‘Interprofessional supervision: A matter of difference’.

Preliminary findings from research

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Interprofessional supervision occurs when the participants of supervision, the supervisor and the supervisee, do not share the same professional training or practice.
A BREAK FROM TRADITION

Traditionally professional supervision has been required to occur between two people from the same discipline or profession
(Bernard & Goodyear, 2009; Bogo, Paterson, Tufford & King, 2011; Hair, 2013; O’Donoghue, 2004; Townend, 2005).

Interprofessional supervision challenges these traditional modes of professional supervision and as such is forging new territory.
PREVIOUS RESEARCH

Interprofessional supervision has been a mode of supervision practice for over 20 years and yet to date here has been little research into this form of supervision practice.
FOUR FACTORS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED AS CONTRIBUTING TO THE DEVELOPMENT AND POPULARITY OF INTERPROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION.
### The Debate:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Concerns</th>
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<tr>
<td>The development of skills and knowledge</td>
<td>The management of difference: knowledge, values, skills and professional contexts</td>
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<td>(Beddoe &amp; Howard, 2012; Townend, 2005)</td>
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<td>An awakening to the assumptions of practice and the development of critical thinking</td>
<td>The difficulty of managing different ethical and practice codes and reporting on profession based competencies</td>
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<td>(Bogo et al., 2011; Hutchings et al., 2014)</td>
<td>(Beddoe &amp; Howard, 2012; Crocket et al., 2009; Hutchings et al., 2014).</td>
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<td>A better understanding and appreciation of the different professional contributions, perspectives and roles in practice settings</td>
<td>That interprofessional supervision will lead to a weakening of socialisation to a particular profession and thus a weakening of distinct professional identity</td>
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<td>(Howard et al., 2013; Mullarkey et al., 2001).</td>
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Studies which have explored practitioners’ experiences of this mode of supervision record positive levels of satisfaction. 

(Howard et al., 2013; Hutchings et al., 2014; Townend, 2005)

“supportive, clinician-focused, content-oriented supervision offered by knowledgeable and skilled clinical experts was perceived as beneficial, regardless of the supervisor’s profession”.

(Bogo et al., 2011, P. 135).
Aim

explore, describe and map the ways in which the participants of interprofessional supervision work with each other and engage in supervision practice.
The research is located in Aotearoa New Zealand where interviews were conducted with Expert Professional Practitioners (practitioners who both hold a supervision qualification and who are engaged in an interprofessional supervision relationship).

9 supervisees and 9 supervisors were interviewed.
FINDINGS TO DATE:

SUPERVISEES

9 interviews

- Age range 31 – 70
  78% in 41 – 60

- Years in practice
  55.5% between 11 - 30 years

Years of interprofessional supervision

- 1- 5 years
- 4 - 6 years
- 11 - 15 years
SUPERVISEES’ PROFESSIONS

- Psychologist 1
- Nurse 3
- Social Worker 3
- Counsellor 1
- Patient advocate 1
PROFESSIONS OF THE SUPERVISEE’S SUPERVISOR

- Counselling x 2
- Counselling /corporate management
- Counselling/ministry (religion)
- Counselling/nursing
- Counselling/psychotherapy/nursing
- Educational psychology
- Nursing
- Psychotherapy
SUPERVISEES

- 7 supervisees had monthly supervision
- 1 supervisee 6 weekly
- 1 supervisee 2 weekly

- Seven supervisees engaged in external supervision whilst 2 received internal supervision

- Eight supervisees indicated they had a choice of supervisor whilst one described this as a limited choice.

- All of the supervisees described an interprofessional aspect to their employment context
SUPERVISEES

5 supervisees reported that they did not have additional supervision

4 said they were also engaged in either
   Informal peer
   Formal peer
   External professional or
   Internal supervision

2 supervisees identified requirements of professional bodies to have same profession supervision

- Five of the supervisees also provided supervision:
  two to practitioners from other profession(s)
  three to practitioners from their own profession
**Findings to date:**

- **Age range 41 – 70**: 78% in 51 – 70
- **Years in practice**: 78% between 11 - 30 years

All the supervisors were in private practice as supervisors. Almost 90% were also in other employment – 2 in Health and 6 in tertiary education.
SUPERVISORS’ PROFESSIONS

- Community Psychologist
- Counsellor X 2
- Counsellor/social worker
- Counsellor/social worker/teacher/supervisor
- Counsellor/supervisor
- Nurse
- Nurse/counsellor
- Social Worker
PROFESSIONS OF THOSE THEY SUPERVISED

- Community work
- Counselling
- Dentistry
- Health and disability support
- Medicine (GP)
- Ministry (religion)
- Not for profit manager
- Nursing
- Osteopathy
- Police
- Psychology
- Social Work
- Youth Work
SUPERVISORS

- Supervision generally monthly
- Only one supervisor was engaged in internal supervision
- All supervisors indicated they had a choice of whether they wished to supervise their supervisee(s) though some indicated that not all supervisees had this choice.
- All of the supervisors described an interprofessional aspect to their employment context
ADDITIONAL SUPERVISION

- 2 supervisors reported their supervisees did not have any other supervision.

- 7 supervisors reported their supervisees were also engaged in a combination of:
  - Internal admin/line management
  - Peer
  - Professional
  - Group
Some findings
CHOICE

All supervisors had the ability to decline request:

criteria for agreeing to be a supervisor included:

- ‘Fit’ – personal
- Openness and potential for trust
- Supervisor’s own competence – skills and knowledge
- Status of professions

- Sometimes there was prior knowledge of the person
- Flattered by the request
CHOICE

SUPERVISEES (generally) had the ability to choose:

criteria included:

- ‘Fit’- personal - openness and potential for trust
- Looking for a very specific theoretical orientation or skill set
- Supervisor’s competence – experience and knowledge
- Often there was prior knowledge of the person
- or Recommendation
- Pragmatics of small communities - objectivity

# organisational policy
SUPERVISION PROCESS

Supervisors:

- Initial conversation regarding ‘fit’
- Contract – clarity about understanding of supervision, expectations, limitations, boundaries, clinical responsibility
- Conversation about difference: right and wrong and mutual learning
- Skills – appreciative enquiry, reflective listening

Reflections:

- Less assumptions
- Less forceful recommendation
- New openness to hearing what is
SUPERVISION PROCESS

Supervisees:
- Initial conversation regarding ‘fit’
- Contract – formal document wrapped around by an informal conversation.
- Conversations of difference ongoing
- Skills – appreciative enquiry, reflective listening

Reflections:
- Confidence in the supervisors’ supervision ability
- Very little difference
  - More careful detailing
  - Collective responsibility
That’s really interesting because I think what happens we educate each other around that and we negotiate those differences and talk about them. So she may say to me the way that I would approach that from this perspective might be this way, but I’m interested in how [your profession would] …. and she may have some assumptions about how my profession may approach that, but she doesn’t make those she puts it out there. So how [does your profession] do that?

(Supervisee participant)
BENEFITS

Supervisors:
- To think about own profession and challenge assumptions
- Open eyes to other perspectives, different ways of being, thinking, doing.
- Value and respect difference, richness and diversity
- Benefit to clients

Supervisees
- Provides a perspective on profession.
- Provides broader, fresh perspectives on self, knowledge and skills
- Opportunity to articulate and explore practice with a different professional
- Challenge to ownership of knowledge.
- Benefit to clients
LIMITATIONS

Supervisors
- Clinical practice
- Interprofessional supervision should not be a substitute for clinical supervision
- Different understanding between professions regarding supervision
- Personal challenges: honesty, tolerance for not knowing

Supervisees
- Clinical accountability
- Different understanding between professions regarding supervision.
- Lack of opportunity to hone profession specific skills/build professional identity.
- Lack of choice of supervisors
- Perceptions of a hierarchy of professions
QUALITIES

Supervisors

- Supervision training and expertise
- know strengths and limitations:
  - as a supervisor
  - as a practitioner
  - as a person

Participants demonstrate:

- Curiosity, Courage, Humility, Openness, Respect, willingness to learn
- An appreciation, excitement and openness regarding difference
- Find and appreciate commonalities
QUALITIES

Supervisees

- **Both Participants:**
  - a real curiosity and genuine wish to learn
  - not defensive about their own profession
  - Value and deeply respect all professions
  - Know what supervision is.

- Demonstrate:
  - Authenticity
  - Curiosity
  - Respect
  - Openness
  - Empathy
  - Confidence

Supervisors:

- Non-judgemental and good listeners
LEARNING

Supervisors and Supervisees

- About reflective practice
- About supervision
- Professional
- Personal
SUPERVISORS’ ADVICE

○ Be prepared to be:
  Challenged, Humble. Courageous,
  Willing to learn and to Ask if you don’t know

○ Make sure there is:
  Trust, Honesty, Genuine interest, Transparency

○ Trust yourself

○ Supervision
  Know what supervision is, Know standards of practice, Become familiar with the language,
  Attend to clinical practice, Negotiate a clear contract.
SUPERVISEES’ ADVICE

- Understand what supervision is and ensure:
  Clarity around limits, boundaries, That there is a clear contract

- Do your research and engage:
  A supervisor who is:
  Qualified, Confident, Reliable, Empathic, Listens

Be:
  Open and honest

Trust the process
REFLECTIONS
FRESHNESS, ENERGY AND EXCITEMENT IN THE CONVERSATIONS

It’s exciting, it’s exciting, it’s interesting, they turned up at my doorstep, they were there and I felt that I could do it. It was satisfying.

(Supervisor)
PROFESSIONAL GROWTH AND LEARNING

The learning from other ways of doing things, just the learning that you can gain from somebody else’s professional perspectives.
So it’s articulating your own perspective, but also learning about others and being able to use and adopt other ways of doing things. I think it gives a whole lot more opportunity and scope just for people (Supervisee)
I'm not into
you're this and I'm that.
I'm into
we share common ground and if we
don't, you know, how exciting is that -
let's explore.

(supervisee)
CONTEMPLATION OF A BROADER VISION OF PRACTICE

If people have a really good understanding of each other then they will feel less defensive and more able to communicate with each other and call on other people’s expertise and recognise it is really important not to know everything.

Supervisee
WILLINGNESS TO PUT CERTAINTY ASIDE AND LOOK FOR POSSIBILITY

helps me to just be a lot more open to hearing what they have to say and what they want to bring as opposed to feeling I have to align this with a code or a professional mandate

Supervisor
it is about an identity thing once you feel established and you have a good sense of who you are as a practitioner then you can venture out

(supervisee)
I’m firmly of the opinion that if you can supervise it doesn’t matter what the person’s profession is especially if you’re using [a] reflective learning model type thing. It is more about the way you facilitate because you are not being directive and you don’t need to know everything about that profession. That’s my opinion anyway.

(Supervisee)
INTERPROFESSIONAL SUPERVISION

... creates rich opportunities for learning and practice development but at times equally large difficulties can occur due to differences of status, values, language, theoretical orientation and approaches to practice. Such a supervisory process can therefore be a personal and professional challenge, as it requires the supervisor to constantly learn about and adapt to the professional needs of the supervisee. It is also a challenge for the supervisee who needs to be open and allow another to learn about their profession and its associated values.

(Townend, 2005, p. 588)
Thank you
REFERENCES


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