,500 giving increased flexibility for any unexpected costs.

A total of 35 of the staff are in the community services get one-to-one supervision; seven of these are health professionals. The annual costs for supervision average $1,000 per staff member plus mileage for travel at $21.90 plus the time cost of an average one hour's travel. The CEO's proposal to restrict supervision to health professionals would reduce the costs by $4,785.20 per month and $672 worth of staff time, however, it will increase the pressure on the managers' time.

In place of external supervision, staff will receive a monthly session devoted to what they want to discuss without any focus on organisation goals or performance management. The managers have already received supervision training as part of their professional development and will undergo a day's training on providing supervisee-led supervision. This will cost the Care and Support Trust $1,500 plus GST but will require extra coaching time for some staff monthly. This is estimated to cost $150 in time monthly for the four staff per manager expected to need extra support.

Supervision in the literature

This section will outline the definition and focus of supervisions and what social workers look for in supervision. It will then move to the outcomes of supervision and the reasons it is promoted in the mental health sector.

> Supervision is an interactive professional relationship and reflective process that focuses on the supervisee's practice, professional development and well-being with the objectives of improving, developing, supporting and providing safety for the practitioner and their social work practice. (O'Donoghue, 2010, p. 346)

Supervision is mainly provided one to one. This can be with the line manager (internal supervision) or with another member of the organisation or from outside the organisation (external supervision). Supervision can also be provided in group format and occur as a peer-support arrangement. The focus of supervision is supportive, educational and administrative and mediational. Hughes and Pengelly (1997) saw supervision as focusing on self-development, the workers' learnings re their caseload and their organisational requirements.

Social workers' perceptions of supervision were researched by O'Donoghue, Munford, and Trlin (2006), who found that having a choice in supervisors was highly regarded as well as a supportive relationship with trust, honesty and openness. Participants emphasised it was important to regularly have a safe space and time to discuss matters that were important to the social worker. They valued a person with the ability to

develop a positive relationship and good knowledge and experience in their work. They also valued a style enabling them to learn and progress and that was interactive, supportive and empowering. They valued the accountability and safety this brought to their practice.

In recent years there has been some focus in the literature on the research evidence for supervision. Beddoe and Davys (2016) note that, although it is a reasonable assumption that supervision should improve staff practice, there is a lack of evidence linking supervision and improved consumer outcomes. In an important review of supervision research, Carpenter, Webb, and Bostock (2013) concluded that there was evidence that good supervision is associated with increased job satisfaction and retention of staff. Supervision is perceived to improve effectiveness of staff and there is some evidence that group supervision can increase critical thinking skills. It also improves workers' perceptions that they are being supported by their organisation.

The mental health workforce body Te Pou o te Whakaaro Nui (2013) developed a position paper on the role of supervision in the mental health and addiction workforce and noted that the benefits of professional supervision were promoting professional development, safe and ethical practice, staff wellbeing and improved outcomes for service users. Research by Sutcliffe (2007) noted that supportive supervision was linked to skill development and professional identity of mental health support workers.

Internal supervision

The social work literature identifies two main forms of supervision, internal and external. Internal supervision it can be linked to professional development and appraisal. In this article, one suggestion will be made on managing the tension between organisational requirements and professional development. Traditionally, only managers provided supervision to staff. This time was used to support the worker and teach them the skills for the role and the required organisational processes. The benefits of this mode are that the supervisor has access to information about their caseload and knows their skills and developments areas. The supervisor can also can see evidence of their work in the notes and reports and through participation in team meetings and case load reviews. This mode of supervision is easily linked to the performance appraisal process and any performance improvement plans, if necessary. Within the organisation it is easier to fully manage service delivery, facilitate professional development and focus practitioner work (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Rankine (2017) noted that internal supervision can be used to recreate and change team culture through exploring the assumptions behind staff actions and the organisation's policies and, if there are differences noted, whether they could be used to improve the client service.

Internal supervision does, however, tend to emphasise organisational policies and tends to focus on casework and organisational goals (Rankine, 2017). For this reason it can be useful to split the session between focusing on organisation requirements and using the supervision time to let the person explore possible options that would benefit clients most.

External supervision

The pros and cons of external supervision will be described. The merits of including external supervision amongst a range of supervision methods are highlighted. Beddoe (2011) links the sector shift towards external supervision with a need to be seen to manage risk. This could be related to a shift from practice development focused supervision to risk minimisation and monitoring particularly in the state sector. Additionally, in the New Zealand health sector since the 1990s, services have become increasingly multidisciplinary and the manager may well have a different professional training from their staff.

Therefore, in that setting, the supervisor would often not be the line manager. Cooper (2006) found that line managers received little feedback from supervisors and supervision was not linked to the staff appraisal process. She found that supervision was a private arrangement sanctioned by the organisation and the focus was still on ensuring quality services to clients.

Beddoe and Davys (2016) note the potential benefits of external supervision as the freedom to choose the relationship, the opportunity to critically reflect and critique one's own practice and the policies of the organisation. Practitioners are more likely to raise ethical dilemmas when using external supervision.

Beddoe (2010) argues that one of the pitfalls of external supervision could be an unhealthy collusion between disgruntled staff and a supervisor who is unaware of the organisation's performance requirements. She also thought an external supervisor had an ambiguous mandate for dealing with poor performance and that the external supervision may deepen the gap between management and front line staff. Beddoe questioned whether this meant external supervision was, potentially, professionally damaging.

External supervision relies on reported performance rather than the 360-degree vision of line management and that it created the loss of a conduit for transfer of practice issues and knowledge back to the organisation (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Other disadvantages include the removal of supervision from site of practice, lack of accountably to organisational standards and policy and lack of organisational accountability for standards of supervision (Beddoe & Davys, 2016). Supervisors may be unaware of organisation goals or values and how these are actioned. These issues could be addressed by communication between the three parties, manager, supervisor and supervisee (Morrell, 2001) and negotiated as part of the supervision contract. There can also be reports from external supervisors to line managers to address these issues. External supervision is not be considered enough on its own. Hirst (2001) recommended best practice as line management plus external supervision plus group or peer supervision.

Supervision is only one of a range of tools available to management. There is also appraisal, training, mentoring, coaching and line management direction. Organisation development is a way of combining staff and organisation and funder and clients' viewpoints (Hirst & Lynch, 2004; Tsui, O'Donoghue, Boddy, & Pak, 2017).

The debate amongst the managers at Care and Support Trust

Many of the points raised in the literature are illustrated in the debate among the managers of the fictional agency, Care and Support Trust, when they meet to discuss the proposal.

John advocates that "making this change this will give us more money for staff training if we recognise development needs and we will be able to fund two more to go to the Mental Health conference. It will put more pressure on us but staff will be travelling less and therefore have more client time." Bob agrees: "We will not be wasting money on people who are not learning from the supervision anyway. Some staff still do not know what to talk about at supervision and can't tell me what they learnt at external supervision. We need to keep supervision available to health professionals so they can meet registration criteria but it is a luxury to give it to all staff."

Sue, however, disagrees, "I give the best coaching that I can and I ensure staff achieve their KPIs but I don't have all the answers and sometimes it is useful for staff to talk to someone with a fresh viewpoint. Also, I cannot provide the cultural options that an external supervisor can offer." "That is true," agrees Mary, "and this change is going to create more pressure on us— although staff

will have more time, we will be under extra pressure to fit in the extra supervision." Bob adds, "We can use the senior staff to do some coaching that will extend their skills and help us."

John raises the point that "Some staff were not using external supervision which was a risk for us and some we sent to external supervision to address issues and we didn't really know what the outcome of that was." Mary counters: "We can improve that by communicating with the supervisor. Good supervision can encourage a staff person to bring back the learning to us. We can ask what have they learnt and get feedback for our organisation."

"If we do this," Sue states, "I will need extra training in supervision." Mary adds, "Maybe we will have more focused supervision with staff to upskill them but that doesn't always mean they will be willing participants. If a person isn't going to productively take part then internal isn't any better than external. I worry we are creating a risk by removing people's choice. People change in their supervision needs as they develop and often need different supervision styles. I change my supervisor every two to four years so that I keep getting a fresh perspective. Staff will not be able to do this and will possibly become stale in their approach."

John finishes, "We need to come up with a solution that keeps us financially viable and enables us to promote staff wellbeing and develop their skills and practice."

Eventually they decide to continue with the current system. However, they also provide a day's training on providing supervision to their senior practitioners at a cost of $1,500 plus GST. Supervision with the senior practitioners is then offered to staff as an alternative to external supervision with six staff taking up this offer and reducing supervision costs by $6,000. Training is also developed for new staff on what to expect from supervision. Additionally, a plan is made to communicate to the supervisor if a staff member is placed on a performance improvement plan and request their feedback after three months as a backup for the support offered by the direct manager. They decide to review these processes again in a year.

Conclusion

This case study was created to demonstrate the debates that can occur in an agency when choosing the best supervision supports for staff. Organisations have to choose between the time costs of internal supervision or the financial cost of external supervision. External supervision is considered best practice in literature but are the financial costs worth the decreased training or staff resource costs it may defer? Internal supervision requires ongoing training and dedicated manager time to ensure supervision occurs. This subject is an ongoing debate amongst social service organisations.

How do you think an agency like the Care and Support Trust should measure their progress in a year's time? What would you recommend to such an agency in this situation to meet their need to provide the best service for the people they work with within the framework they have?

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Newly-qualified social workers: A practice guide to the Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (3rd ed.)

Steven Keen, Jonathan Parker, Keith Brown, and Di Galpin (Eds.), 2016
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This practice guide has been written to assist newly qualified social workers (NQSWs) in their first year of employment. The specific focus is for NQSWs in the UK, where there is a requirement to meet specific knowledge and skills competencies in the structured Assessed and Supported Year in Employment (ASYE). The obvious limitation of this practice guide for an international readership is this specific focus on UK social work and legal processes. However, there are some helpful sections that can apply to any new social worker.

The practice guide is an edited book with chapters including the transition from student to social worker, critical reflection and continuing professional development (CPD), supervision, induction, self-care, team-work and service development. There are appendices with practical advice about using written skills, court skills, child protection, and safeguarding adults. The guide was developed as a result of research findings from tracking NQSWs in the UK. It was originally published in 2009 and has been updated twice since then in response to updated legislation. Each chapter is well structured, with clear signalling of the relevance to the ASYE professional capabilities, knowledge and skills. Each chapter concludes with signposting to further reading and a summary of the key points. Chapters include case studies, self-reflection activities, and relevant figures and tables illustrating theoretical concepts.

A distinguishing feature is the range of contributors, including service users, carers, managers, academics and NQSWs. Vignettes that include the voice of service users and carers are poignant, helping to link theory to practice, and serve as reminders of the importance of effective social work. The practice guide has been written in such a way that readers can dip into areas of interest as needed. It covers a broad range of areas, and readers are encouraged to follow further reading suggestions to gain a depth of understanding on specific topics.

After getting through the chapter about the ASYE process, which has no relevance to social workers outside of the UK, there were some gems to be found. From my experience working alongside new graduate social workers in Aotearoa, there were several topics that are relevant to NQSWs, as well as good reminders and reflection for more experienced social workers.

The chapter by Steven Keen, Lynne Rutter, Keith Brown and Di Galpin, with contributions from Angela (NQSW) and Jane (social worker) about CPD and critical reflection provides a good overview of the purpose of CPD. They encourage social workers to take ownership of CPD, and to identify what learning is required to meet personal and professional goals. They explain the CPD cycle by Brown, Rutter, Keen, and Rosenorn-Lanng (2012), as well as Rutter and Brown's (2015) elements and activities of critical *expert* practice, dimensions of critical reflection, and

framework of practical reasoning principles. This is then linked to a reflective exercise, asking the reader where they want to be in five years, and the skills required for this. The chapter does rely on a CPD case study from a social worker who completed a post-qualifying Masters degree. Given the relative rarity of additional postgraduate education for social workers in Aotearoa, there is scope for further CPD examples that are more applicable to international readers. CPD discussion is relevant for all readers, but particularly for social workers in Aotearoa, with the SWRB requirement of up-to-date CPD logs available for audit. This chapter provides some useful guidance about how social workers can use CPD in a meaningful way aligned to learning goals and professional ambitions.

Managing transitions is addressed in the chapter by Lee-Ann Fenge with contributions from Mark Hutton (manager), Tom (NQSW) and Tom's university tutors. After moving beyond the UK-centric tips for how to search for social work jobs on UK websites, there are nuggets of gold for job-seeking NQSWs. From my own experience interviewing new graduates for social work positions, I wish that this information was available to all candidates. There are excellent practical suggestions for how to approach job applications, including ensuring no gaps in employment history, how to choose referees, CV formatting, and tips to be best prepared for an interview. Tom's case study provides excellent guidance for how to do this well. There is also discussion about the psychological transition from student to social worker, paying particular attention to the loss of a class of peers, which may often be overlooked by eager new social workers.

Ivan Gray, with contributions from Mary (NQSW) and Karen (carer), wrote the chapter on managing induction, probation and supervision. Again, there is a theme of NQSWs taking ownership of their role in ensuring helpful induction and supervision, in partnership with other team members, managers and supervisors. Of concern is a case study about Mary's first job, where she often starts early and finishes late. This appears to have been portrayed as a good example for a NQSW. While this may be the reality for many NQSWs, it does not seem helpful to have this presented as an exemplar. The subsequent chapter about thriving in social work, written by Kate Howe, with contribution from Pru Caldwell-McGee (NQSW), is a lovely antidote for such pressures. There is excellent discussion about stress, sphere of influence and control, and self-management.

While this guide book is written specifically for NQSWs in the UK, with whole sections that are irrelevant for other readers, there is value to be found. Professional and self-development for NQSWs is important, and our new social workers should be supported as they transition into the workplace. There is a role for all of us in this work, in order to support and retain social workers with up-to-date research knowledge and fresh-eyed enthusiasm for social work.

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