

ABSTRACT

Supervision training and practice has evolved from a uniprofession- based approach where counsellors provided supervision for counsellors and coaches provided supervision for coaches, to what I term cross-professional supervision, (a term I coined in 2010). While the practice of supervision is commonplace in most clinical and counselling training contexts, a culture that values supervision has not yet developed in many professions such as adult education, spiritual direction, police force, health care and hypnotherapy. Drawing on my own training in counselling supervision, and the learning gained through the design and delivery of professional products including a supervision text *The Soul of Supervision*, the following research project traces the leadership role I have taken as a senior practitioner and trainer in setting up and directing the first Masters programme in supervision within Ireland. A consequence of this development has been what I term an emerging cross-professional supervision practice (CPS) in which trained supervisors from differing professional and disciplinary backgrounds supervise practitioners from various professions and the consequential need for a new professional supervision organisation which I founded in 2005.

The practice of CPS has grown and to date there appears to be little research concerning the possible strengths and challenges of this practice for supervisors, supervisees or clients. Using a qualitative phenomenological inquiry this study explores the experiences of eight purposively chosen co- researchers, supervisors practicing CPS and in that sense knowledgeable about the field. Using qualitative interviewing, analysing the data thematically, reflecting the reflexive methodology of supervision, the interviews focussed on the co-researchers' experience of CPS training and practice. Themes were grouped together in related clusters and fell naturally into two related major themes 1) *Evolving Identities* and 2) *Emergent Professional Knowledge*. One of the most striking and consistent themes from the interviews was, the impact of transformational learning theory and ways of knowing, foundational to the training and practice, thus core elements for the Final product, a brief for a Manual on CPS. The study suggests that the uniprofessional approach across professions and accreditation requirements within counselling supervision, if left unchallenged, may limit the practice of CPS and the development of the profession of supervision. The study also suggests a need for ongoing training in CPS and further research into this emerging practice.