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**Out of the Closet:  
Experiences and  
Expressions of Spirituality  
in Supervision**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of  
the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Philosophy  
at Massey University, Palmerston North, New Zealand

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# **ABSTRACT**

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This research used a collaborative inquiry process approach to explore how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision. The inquiry involved an established professional development group of supervisors, of which the researcher was a member, and their associated supervisors in a four stage process of dialogue and reflection. From the data, experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision were clustered under the themes of magical and memorable moments, ordinariness, connections within the supervision relationship, supervisor choice, strength-based practice, the use of ritual and ways of asking questions. These experiences and activities were believed important to practicing biculturally and holistically. They were found to provide benefits not just in supervision but also in work with clients and in the practitioner's wider life and self-care. Conscious practice and the use of supervisee-appropriate language and questions was a consequence of participant research involvement. Ethical cautions regarding spirituality in supervision are identified and ways of advancing these are discussed. Recommendations for future debates, training, emphases in supervision and supervisor choice are proposed.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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Finally, I dedicate this work to the memory of my dear Dad, whose love, spirituality and belief in me has inspired and sustained me throughout my life.



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# **CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

Social work has enjoyed a long association with religion and spirituality. Many helping professions had their origins in religious, charitable and philanthropic organisations (Russel, 1998). However, from the 1920s, for over half a century, the connection between social service delivery and religious sponsors became less visible. Over this period the separation between church and state was more strictly adhered to and a more clinical, scientific and professional approach was adopted (Nash and Stewart, 2002, p. 133). In later years there has been a resurgence of interest in spirituality demonstrated in the literature, conference presentations and professional papers (Russel, 1998, p. 17). This interest in spirituality is evident in wider society and reflects a diversity of beliefs and practices, as books, media, study and travel provide opportunities for people to interact and learn about traditions different from their own (Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 17). It is in this context that the current research sought to determine how spirituality is experienced and expressed in the supervision of some helping professionals.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research uses a collaborative inquiry process to discover how spirituality is experienced and expressed in professional supervision by a group of people comprising supervisors and supervisees. This objective is achieved through a four-stage process.

Stage One - a professional development group of supervisors (known as the GG group<sup>1</sup>, of which the researcher is a member) discuss the research question together.

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<sup>1</sup> GG group- GG is an abbreviation for Good Gossip, the name adopted by the group as a feminist reclaim of not-so-good gossip.

Stage Two - the above group together review and analyse a video recording of their discussion in Stage One and share their reflections and analyses with each other.

Stage Three - the individual members of the GG group discuss the research question with their own professional supervisor.

Stage Four - the GG group come together again to discuss the implications of the research findings for their practice.

Finally, these accounts and experiences are analysed using the literature on both spirituality in supervision and spirituality in the helping professions. In light of the analysis, considerations for future practice are suggested.

## **PERSONAL JOURNEY LEADING TO THIS TOPIC**

I am the second of six Pakeha children, a married mother of six. I was born to university-educated Catholic parents. My mother was the dominant partner in the marriage and my father admired her intellect. My journey has taken me through studies in psychology and sociology, charismatic and social justice spiritualities and social work in diverse settings. During my third pregnancy I had the opportunity to be involved in the birth of Sophia - a women's spirituality group formed for women primarily from a Catholic tradition. Here I found a spirituality expressed in a new language with new symbols and images that spoke to my womanhood. It was the budding of a new transformation for me, a transformation that has had an ongoing effect in most areas of my life. This was my awakening to feminism and to understanding how feminisms unfold from women's experiences and practices (Fischer, 1988; Stanley, 1990; Brancroft, 1996). When asked to choose a symbol to represent my supervision practice as part of the Postgraduate Diploma in Social Service Supervision, I experienced, for the first time, permission being given to connect spiritual and professional aspects of my life. From this experience I developed a model of practice (Simmons, 2001) that named the spiritual context of my work. Framing my supervision practice in this way led me to question how others might deal with the spiritual in their work. Hence the research question: "How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?"

## THESIS FORMAT

The thesis is organised as follows. Chapter Two provides an overview of the literature on spirituality in social work, counselling and psychotherapy, since these disciplines are representative of the research participants. Emphasis is given to literature relating to social work in recognition of my own professional origins and that of the majority of participants. The chapter provides definitions of spirituality in relation to helping and discusses the theoretical framework informing the research. The decision not to provide a separate theory chapter is deliberate. Whilst I acknowledge the theoretical stances that inform my view of the world, my desire was to invite a reciprocal shaping of theory and practice through the process of the research design, as a way of limiting the dominance of my own theoretical voice.

The literature review traces the historical threads connecting spirituality with the helping professions both internationally and in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Key themes in the literature are identified along with the theoretical perspectives that inform them. Gaps in the literature are identified.

Chapter Three takes a critical look at the literature relating specifically to spirituality in supervision. Various definitions of supervision are compared before key themes of spirituality in supervision are discussed. Significant pieces of relevant research are linked to the chapter themes and areas for further development are considered.

Chapter Four discusses the research methodology and the rationale for choosing it. The research is located within the current socio-political context and the qualitative research paradigm. The research objectives and design are explained along with the management of the ethical issues that arose during the course of the research. The processes and difficulties associated with the data collection and analysis and the limitations of the research design conclude this chapter.

Chapter Five introduces the three data presentation chapters by providing a broad profile of the participants. This chapter summarises the responses of the GG group in Stages One and Two of the research. Stage One begins by outlining the process of the group discussion before summarising the key themes identified in defining

spirituality. Experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision are considered separately under thematic headings before participants locate their responses in relation to their own spiritual journey and their historical context. Ethical issues are also considered.

Stage Two involves the GG group's review and analysis of Stage One and is divided into two parts. Part one reviews and analyses their definitions of spirituality and their own processes in undertaking the discussion. Part two reviews and analyses their experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision and highlights one particular theme in doing so.

Chapter Six presents the data from Stage Three of the research where each GG group member considers the research question with their own professional supervisor. The format used to present the data is similar to that chosen for Stage One, highlighting the shared themes and noting those that appear for the first time. This chapter concludes with participants' reflections on how spirituality in supervision makes a difference to the way they live their lives.

Chapter Seven concludes the data presentation chapters by summarising Stage Four of the research where the GG group jointly consider what the implications of the research are for their practice. This chapter, like those before, gives priority to reflecting on the process of the group discussion before getting feedback on participants' satisfaction with the summaries provided for Stages One, Two and Three. Themes are identified regarding what participants want to change and what they have already changed in their practice as a consequence of being involved in the research.

Chapter Eight analyses the data in the light of the literature considered in chapters two and three. The analysis begins with a critique of the research process and continues using the voices of the participants and the voices in the literature to reflect on the outstanding themes presented in this research. My own voice amplifies two positions taken in the research as part of the data analysis process. I suggest that a negative view of religion and spirituality is prevalent in Aotearoa/New Zealand. I further

suggest that the belief that spirituality and religion are personal rather than professional matters has a direct bearing on the shape of the research findings.

Chapter Nine is the concluding chapter of the thesis. In this chapter the process and content findings of the research are summarised. Implications of the research findings are discussed and suggestions for future research are included. Recommendations for practitioners and the profession are identified.

Spirituality in supervision is alive and well. This research weaves a vibrant tapestry of participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision, and what this means for their personal and professional lives. For most of the group the story is new in the telling, and one that they wish to continue to tell as a way of honestly honouring a worldview that brings life to supervision practice.

# **CHAPTER TWO – LOOKING AT SPIRITUALITY IN SOCIAL WORK AND RELATED PROFESSIONS**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

The first stage of this literature review considers spirituality in the wider context of the helping professions, particularly social work, counselling and psychotherapy. They are chosen because they represent the professional groups involved in this research. While resources from each of these fields of practice will be considered, I have confined myself primarily to literature relating to the discipline of social work because this is the context of the majority of research participants and it makes the literature review task manageable. Much of the material utilised is drawn from northern hemisphere sources, but I have also endeavoured to foreground literature from Aotearoa/ New Zealand as representative of my own context and as part of my commitment to Te Tiriti o Waitangi.

The chapter provides a rationale for this work and outlines the research questions. The process for the literature review is then summarised, followed by definitions of how spirituality is believed to operate in the helping professions from differing theoretical positions. I then declare my own theoretical position and look at the history of spirituality in the helping professions. Themes from the literature are then considered along with the research and theoretical positions that inform these themes. The chapter concludes with some gaps identified for further consideration on the basis of the literature reviewed and a summary of the key points.

## **RATIONALE**

Much of the literature that has formed the basis for education and training in the social sciences and in the helping professions, in particular, has been imbued with a

Western cultural bias. Dualistic Western philosophy splits the spiritual and the physical into two mutually-exclusive spheres. The secular and the sacred, the material and the spiritual have been dichotomised. The polarisation of body and soul, science and spirituality reflects the institutionalisation of dualism (Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 17), such that the recognition or legitimation of spirituality within familiar paradigms of supervision is conspicuous by its absence. Ideology, the stories a culture tells itself about itself (Lather, 1991, p. 2), is powerful. Spirituality does not appear in published definitions of supervision. There is a need to explore the implications of this in supervision.

Is this in keeping with experiences of supervision? Is this a constraint in supervision? With the renewed interest in spirituality the implications of this situation for supervision needs to be examined.

## **RESEARCH QUESTION**

The purpose of this research is to discover how practitioners experience and express their spirituality in the forum of professional supervision. The key research question is phrased:

How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?

In order to assist the discussion, the following sub-questions have been suggested as prompts for the exploration process:

- What is spirituality? How is it defined?
- Is spirituality relevant in supervision? In what way?
- Has it a role in supervision? If so, what?
- Does it feature in supervision? If so, how?



- Does spirituality benefit supervision? If so, how?
- What, if anything, is it about this point in time that influences the experience and expression of spirituality in supervision?
- What of your own spiritual formation and journey influences how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision?
- Does spirituality in supervision make a difference to how you live your life?

In considering these questions it is important to firstly consider how the literature portrays the experience and expression of spirituality in the helping professions, as this is the context from which professional supervision emanates.

## **PROCESS OF THE LITERATURE REVIEW**

In conducting my literature search I like to be open about my approach as an expression of my feminist perspective. The process of reviewing the literature involved the following steps. Firstly, the term, “spirituality” was used under the Massey University KEA Index and all books that included material from the key disciplines identified above were ordered. Of these, most emanate from the discipline of social work (Bullis, 1996; Canda, 1998; Canda & Furman, 1999; van Hook, Hugen & Aguila, 2001; Martin & Martin, 2002; Nash & Stewart, 2002).

The second step involved searching the EBSCO megafire using the Academic Search Elite; ERIC; Health Source; Nursing/Academic Edition; Health Business Fulltext Elite; PsycARTICLES and PsycINFO databases. The terms “spirituality and helping professions” only yielded 10 results so the decision was made to search by discipline. “Spirituality and social work” yielded 197 results, “spirituality and counselling” 58 results and “spirituality and psychotherapy” 918 results. Many of the references overlap so this review focuses on the material from the “spirituality and social work” results that specifically relate to professional practice.

As my research progressed I also made use of publications obtained during my study for the Diploma of Social Service Supervision, material obtained through attending the Global Social Work Congress 2004 in Adelaide and resources provided by supportive colleagues along the way.

## **DEFINITIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN RELATION TO HELPING**

Definitions of spirituality reflect the multiple traditions that are researching and developing discourse in the field of spirituality in relation to helping. The themes represented below are my representations of traditions that are currently contributing to this discourse.

### ***Spirituality as essence discourse***

The spirituality as essence discourse is representative of Jungian and transpersonal psychology. Carroll (1998) talks of spirituality as essence, a core nature that generates the energy for self-development and transformation. Canda (1988a cited in Carroll 1998, p. 3) refers to a universal “intrinsic and irreducible aspect of the person”. Jung referred to spirituality as the essence of human nature and theorised that the spirit was “universally present in the pre-conscious make-up of the human psyche” (Jung, 1959, p. 214 cited in Sermabeikien, 1994, p. 179). Siporin (1985) also associated spirituality with the human psyche, both conscious and unconscious, which he believes emanates from what he called the human soul. This leads the person to strive for transcendent values; for knowledge of an ultimate reality; for relational aspects such as belonging to a moral universe and community, and for union with supernatural powers that guide people and the universe for good and evil (Siporin, 1985, p. 210).

### ***Spirituality as meaning, purpose and connection beyond the self***

The transcendent values referred to by Siporin (1985) include the human quest for life meaning (Canda & Furmin, 1999; Wheeler, 2002). This position is more reflective of an existential perspective. It is often linked with creating harmony and balance in mutually-fulfilling relationships; relationships that can include people, ecology and

the non-human environment, and for some, God (Okundaye, Gray & Gray, 1999; Canda & Furmin, 1999).

Whittingham's (2004) phenomenological study of the personal and professional experiences of ten expert family therapists identified interconnectedness, language and culture as three indispensable characteristics of spirituality. Connections with family, community, culture and nature were viewed as signs of health and wellness. Part of the family therapist role is to assist clients to regain their own sense of connectedness.

The research of Faver (2004) involving 50 women service workers and social reformers demonstrated that women caregivers were sustained in their work not just by a sense of efficacy and success but also through their connections to their work, social networks and clients and to a sacred source of love and strength.

Canda & Furman (1999, p. xv) refer to spirituality as the heart of helping, the heart of empathy and care and the pulse of compassion. It is the driving force of action for service. It is about what we do with the fire inside us (Rolheiser, 1999) and needs to lead to the resolution of social and political inequity (Nash and Stewart, 2002).

### ***Spirituality and religion discourse***

Sometimes the terms, religion and spirituality, are used synonymously but spirituality is generally considered a much broader category than religion (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 15; Coffey, 2002, p. 33). Spirituality can be expressed in religion (Joanides, 1997). However, religion may hold negative connotations for some so it is important that a distinction is made. Some of the kinds of negative connotations associated with religion include the possibility of promoting fanaticism, intolerance, prejudice and the status quo, thus perpetuating injustice (van Hook, Hugen & Aguilar, 2001, pp. 11-12). Religious injustice can disenfranchise members from what may have been their spiritual home; for example, women who feel excluded by a patriarchal system of religion (Burhardt and Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, pp. 13-14).

Carroll (1998, p. 2) distinguishes between religion and spirituality when she refers to spirituality as one's basic nature and the process of finding meaning and purpose in

life, whereas religion involves a set of organised beliefs and social functions as a means of spiritual expression and experience. Religion takes an institutionalised form that is shared by a community and transmitted over time through traditions (Canda & Furman, 1999, p. 37). The inclusion of a divine being, higher power or “Other” is also a feature of some definitions of spirituality and religion (Shamy, 1996, p. 57; Carroll, 1998, p. 3; Stewart, 2002, p. 55) but is not essential to either.

### ***Spirituality as the triumph over adversity***

In America, the Black helping tradition emphasises spirituality as a sense of the sacred and divine (Martin and Martin, 2003). Here is a view of spirituality that provides a people with the strength to carry on when oppressive forces threatened their very existence, to find a way forward through the impossible, to live with courage and encouragement amidst suffering and death, and to find the will to live and make life worth living (Martin and Martin, 2003, p. 1). For the North American Black, their spirituality is expressed through shouting, singing, dancing, moaning, mourning, affirming and many other forms (Martin and Martin, pp. 1-2). Quantitative and qualitative research involving African-Americans in North America has indicated the importance of spirituality and family as critical variables in resilience, coping and life satisfaction (Starks & Haughey, 2003; Smith, 2003; Esser-Stuart & Lyons, 2002).

### ***Spirituality as calling or vocation***

The concept of triumph over adversity is extended by Hillman (1996), a Jungian psychologist, in his “acorn theory” where he uses the concept of calling or vocation to explain how people have risen above difficult circumstances in the belief that they were called to do so. According to Hillman (1996), people must ‘grow down’ into their vocation but for this to occur, they must, like the acorn, be firmly rooted in their own time, place and circumstance. This theory carries with it the notion of personal destiny, which is explained as a spiritual process involving an inner journey of faith, hope and love along with an acute awareness of the outer world. This spiritual journey takes the person to the roots of their soul where spiritual gifts of life and love can be shared with others (Eastham, 2002). For practitioners who view their work as a vocation, it is more than just a job or a career. It is a total orientation of the person, mind, body and spirit in service of the community (Eastham, 2002, p. 34-35). In

times of turmoil and burnout these notions can help sustain the practitioner. Whilst these notions come out of a Western notion of calling or vocation which focus on a unique expression of individuality, indigenous works portray a collective aspect of this concept, where groups are identified as demonstrating particular talents or propensities for a particular area of work (Ruwhiu, 1994).

### ***Spirituality as holism***

Canda (1988a) refers to spirituality as the gestalt of the total process of human life and development, encompassing biological, mental, social and spiritual aspects. It is the wholeness of what it is to be human and is not reducible to constituent parts, it is the ontological ground of existence.

Durie (1994) presents Te Whare Tapa Wha (four sides of a house) with te taha wairua (the spiritual side), te taha hinengaro (thoughts and feelings), te taha tinana (the physical side), and te taha whanau (family) representing a holistic view of health and well-being to ensure strength and balance. Each aspect is needed for the house to stand as a supporting structure. Taha wairua is definitely considered by Maori to be an essential requirement for good health. Spiritual awareness, the capacity to have faith, helps ensure wellness and the avoidance of misfortune. Spirituality encompasses religious beliefs but is not confined to these. It implies much broader understandings of the links between human beings and the environment. Land, lakes, mountains and fishing areas have a spiritual significance and a lack of access to such areas is considered unhealthy. When indigenous groups speak of healing they refer to being reconnected with land, heritage (including language), family and tupuna (spirit world) (Durie, 1994; Beatch & Stewart, 2002). Healing is considered a holistic process that seeks balance and harmony. Spirituality and culture are inseparable (Whittingham, 2004). These aspects of spirituality extend psychosocial understandings of the concept to include empowerment approaches and considerations of social justice.

### ***Spirituality as emancipation of the oppressed***

Considine (2002) believes that a holistic spirituality is essential in order to engage in action for social change. By this he means the necessity of reconnecting with whatever our spiritual roots are, because he sees that much of today's ills are related

to spiritual bankruptcy. No matter what the culture, Consedine believes that each needs to integrate spirituality into daily life in the way that Maori and Polynesian cultures have. When we reconnect with the land we live and walk on, the air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, we become spiritually aware and realise that we are all interconnected. When we recognise the divine spark in each other we realise the need to protect the most vulnerable, the poor and powerless. The struggle for justice is at the heart of a truly holistic spirituality (Consedine, 2002, p. 45). Justice spirituality requires a commitment to the common good, a concern for global sustainability, wisdom and holistic spirituality. Consedine uses the Catholic Bishops of England and Wales' (1996) definition of the common good, which requires four conditions to ensure its existence. I have noted these conditions are consistent with the NZASW ethical principles from the *NZASW Code of Ethics* (1993).

- The principle of subsidiarity supports grass roots decision-making at the lowest level possible (Principles 2.6 & 2.7)
- The principle of solidarity (Principle 2.2)
- The protection of Human Rights (Principle 2.4)
- An option for the poor (Principles 2.2, 2.4)

Sustenance is a very important consideration in the struggle for justice as the potential for burnout is high. Individual and collective ways of nurturing the spirit need to be found. Consedine reflects on the need for positive, life-affirming food to be built into our everyday lives and the importance of cooperating and working with others. Consedine mentions several spiritual giants in the quest for justice, for example, Ghandi, Martin Luther King and Dorothy Day, none of whom worked in isolation. The example they gave showed a preferential option for the poor, a life of integrity and the centrality of community prayers and worship. Consedine believes that in order to be involved in justice work today these aspects are required as well as a good analysis, passion, dedication and discipline (Consedine, 2002, p. 46). His work is informed by liberation theology and the work of Paulo Friere, which have contributed to the development of anti-oppressive approaches (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 48-49).

In summary, spirituality as it is represented within the literature chosen, is defined as a core characteristic that provides meaning, purpose and connection with others,



including the environment. It provides grounding and identity and finds expression in the search for holism, balance and healing and enables mastery over adversity and commitment to social justice. For some it is experienced as a sense of calling or vocation, which brings all the components of spirituality mentioned here together. Spirituality can include religion but is not limited by it.

## **THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK UNDERPINNING THE RESEARCH**

I have already outlined the spiritual journey that has led me to this research. In terms of how this research is framed, the assumption is that spirituality is present in supervision; the question being, how is it present? This assumption becomes part of my argument in the contention for legitimacy. Both a feminist standpoint and postmodern epistemologies have influenced my current position. Although these epistemologies have sometimes been viewed as incompatible (Schoenholtz-Read, 1996, p. 483), my position acknowledges women's multiple experiences and how these experiences are shaped by the dominant historical, cultural, political, social and economic arrangements of the time. It is a critical position that questions what is deemed real, who decides this and for what purpose. It is not a position that questions for the sake of it but rather questions as part of a way forward in working to achieve a more just world with others. The core of feminism and its scholarship is a political movement for social, structural and personal transformation (Macguire, 2001). Transformation lies at the heart of the aspects of spirituality considered above so it is argued that feminism and spirituality can have similar outcomes.

While I have indicated the importance of feminist scholarship for my position, the theoretical framework proposed by the anthropologist, Bruner (1986), was found to be particularly apt for my research which aimed to capture the experiences and expressions of spirituality of a particular group of professional women. Bruner's (1986) ideas are heavily influenced by Dilthey's hermeneutics (Dilthey, 1976 cited in Bruner, 1986, pp. 4-6) which focus on the dialogic and dialectical relationship between experiences and their expressions. For Dilthey, experience structures expressions and expressions in turn structure experience creating a hermeneutic circle that needs to be worked through. Bruner (1986) extends these ideas through

highlighting that when conducting research on human experience, one has to make a distinction between the experience and its expressions. He makes a distinction between life as lived, that is, what is really 'out there'; life as experienced, that is, how the reality 'out there' presents itself to consciousness; and expression, that is, life as told, how individual experience is articulated and represented (Bruner, 1986, p.9). Experience is comprised of a compound of cognition, feelings, expectations and the like. The difficulty "is that we can only experience our own life, what is received by our own consciousness" (Bruner, 1986, p.5). Thus, we can only overcome the limited sphere of experience by engaging in interpretations of expressions. "Expressions are the people's articulations, formulations and representations of their own experience" (Bruner, 1986, p.9). The only way we can gain access to others' experience is through their expressions. We cannot live others' experiences. We can only listen and see what they say about their lives in words, images and so on.

Such expressions are interpretive and involve the arbitrary imposition of meaning on human memory, in that we highlight some experiences in the telling and discount others (Bruner, 1986, p.7). The interpretive process consists of two layers: the persons being researched interpret their own experiences in expressive form through a type of editing process and these interpretations are, in turn, further interpreted by the researcher. Bruner (1986) acknowledges that experience has an explicit temporal dimension "in that we go through or live through an experience that then becomes self-referential in the telling" (Bruner, 1986, p.7). Bruner contends that reflexivity is crucial in the interpretation of expressions, since the researcher needs to become conscious of what they are choosing to focus on (Bruner, 1986, p.22). He also acknowledges the political nature of this process in that the dominance of a particular narrative is indicated by the space allocated to it in discourse, and that narratives can change as the context changes (Bruner, 1986, p.19).

The political nature of this research is acknowledged in the feminist and action research approaches adopted which are explicitly intent on working for social justice and democratisation (Lather, 1991). This research is feminist because its goal is to disturb and dismantle interlocking systems that oppress and dominate our professional lives. It aims to give voice to our experience, to examine the implications of our gendered and multiple identities in influencing our research practices. It aims to



restructure the power dynamics of the research process by creating co-researching and self-critical opportunities as a way of grappling with differing positions and interpretations (Macguire, 2001).

For Lather (1986), research is feminist only if it is linked to action. Her work is influenced not only by feminist research but also by Friere's "empowering" participatory research and neo-Marxist critical ethnography. From these she develops an emancipatory approach to research where the goal is to encourage self-reflection and deeper understanding on the part of those being researched in order to critique the status quo and build a more just society. Lather coins the term, 'research as praxis', to refer to the dialectical, interactive, reciprocal shaping of theory and practice whereby both the researcher and the researched become the change agents as part of their own transformation. The challenge here is to ensure that one's dialectical practices invite reciprocal reflexivity and critique that are sufficiently robust to guard against the deifying of the researcher. This is particularly important in ensuring that the researcher's "pet theory" does not limit the ways that the data may be understood. If the research is to be emancipatory then those who are participating need to be involved in theory construction and validation. The researcher needs to help create an environment that encourages participants' critical responses to the researcher's account of their world (Lather, 1991, p. 64).

In this section I have attempted to outline my position as I undertake this research. It is an approach that acknowledges the importance of spirituality in my own life and the influences of Bruner's (1986) theoretical framework and feminist scholarship. The challenge in applying this approach is not to privilege my own position relative to that of my co-research participants.

## **HISTORICAL EMERGENCE OF SPIRITUALITY IN THE HELPING PROFESSIONS LITERATURE**

Canda & Furman (1999) name three historical phases in the connection between spirituality and social work in North America. The first phase follows the colonial period into the early twentieth century and is named the sectarian phase (Canda & Furman, 1999, p. 87). The earliest pioneers in social work were intimately connected with religion and spirituality (Bullis, 1996, p. 7). Religious institutions were the first

sponsors of social services programmes. The first workers in the Charity Organisation Society and settlement house movements shared a sense of spiritual mission and often referred to their work as a calling (Russel, 1998, p. 16). The theological ideas of the time fostered notions of the 'deserving' or 'undeserving poor', although the Jewish and Christian Social Gospel promoted notions of community responsibility and social justice.

Phase two of the Canda & Furman (1999) framework (1920s-1970s) characterised increasing professionalisation and secularisation of social work. The separation of church and state was more strictly adhered to in social service delivery, although sectarian private social service agencies such as Catholic, Lutheran and Jewish Family Services did continue.

In 1952 the American Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW) Curriculum Policy Statement was altered to include spirituality as part of the section on human growth and behaviour, even though by this time the influence of spirituality was beginning to wane. This was due to the increasing influence of psychiatry and the medical model, empiricism, secular humanism and libertarianism. Spirituality was not included in the 1970 and 1984 statements, a testament to increasing secularised professionalism (Russel, 1998, p. 16-17). The reluctance to address religious and spiritual issues over this period was also seen as being related to economic, political and professional competition between religious professionals and social workers (Marty 1980 in Bullis, 1996, p. 6) paralleled by the proliferation of job specialisation.

In the late 1960s proponents of humanistic psychology were becoming more aware of the gaps and limitation of this approach and began to develop a professional interest in the study of states of consciousness triggered by the proliferation of consciousness-altering techniques such as meditation, yoga and psychedelic drugs (Strohl, 1998, p. 398). There was a recognition that the concept of self-actualisation needed to be expanded to include transcendent capacities beyond ego boundaries that included spiritual development. The philosophies of the Eastern mystics, including Zen Buddhism, Taoism and yoga began to be integrated into their theory and practice.

This led into phase three of the Canda & Furman (1999) framework, which has seen a resurgence of interest in spirituality characterised by religious and spiritual diversity, hallmarks of the postmodern era characterised by the erosion of the 'grand narratives' or universal truths. The emphasis has been on individual tastes and freedom from an imposed and patriarchal authoritative view of spirituality (Robinson, Kendrick, Brown, 2003, p. 6).

In 1994 the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM IV) recognised religious and spiritual problems as a category for concern as distinct from any mental disorder. This reflected a movement away from an earlier tendency to treat religion as a delusion or evidence of escapism or neurosis (Bullis, 1996, p. 16). The recognition of clients' spiritual lives as a resource has begun to appear in the literature (Sistler & Washington, 1999; Cadell, 2001; Whittingham, 2004). The importance of the practitioner's spirituality as a resource in their work has yet to achieve equivalent attention (Carlson & Erikson, 2002, p. 6).

Indigenous groups had their own stories relating to spirituality and helping. Prior to the arrival of the colonisers in Aotearoa/New Zealand, traditional Maori models of healing, strengthening and empowering were apparent (Durie, 1994; Walsh-Tapiata, 2000). Te Tiriti o Waitangi was signed in 1840. It guaranteed Maori through their chiefs, chieftainship over their lands, villages and all their treasures, the rights and duties of British citizens, religious and cultural freedom in return for giving the Crown the right to govern and the right to purchase land at an agreed price from the chiefs. Within 50 years, laws, wars, land confiscations and the denigration of Maori culture had secured the colonisation of Maori. This produced a significant loss in beliefs, values and lifestyle that incorporate spirituality (Stewart, 2002). Many Maori believed that only Western, Eurocentric ways of working were of value (Walsh-Tapiata, 2000).

While this may still hold true for some Maori, many Maori have been relentless in their endeavours to have the Treaty honoured. Significant developments such as the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal (1975), Pua-te-Ata-Tu (report from a Ministerial Advisory Committee on a Maori Perspective for the Department of Social Welfare, 1986); the development of shared governance of Maori and Tuiwi social

workers in ANZASW in 1989; a Bicultural Code of Practice within the Code of Ethics in 1993 and the proliferation of tangata whenua (people of the land, indigenous Maori) social services in the 1990s as a by-product of the neo-liberal managerialism policies, have all worked to open up space for the reassertion of mana (influence/power). Indigenous Maori models of practice, such as Te Whare Tapa Wha (Durie, 1994), Te Wheke (Pere, 1991) and Mana Enhancing (Ruwhiu, 1995), are being utilised to promote health and well-being (Pakura, 2004). Workers are reclaiming their own professionalism.

The stories above bear some similarities to the Black social work helping tradition in North America (Martin & Martin, 2003). Prior to the turn of the twentieth century Black social workers declared their own spirituality, identified the spirituality of their clients and worked spiritual paradigms into the intervention process (Martin & Martin 2003, p. 4). These workers used spirituality in very different ways from their white counterparts. Spirituality was used to distinguish Black people from their oppressors, to critique society, to affirm dignity, integrity and self worth, to promote interracial cooperation and cultural diversity and for achieving Black sanity, communal solidarity and support (Martin & Martin 2003, p. 1). This changed when Black social workers followed the secularised thinking of the proponents of the scientific method, as professional social work took hold.

Today there are numerous studies suggesting that a religious or spiritual orientation may be crucial to the prevention of negative life outcomes for Blacks (Martin & Martin, 2003). Black social workers are using indigenous based frameworks, for example, “Nguzo Saba” to mentor black youths in their cultural and spiritual heritage (Martin & Martin, 2003, p. 242). These are indicative of movements to reclaim the spiritual paradigm, a trend that is also evident in Canada with First Nation American Indians (Voss, Duville, Soldier & Twiss, 1999; Beatch & Stewart, 2002).

It would appear from this literature review that the trend to reclaim or restate the spiritual paradigm is evident across diverse cultural practice contexts. The journey to this place varies considerably according to the socio-political issues involved. We now turn our attention to the dominant themes identified in the literature.

## **THEMES IN THE LITERATURE**

### ***Resurgence of interest in spirituality***

Historical patterns show a resurgence of interest in spirituality over the last fifteen years (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 133). This interest has been shown in the literature, in conference presentations and professional papers (Russel, 1998, p. 17; Carlson & Erikson, 2002). When Carlson & Erikson (2002) were looking to edit a special edition of the *Journal of Family Psychotherapy* focusing on spirituality and family therapy, they were overwhelmed by the response they received, with sufficient material for a whole volume, two double issues, which also became a book for non-subscribers. Russel (1998) comments that increasing interest in spirituality in the social sciences is paralleled by a very broad interest in spirituality in society that includes eastern religions, evangelical and fundamentalist teachings, New Age movements, Goddess worship and concern with the environment and holistic health, to name a few. The influence of post modernism is also apparent where multiple knowledge sites are spoken of and pluralistic structures of authority are established which are non-dualistic and anti-hierarchical (Lather, 1991, p. 160).

Surveys of teaching faculties suggest that there are significant levels of interest in elective courses covering spirituality and religion in the social work curriculum. What is more, these studies find that a high proportion of practitioners and students are interested in exploring the spiritual dimension of their work (Canda, 1989; Russell, 1998). Spirituality has begun to be seen as a resource in clinical work, whereas previously it was mostly ignored or problematised (Whittingham, 2004). Social work and other mental health professionals are willing, even eager, to discuss spirituality and to apply it to social work assessments and interventions (Bullis, 1996, p. 1).

### ***Spirituality and grief work***

When Nash (2002) sets the scene for her chapter, 'Spirituality and Social Work in a Culturally Appropriate Curriculum', she mentions that mostly spirituality is mainstreamed in the curriculum in the context of culture, ageing, grief and loss. It would be difficult to avoid these aspects in most fields of helping which is why it is

important for practitioners to be able to grapple with spirituality in their work. In terms of the literature review undertaken, research and discussion focusing on the end stage of life, hospice work (Simmons, 1998; Carr & Morris, 1996; Reese & Brown, 1997); working with those with AIDS and their carers (Cadell, 2001; Poindexter & Linsk, 1999; Dunbar, Mueller & Medina, 1998; Jankowski, Videka-Sherman & Laquidara-Dickinson, 1996); and dealing with traumatic life events (Noronha, 2000; Williams, Davey & Klock-Powell, 2003; Angell, Denis & Dumain 1998; Chew, 1998) received considerable attention. A common theme is the relationship between spirituality and resilience (Poindexter & Linsk, 1999; Voss, Duville, Soldier & Twiss, 1999; Angell, Denis & Dumain, 1998). What these works demonstrate is the significant contribution that spirituality makes in clients' mastery of grief experiences. This is apparent across cultural groups (Paulino, 1998; Sistler & Washington, 1999). The implications of this for the helping professional are now considered.

### ***Spirituality and the professional worker***

Historically, the dominant Western discourse around the spiritual and the professional suggested an uneasy alliance. Church and state were to be kept separate, so exploring the meaning and contribution of religion and spirituality was largely avoided (Hermann, 2002).

The recent research of Canda, Nakashima and Furman (2004) bears some reflection on the current situation in the United States of America regarding the interface between spirituality and social work practice. It was an extensive mixed method survey of 2,069 National Association of Social Workers (NASW) members that was primarily focused on ethical concerns. A strong indication was given of the positive value of addressing spirituality in their work. Only nine percent of all 2,069 NASW members who responded to the survey believed that integrating religion and spirituality into social work practice conflicted with the NASW Code of Ethics (Canda et al, 2004, p. 33.).

In the quantitative section of the research, 81 percent had discussed the role of clients' religious or spiritual beliefs in relation to significant others, 90 percent believed this to be appropriate. Sixty-four percent had assisted client critical reflection on religious or



spiritual beliefs or practices and 77 percent believed this was appropriate. Ninety-four percent had considered ways that client religious or spiritual belief systems were helpful and 97 percent believed this was appropriate. Seventy-one percent helped clients consider ways their religious or spiritual systems were harmful and 87 percent believed this was appropriate. The research provides a clear picture that spirituality is considered in therapeutic work, and that this is viewed as positive and desirable.

The literature used in Whittingham (2004) did not speak directly to the spiritual connection between the worker and the client. However, it was the position of some of her co-researchers that life is a spiritual process and therefore therapy, as a part of life, is also spiritual. The best therapy was deemed to occur when the worker has a deep spiritual connection with the client that creates the climate for creative transformation.

Aponte (2002, p. 13) believes spirituality enhances the power of therapy in the following ways:

- 1) It makes moral choices the heart of the issues the client presents.
- 2) It assists clients in becoming emotionally and spiritually grounded.
- 3) It includes spiritually-enriched resources among people's options for solutions. Aponte's focus is on the importance of values to spirituality. He places the therapeutic relationship in the context of contemporary society with its many and conflicting voices about values and morality. Professional voices encourage the worker to own the philosophies and theories that inform their practice. The media contribute to moral and ethical debates in ways that can create ambiguity for the public. Add to the mix the workers' own views about what they believe contributes to well-being and these are challenging waters to navigate.

In order to navigate these waters effectively, an essential element is the spirituality of the therapists who must be knowledgeable about spirituality in their own life (Aponte, 2002, p. 19). Others refer to the appropriate and purposeful use of self in regard to spirituality (Canda & Furman, 1999; Strohl, 1998; Whittingham, 2004). Therapists need to be able to reflect on their own level of comfort with or bias towards spirituality and how this is likely to affect their therapeutic work (Smith & Harkness,

2002; Brotherson & Soderquist, 2002). Carlson and Erikson (2002) note the impossibility of not allowing their spirituality to influence their work in the same way that one's gender and culture influences one's work. Spirituality affects how one relates to others and one's rationale for being involved in this type of work in the first place.

The issue of professional boundaries is an important one in regard to spirituality in the helping professions. Matters of spirituality and religion have traditionally been deemed the prerogative of the pastor or shaman (Carlson & Erikson, 2002). Referring on or collaborating with religious helping professionals creates little controversy (Smith & Harkness, 2002; Canda, et al, 2004). Workers need to know their own limits and have a well-developed theoretical rationale for the use of various techniques (Smith & Harkness, 2002, p. 102).

Hodge (2001) cautions that given the interest in engaging the spiritual as part of the therapeutic conversation, the boundaries and goals need to remain clear so that therapy does not get diverted into becoming spiritual direction. Boundaries need to be discussed with agencies to avoid misunderstanding. Transparency with one's colleagues about one's practice is advised (Smith & Harkness, 2002).

### ***Ethical concerns***

In discussing boundaries, it is recognised that bringing spirituality and therapy together is a delicate issue that has the potential for negative consequences. Without critical reflection on the use of power and how we hope spiritual beliefs will or will not influence our work, it could be damaging. As our work is influenced by our gender, age, culture and race, so too, is it influenced by our spirituality. It is essential that we undertake purposeful exploration of how our spiritual lives call us to be in relationship with others and how much influence does and should spirituality have on these relationships (Carlson & Erikson, 2002, p. 9; Canda et al, 2004, p. 33).

Haug (1998a) addresses both ethical and risk management concerns regarding the spiritual dimension by suggesting the following:



- 1) Practitioners need to examine their own spirituality, especially related to relationships with clients, gender or cultural contexts and theoretical positions. In doing this, they may increase the likelihood of ethically-sound decisions.
- 2) Create the space for spiritual discussions including those involving interventions. Refer where appropriate and neither impose their beliefs nor ignore their clients' beliefs.
- 3) Connect with the clients' world view through their language, respect their ethnic and cultural rituals, acknowledge and honour clients' roles and obtain training to ensure standard levels of competence in order to better serve a diverse range of clients.

Whittingham (2004) supports these suggestions. Practitioners need also to consider other ways to protect themselves by, for example, seeking out appropriate training and attending to their own subjective experiences to ensure their own vitality and health (Coffey, 2002). Here again we see the importance of self-care for the practitioner in terms of sustainable ethical engagement (Consedine, 2002).

Canda et al (2004) also discuss training in their consideration of the appropriateness of certain spiritually-sensitive helping activities. The US Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (2001) endorses the importance of foundation-level knowledge on spiritual development, preparation for skilful, competent non-discriminatory practice with regard to religion and other types of diversity and the importance of addressing ethical issues about spirituality in social work education (Canda et al, 2004, p. 33).

It would appear from the survey responses that there is still much to be done to ensure this policy is realised. Given this, it was nonetheless evident that social workers were being guided by key ethical principles in their work around spirituality, namely, client-centredness, client self-determination, dignity, being non-judgmental, cultural competency, obtaining training and support and not acting outside one's own level of expertise (Canda et al. 2004, p. 31). Strongly-worded statements stressed respondents' beliefs that social workers should never impose their own values, religious beliefs or agenda on clients. In addition, they should refrain from converting

or evangelising clients, avoid demeaning clients' religious beliefs and not exacerbate religiously related delusions or vulnerabilities (Canda et al. 2004, p. 31).

This final point raises the issue of the interface between spirituality and mental health. Canda & Furman (1999), Nash & Stewart (2002), Robinson, Kendrick & Brown, (2002) and Canda et al (2004), discuss the importance of differentiating between spirituality that facilitates wholeness, versus beliefs that appear to disconnect the person from their reality and involve psychopathology. The issues surrounding this interface are complex and are covered in some depth by Canda & Furman (1999) and Sperry & Shafranski (2005). Very good supervision is required to manage this area of practice respectfully (Nash & Stewart, 2002).

Canda et al (2004) note that the NASW Code of Ethics leaves much unspecified around specific ethical practices. Their research findings prompted discussion about the ethical use of healing touch, use of spiritual writings, self-disclosure and prayer. Consideration was given to how the client might be disadvantaged if these activities were included in therapy work. The authors support the use of a framework such as that of Canda & Furman (1999, p. 264) to guide the ethical decision-making process. This framework like that of Corey, Corey & Callanan (1998) supports deep reflection and dialogue with self, colleagues and clients as essential to ethically resolving the spiritual dimension in practice.

### ***Training***

Bearing in mind the increasing awareness of the importance of spirituality in people's lives, this raises questions regarding the training of workers to deal with religious and spiritual issues. In the past, for some, the topic of spirituality and religion was never mentioned as part of their training, whereas for others training was Eurocentric and religion and spirituality were pathologised (Whittingham, 2004). Nash & Stewart (2002) comment that in terms of the coverage of spirituality issues in the curriculum to date, this has largely been subsumed in the context of exploring culture, ageing, grief and loss. Comprehensive texts for the study of spirituality in social work are now appearing (Bullis, 1996; Canda & Furman, 1999; Van Hook, Hugen & Aguila, 2001).

Signs are encouraging that accredited programmes offering courses on spirituality and social work are continuing to increase. In 2001 there were 50 such programmes being offered in North America, up from 17 in 1995 and just a handful in 1991 (Miller, 2001), so growth in this area is rapid. Research with family therapy graduate students found only a minority had any training on how to work with spiritual concerns and the majority were uncertain about their skills in the area (Prest et al, 1999, cited in Coffey, 2002). This was reiterated in Canda et al, (2004). Seventy-three percent stated that they had no religious or spirituality content in their social work education despite acknowledging that spiritually-orientated activities entered their work. The ethical issues associated with this have been discussed above.

If spirituality is to be covered more extensively in the curriculum than it is at present, and the suggestion is that this is necessary (Canda & Furmin, 1999; Nash & Stewart, 2002; Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002; Whittingham, 2004), then decisions need to be made about what students are to be taught, who should be teaching them and what boundaries need to be in place to ensure that curriculum content is appropriate and safe for the students concerned (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 137). “How can we address spirituality from a perspective that honours and embraces diversity?” (Canda, 1998, p. 105). This was the question that concerned potential providers about including spirituality in the curriculum, how to teach the content and how to ensure the content is balanced (Sheridan & Wilmer, 1994).

There was recognition also that training in relation to spirituality in practice needs to occur across a broad spectrum. While on the one hand it is important to advocate for training at the graduate and postgraduate level, professors, managers and Heads of School also require training so that they are knowledgeable and comfortable about these issues. In-service and continuing professional education forums are also required for those already in practice so that they can upskill (Casio, 1998).

Dissemination of knowledge, though, is not the only matter that needs to be addressed. Implementing this knowledge in the practice setting is another issue. Transparency in agencies about spirituality in practice has already been discussed. Clear agency guidelines, training and supervision are required for the protection of

clients and for the reassurance and direction of the worker uncertain of her/his boundaries in these matters (Casio, 1998, p. 530).

### ***Western theoretical approaches most commonly expressed or implicit in the literature***

A range of theoretical perspectives incorporating spirituality emerges in the literature with predominance favouring various psychological and social constructionist perspectives. Sperry & Shafranske (2005) undertook a comparative analysis of 10 spiritually orientated psychotherapy approaches. Of these, the most common identified in this literature review was the existential approach. The works of Sermabeikan (1994), Hillman (1996), Carroll (1998) and Canda (1998a) reflect an existential approach that has its origins in Rogerian and Jungian psychology that recognises the importance of the therapeutic relationship. The Jungian perspective is identified with the treatment of alcohol and substance abuse and is commonly recognised in the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step recovery programmes (Ronel & Tim, 2003; Kissman & Maurer, 2002; Okundaye, Smith & Laurence-Webb, 2001).

Okundaye, Smith & Laurence-Webb (2001) also utilise aspects of the strengths perspective which has its origins in social constructionism. Social constructionist ideas have led to a more relational spirituality which involves seeing the connections between spirituality and social justice, where the stands taken for social justice, community and family are an expression of spirituality (Carlson & Erikson, 2002, p. 4). Social constructionism portrays a relative position on values, morality and ethics, and encourages the worker to enter into a moral and ethical experience with oneself and others. The inference here is that a situation of intimate accountability establishes itself where one person's way of being and acting participates in shaping the 'self' of the other (Carlson & Erikson, 2002, p. 4).

Nothcutt (2000) and Griffith & Griffith (2002) both use constructionist frameworks to incorporate religion and spirituality in psychodynamic psychotherapy. This is an interesting juxtaposition of therapeutic approaches. Constructionist approaches are used when beliefs can strengthen clients' lives, yet at the same time, therapists are equipped to act as safeguards of society when psychosis is present. What is

encouraging is that authors are clearly articulating the frameworks that are informing their practice in a way that gives the reader a clear justification for their approach.

### ***Indigenous and minority group approaches***

Although in the minority, anti-oppressive frameworks were evident in many of the indigenous works. They were also evident in the writing of Consedine (2002). Exploration and publication of indigenous and minority group models of practice are considered against the prevalence of Western approaches. The development and use of indigenous models of practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand have already been mentioned. Maori models of practice are emancipatory and expressions of tino rangatiratanga (self-determination) (Ruwhiu, 2002).

Chinese and Native American practitioners have also articulated emancipatory works. The body-mind-spirit integrated model has shown very positive intervention outcomes, when used to promote the health of Chinese groups, such as, cancer patients, bereaved wives and divorced women (Chan, Ho & Chow, 2001). This model of intervention incorporates Eastern philosophies of Buddhism, Taoism and traditional Chinese medicine to pursue holistic health treatments that consider the individual in relation to their wider environment. Recreating harmony and oneness between people and their surroundings is also the aim of many First Nations approaches that have become visible to those working from a Western worldview. The Cree medicine wheel for healing First Nations (Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996) uses the ancient Cree oral teachings to provide a spiritual map for healing.

These two sources (Chan, Ho & Chow, 2001; Nabigon & Mawhiney, 1996) contrast with the other works available through the EBSCO search mentioned above which could be broadly classified as spiritually-sensitive practice. Hodge (2004), Coleman, Unrau & Manyfingers (2001), Fukuyama & Sevig (1999) and Chua (2003) integrate indigenous and minority group frameworks into mainstream Western practices. These authors are representative of indigenous, minority and dominant groups. Unless Western practitioners show a willingness to learn the belief systems of indigenous and minority groups and actively participate in their traditions, spiritually-sensitive practice is all that is likely to be available to them in terms of working cross

culturally. As a representative of the coloniser the Western practitioner can be limited in terms of operating as an effective healer in these situations, unless they can establish credibility and non-exploitative partnerships with aboriginal communities (Beatch & Stewart, 2002, pp. 155-156).

## **EXISTING GAPS**

In this review, the research and literature from a Western perspective has focused primarily on the micro perspective of the client-worker interface. Spirituality as a part of practice also needs to address wider issues. What is the spirituality of the NASW that funds and supports candidates in the American presidential elections? Policy development needs to keep pace at both the agency and professional level to support what is currently evident in practice. For example, Canda (1998) suggests that total planet ecology needs to become an international responsibility as part of the Code of Ethics and to include such aspects as waste paper and computer disposal. The link between spirituality, social work and the deep ecological movement requires further exploration. Some work has already been attempted in this area under the umbrella of ecofeminism and transpersonalism (Besthorn, 2001). However, these topics are beyond the scope of this review.

Canda et al (2004) suggest the need for detailed qualitative research using ethnographic and naturalistic methods to explore how practitioners sort through ethical dilemmas in their daily practice situations.

Many questions remain as to how to incorporate a spiritual perspective into the mission of social work. The ethical and legal implications of using “spiritual” methods in programmes that are accepting government funds need to be considered (Casio, 1998). Is social work a spiritual activity? This is a fundamental question that requires debate and will depend on how spirituality is defined. There are many stakeholders who need to contribute to this debate so that their interests are represented. If social work is a spiritual activity, what difference will this make and for whom?



## CONCLUSION

This chapter has attempted to summarise, synthesise and critique some of the literature associated with spirituality in social work, counselling and psychotherapy. Differing theoretical positions inform definitions of spirituality which encourage personal and political transformation as a part of the helping endeavour. Across cultural divides spirituality is enjoying an enhanced profile as part of professional practice. The research considered showed that while there is ethical caution around the topic, resistance to its consideration appears minimal. Training, self-reflection and self-care are considered essential in terms of the successful management of spirituality in practice and spirituality is primarily seen as a positive resource in clients' lives.

However, aside from the family therapy and indigenous perspectives presented in this review, much of the literature is integrationist and focuses on 'spiritualising' current practises. Is this an indication of a sacred/ secular dualism, referred to earlier in the chapter, and identified as significant in Phase Two of the Canda & Furman (1999) framework? It is now my task to see whether or not the literature on spirituality in supervision addresses this issue.

# **CHAPTER THREE – TAKING SPIRITUALITY TO SUPERVISION**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Supervision first appears in the earliest Western writings on social work. The paid workers of the Charities Organisation Societies Movement were supervised as part of their apprenticeship (Munson, 1993 cited in O'Donoghue, 2003). Since that time supervision has developed as an integral part of social work practice, being accorded different emphases in response to various contextual influences. In the past two decades the visibility and prominence of supervision in Aotearoa /New Zealand has increased as a critical ingredient in professional practice. This is corroborated through the appearance of a Supervision Resource Package, supervision journals, conferences and qualifications in supervision, the establishment of supervision interest groups and the proliferation of varying helping professionals requiring supervision (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 56-58). While supervision has been enjoying an enhanced professional profile, during the corresponding time frame, there has been a resurgence of interest in spirituality (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 133). This chapter explores the links between spirituality and supervision through a critical evaluation of the literature. Definitions of supervision are provided from differing worldviews and key themes are identified in the literature.

## **PROCESS OF THE LITERATURE SEARCH**

As in the previous chapter I begin by outlining my process in undertaking this review of the literature. My starting point was resources that I have acquired through attending supervision conferences in Aotearoa/New Zealand in 2000 and 2004. These include my personal notes from sessions as well as conference proceedings. I have also utilised articles and books obtained through undertaking the Diploma in Social Services Supervision. An EBSCO megafile search was undertaken using the same databases as Chapter Two but this time using the terms “spirituality and supervision”.



This yielded fifty-six results and included articles where spirituality and supervision were examined in terms of their mutual influence on each other and as separate entities. This review focuses primarily on the former, although some attention is given to spirituality and supervision as vehicles for self-care. Writing and research in this area is very recent. All resources accessed have been published within the last ten years and represent a specialism within the literature on spirituality and the helping professions.

## **DEFINITIONS OF SUPERVISION**

There is no single definition of supervision. Definitions usually acknowledge aspects of process, activity and relationship(s) (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 14). The definition below seeks to bring together key aspects of supervision as it is understood and applied in the helping professions.

Supervision is a working alliance in which one worker enables, guides and facilitates another worker(s) to achieve, sustain and creatively develop a high quality of practice in order to meet certain organisational, professional and personal objectives. These objectives include competent accountable performance, continuing professional development and personal support. Supervision is a formal, contracted process. The primary purpose of supervision is to protect the best interests of the client (ANZASW, 1998; BAC, 1987; Bond & Holland, 1998; Morrison, 1993).

The emphasis in supervision is heavily influenced by the context in which it is embedded. Feminists have sought to critique supervision from the perspective of feminist theory. Their concern is that traditional Western definitions of supervision imply a hierarchical relationship between supervisor and supervisee, with power residing with the supervisor. For feminist supervision to avoid replicating patriarchal systems of domination, Hawes (1998) proposes that an explicit process of dialogic reflexivity be undertaken. Here the parties turn a critical gaze back on their personal and interpersonal horizons as well as the professional, historical and cultural understandings that constrain their capacity to think and act in the context of a relationship.

For Porter & Vasquez (1997) feminist supervision emphasises open discussion, analysis of power and targets the best interests of the supervisee. It is focused on the social context of the lives of the client, supervisee and supervisor. Porter & Vasquez (1997) have renamed supervision, 'covision', to include collaboration, mutuality, disagreement without disapproval, safety, regard for the person and their ideas, the ability to integrate many different perspectives as well as the ability to encompass both relationship and challenge. Feminist supervisors emphasise openness, non-defensiveness, authenticity, reflexivity and the value of life-long learning and self-examination.

So where does spirituality fit with this? When Autagavaia (2001) describes supervision as a sharing process between Pacific Islanders to provide healing, encouragement and challenges to enhance the personal, cultural and professional self, she qualifies the personal self as inclusive of the spiritual, relationships, health, identity, family vision and church growth. This definition explicitly mentions spirituality as pertaining to supervision through acknowledging Pacific Island cultural values. These values are distinctly different from the values implicit in the definitions offered by the other authors acknowledged in this section. When Carroll (2001) describes supervision as a reflective process that allows participants to think deeply and vulnerably about their life and values, work and career, relationships and connections, he is referring to what he calls the spirituality of supervision. His focus is on supervision as a way of life and represents one view of spiritual values and how they might be demonstrated.

The differing values implicit or explicit in these definitions of supervision are indicative of the multiple contexts in which they are considered. These definitions will now be used to explore some of the themes in the literature related to spirituality and supervision. Themes to be explored include: spirituality in the supervision relationship, supervisory qualities, connectedness in supervision, indigenous perspectives, working with content, spirituality and supervision as a means of self-care and training.

## THEMES IN THE LITERATURE

### *Spirituality in the supervision relationship*

Okundaye, Gray & Gray (1999) reimagine fieldwork instruction using themes from Eastern traditions. They draw a distinction between supervision and fieldwork instruction. The former focuses on the administrative, educative, supportive and professional development functions of supervision whereas the educative process is emphasised in fieldwork instruction. Okundaye et al (1999) suggest that the boundaries between social work and spirituality break down as the student and fieldwork instructor engage in a mutually-beneficial growth-producing experience. The view expressed is that a caring mentor can bridge the gap between a therapeutic and pedagogic relationship through a spiritually-sensitive relationship where the focus is on authority based on respect rather than power (Okundaye et al, 1999, p. 381). The fieldwork instructor is encouraged to model spiritual practices such as taking time for silence, sitting with physical calmness, and monitoring slow, conscious breathing. This is not a radical revision of the instructor student relationship but rather an attempt to broaden the scope about what is possible within that relationship. The aim is to appropriate various aspects of Eastern spirituality and apply them to fieldwork supervision.

Okundaye et al (1999, p. 374) acknowledge the influence of postmodernism and poststructural philosophy in constructing their model. They also comment how the Western context and the managed care practicing environment would serve to constrain the development of a spiritually-sensitive relationship. To foster such a relationship it is suggested that task-related aspects of supervision are kept separate to create a sacred space free of pass/fail anxiety, hierarchical structures and utilitarian concerns. From an anti-oppressive practice perspective this would appear to be somewhat challenging, given that the relationship between the fieldwork instructor and student exists as a structurally hierarchical one, where the supervisor has ascribed power. Okundaye et al (1999) also suggest that the field instructor should be able to keep difficulties that they might be having with their agency from having an impact on the field-instruction relationship while promoting open and conscious dialogue. This could be viewed as contradictory. None of the principles of Eastern spirituality

outlined were specifically concerned with engaging with struggles and contradictions but were more concerned with creating sacred space, reciprocity, interrelatedness, process and harmony.

In contrast, Maclean (2002), a gestalt therapist from New Zealand, encourages the supervisor to engage with what might be avoided, softened or dismissed through what she terms a conscious supervision relationship. In her book *The Heart of Supervision* she focuses on the spiritual aspect of supervision and the relationship between the supervisee and supervisor without neglecting what she refers to as supervision tasks. She names three qualities as central to walking a spiritual path in 'conscious' supervision. These include acceptance of relationship, humility and open-mindedness. She describes acceptance of relationship as being aware of safety yet not restricted by it, seeing life and opportunity while encompassing the difficulty of the moment as the way to new possibilities. For Maclean (2002), supervision should at least be nurturing and include a training component. Supervision when viewed as a spiritual journey can become an oasis for participants.

The use of metaphors is common when referring to spirituality in supervision. Carroll (2001) refers to supervision as a form of retreat where we leave our work for a while to stop and listen. Stopping and listening is deemed the ultimate spiritual act akin to having a cat sleep in your lap. The key is to not disturb the cat! The concept of supervision as a retreat is reinforced by Simmons (2001). I, as the author, use the 'nurturative' aspects of the spiral shell (trochus) to suggest the need to withdraw, to recollect and to celebrate in order to refuel and to re-experience a new energy and sense of direction. Celebration is seen as an important aspect of nurturing in supervision where achievements, recognition of difference, marking closure, or trusting what must remain unfinished need to be marked through some kind of ritual before the rhythm of practice begins anew. Celebrating and creating space for acknowledgement is like noting the detail and texture of the shell. Without such marking, practice is in danger of becoming indistinct (Simmons, 2001, p. 184). I name my work as feminist (Simmons, 2001) when I situate the work of supervision across a spectrum that traverses the earth to the universe and includes forebears, client, social worker, supervisor, agency, society, professions and global contexts.

When Carroll (2001) proposes his model of supervision that has spirituality at its heart, he is in essence advocating supervision as a way of life. Carroll is from Britain, and appears to be strongly influenced by the person-centred theories of psychological functioning. He acknowledges various Christian theologians and Celtic spirituality in his work, but does not explicitly comment on his own cultural and spiritual origins. Carroll sees similarities between spirituality and supervision in that both are reflective, both learn from doing, both are about relating and connecting and both are about noticing what is happening internally. When he talks of establishing healthy and healing relationships, his focus is much broader than supervision. He asks the question: "Am I looking after my loved ones and myself as well as I am looking after my clients?" This is the starting point for "inside-out" supervision (Covey, 1989) and for developing the spirituality of the supervisory relationship. For Carroll (2001, p. 17), celebration involves allowing the process to happen in supervision rather than endeavouring to control it, since this is where miracles, the impossible and the unthinkable happen.

### ***Qualities of the supervisor***

Maclean (2002) and Carroll (2001) both name qualities associated with spirituality in supervision. Maclean focuses on the qualities of humility and open-mindedness as essential to spirituality in supervision. Carroll, when writing on the spirituality of supervision, distinguished between doing supervision and living a supervisor's life. There is a strong focus on 'being' a supervisor alongside 'doing' supervision and on questioning the kind of life the supervisor is living. Is it a principled life based on fairness, integrity, human dignity, service, excellence and apologies when needed (Carroll, 2001, p. 19)? For Carroll living a supervisor's life involves six propositions: being reflective, learning and learning how to learn, becoming process orientated, establishing healthy relationships, learning connectedness and becoming an interior person (Carroll, 2001, p. 13). Integrity is a critical platform in Carroll's approach, for it is the role modelling of the supervisory life that provides the greatest education in supervision. The feminist approaches of Porter & Vasquez (1997) and Hawes (1998) are also concerned about integrity issues. However, where Carroll (2001) focuses on self-reflection and interiority, they are also concerned with structural critique as part of supervision.

## ***Connectedness***

Differing disciplines and academic traditions describe experiences of living in the interconnected web of life (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 20). Hawkin & Worrall (2001) in outlining their reciprocal mentoring peer supervision describe experiences of accessing the wisdom of the ages in a connectedness that goes beyond the two of them, where they are linked to their forebears and those around them. This brings with it a sense of self worth and an evolving understanding of their place in the web of humankind. They name an intangible, “hard to describe” special experience, a meeting of minds and spirit that happens rarely in the ‘harriedness’ of contemporary life as the spiritual dimension. They believe it is a relationship of trust, sacred space, silence and acceptance that enables these profound moments of revelation to “Hover in the air”.

The connectedness theme is developed further in Okundaye et al (1999) through the concept of Karma - the idea that all intentional actions produce a reciprocal effect equal to the positive or negative nature of original action. It could be equated with the saying, “what goes around comes round”, and provides a way of measuring the integrity of the fieldwork instruction process. This concept is further supported by a principle of radical interconnectedness ‘interrelation-emptiness’, whereby everything and everybody is empty of an independent identity, and everything is interrelated. For example, one cannot have a teacher without a student, or a mother without a child. Okundaye et al (1999) believe such interconnectedness brings a stance of spiritual humility to the supervision relationship.

## ***Indigenous perspectives***

Spiritual values differ according to the origins and traditions of their context. Collective spiritual values are apparent in the indigenous approaches to supervision now described. Authors describe models of supervision that critically analyse their position in society and reflect their worldview. In Aotearoa /New Zealand wairuatanga (spirituality) is a lifegiving principle critical to Maori well-being and Maori cultural supervision. It includes respect (tapu/noa (sacred/non sacred), mauri (life principle)), balance (to maintain or increase the wellbeing of whanau (extended



family), hapu (sub-tribe) or iwi (tribe)) and multidimensional interrelationships. Whakapapa (order, interconnectedness and growth) and tikanga/kawa (consistency, holistic healing, constitutional order, social justice and social development) are also life-giving principles (Ruwhiu, 1999, p. 1). In his critical analytic framework, Ruwhiu (1999) states that an informed understanding of the nature and state of race relations in Aotearoa/New Zealand is required as well as an understanding of the influence of the State on the politics of Maori social well-being and diverse Maori realities. The goals of culturally-appropriate supervision are therefore the promotion of Maori well-being, the promotion of Maori identity, self management, development and generosity.

Wairuatanga is embedded through all aspects of natural living terrains, including humanity. It is the source of pain and suffering, healing and well-being. In his keynote address entitled “*Cultural Supervision: A wairua journey within to strengthen without!*” given at the Supervision Conference, Ruwhiu (2004) referred to wairuatanga as the power of ideology, the embodiment of ideas reflecting the past present and future needs and aspirations of a culture. Healing is critical to his vision for supervision. Healing for the healers, in order to enhance best practice. The reciprocity of mana and wairua means the socio-political context of supervision needs to be considered as critical to mana enhancing practice. Ruwhiu (2004) spoke of supervision as a place to go home, not only physically, but also spiritually. Ruwhiu’s (2004) view is that the venue for supervision also needs to be healing.

Webber-Dreardon (1999) is also concerned about the socio-political context of supervision for Maori. In adopting an ecological perspective, her concern is the status of kaupapa (philosophy) Maori supervision within her organisation. She proposes a three-dimensional approach to supervision that includes an organisational supervisor, a tangata whenua supervisor and a kaumatua and/or kuia (elder man/woman). She is clear that both Tangata Whenua and Tauwiwi (non-Maori) knowledge bases and practices inform her model. Webber-Dreardon (1999) like Ruwhiu (1999) signals the importance of tikanga and the gifts of her tupuna in the ‘Awhiowhio’ model of supervision. This model includes karakia (prayer-chant), which provides a spiritual entrance and exit to supervision where a link is established between those present and the spiritual realm. In describing the importance of karakia in opening and closing the



supervision process, Webber-Dreardon (1999) like Ruwhiu (1999) speaks of the need to bring about balance. Kai is also used in the concluding process to lift the tapu. The use of kuia and kaumatua in supervision is also referred to by Webber-Dreardon (1999). They share their wisdom under their spiritual korowai (cloak) as part of the three-dimensional approach to the supervision of Tangata Whenua practitioners.

Utilising the wisdom of elders and connections with the traditions of the past is shown in the work of Josie Oltrop, in her work at the Calgary Native Women's Centre. The peer counselling programme that operates at the 24 bed refuge for women and children is grounded in traditional Indian spirituality and developed under the supervision of Indian elders. Reconnecting with spirituality and traditions are seen as the beginning of the healing process (Healing with sweetgrass, 1995).

Reconnecting with spirituality and traditions is part of a Pacific Islands Supervision Model proposed by Autagavaia (2001). She states that supervision based on theoretical perspectives informed by Western values of secularism, individuality, independence and consumer rights transgresses the spirit, identity and being of Pacific Islands social work practice. Pacific Islands practitioners require a culturally-appropriate approach based on kinship, spirituality, interdependence, balance and harmony in relationships. These core values closely reflect those of Maori mentioned above.

Some indigenous approaches and models of supervision have survived the ravages of colonisation and have in contemporary times been published in professional literature. Their use within social services remains precarious and subject to changes in agency policy and personnel. Indigenous approaches will continue but whether they thrive will depend on the soci-political context in which they exist.

### ***Working with Content – a how-to guide***

Some of the literature provides ways of working with spiritual content in supervision. Carlson, Erikson & Seewald-Marquardt (2002) argue there are grave consequences in separating therapists' spiritual and professional lives as spirituality is viewed as a tremendous resource for therapists. They argue that this resource can be utilised

immorally and unethically. Hence, there is a need to develop critical reflexivity in the worker in order that they might connect appropriately to their own ethics and morals. In undertaking this work the influence of narrative therapy and many critical approaches is acknowledged (Carlson, et al, 2002, p. 218). These discourses challenge the notion of a clear distinction between personal and professional lives. In encouraging workers to draw upon their spiritual beliefs in therapy, the focus is on using these beliefs as a basis for their personal ethics and asking “How do these beliefs call us to be in relation to others in therapy?”

This is the question raised by Carroll (2001) when he puts forward the idea of supervision as a way of life. He is positioning that spirituality as the ethics and values of supervision are what influences personal and professional development. Carroll believes that organisations and companies today want religion, not spirituality, in that they want quick fix solutions and saviours who will keep providing the competitive edge in order to secure contracts. Pragmatism rules and there is not the time to stop, reflect, think and plan. Reflective practice, as a way of life, is counter-cultural in these environments. Carroll’s ‘recipe’ for being reflective has three steps and is adapted from (Neufeldt, 1999 cited in Carroll, 2001). These steps involve: 1) attending to actions, emotions, thoughts and interactions, 2) the stance of examining in depth, critical inquiry, openness and vulnerability and 3) the use of theory and experience. Carroll centres on the individual as the agent of change. Although he acknowledges the environment around the individual, the organisational, professional and societal supports necessary for reflective practice are not considered in this article.

Carlson et al (2002) have devised a four step process using a series of narrative style, open-ended questions that the supervisor might use to invite the worker to consider 1) their own spiritual preferences, 2) critical reflection on these preferences, 3) key spiritual relationships and how these persons might influence the way that one works and 4) ongoing reflection. Bishop, Avila-Juarbe & Thumme (2003) also propose that the supervision partners, engage in dialogue regarding the nature of spirituality and its relevance to counselling and supervision, spend regular time in self-examination and contemplation regarding spiritual matters and develop specific scientific bases for the inclusion of spirituality in supervision. Although differing theoretical frameworks

inform both of these articles, what they are proposing is a way of placing spirituality explicitly on the supervision agenda.

Polanski (2003) adopts an educational focus for supervision in promoting a leading role for the supervisor in the training of a supervisee on how to deal with issues of spirituality in practice. Polanski (2003) promotes the Discrimination Model (Bernard, 1997 cited in Polanski, 2003) as a way of doing this. The model promotes the supervisor as an expert, ensuring that the supervisee knows how to do a full assessment of the spiritual area. It also shows how to question the supervisee's intervention, conceptualising and personalising skills. The fact that it is spirituality that is being fostered for exploration largely appears irrelevant, given that Bernard's model could be used to promote the development of any area of practice with certain trainees who may be theoretically and culturally aligned with this approach. However, Polanski states Bernard's model is promoted as being atheoretical and acultural. This represents a false consciousness, in my view, and is thus open to being applied in an unsafe manner. The power differential between the supervisor and supervisee is exaggerated through the explicit teacher, counsellor and consultant roles the supervisor is expected to fulfil. The power differential appears more exaggerated in Bernard's model than in the approach taken by Okundaye et al (1999). Although the teaching role in supervision is highlighted in both, the focus in the latter is more on developing spirituality within supervision rather than dealing with clients' spiritual issues.

### ***Spirituality and supervision as a means of self-care***

Mention has already been made of the works of Ruwhiu (1999) and Webber-Dreardon (1999) who emphasise the importance of balance in their approaches to supervision. Walsh-Tapiata & Webster (2004) concretise this notion of balance through proposing the Te Whare Tapa Wha Self-Care Plan. Supervisors are encouraged to use this holistic tool to develop a self-care plan with the kaimahi (worker). Adapted from the work of Durie (1994), the kaimahi identify specific wairua, tinana, hinengaro and whanau goals and tasks they wish to achieve for their lives and work to ensure safe practice, professional development and accountability.

Spirituality and effective supervision were described as important in ameliorating the adverse effects of vicarious traumatisation by thirteen psychotherapists involved in the Bennett-Baker (1999) heuristic design study. Vicarious traumatisation, sometimes known as secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, countertransference or empathic strain is a common experience for professional counsellors working in the area of client trauma (Bennett-Baker, 1999; Jones, 2001; Pack, 2001).

Seeking continual feedback and supervision, and experiencing a strong sense of spirituality were two of several factors named in the qualitative selected sampling research undertaken by Dlugos (2000) with a group of twelve passionately committed psychotherapists. This research revealed remarkable internal consistency with four common factors characterising the experiences of all twelve participants: Balance, Adaptiveness/Openness, Transcendence/Humility, and Intentional Learning. These factors are all consistent with the work of Carroll (2001) and Okundaye et al (1999) and a useful study into the contribution of spirituality in building resilience.

### ***Training***

As in the previous chapter, considerable attention is devoted in the literature to the lack of training in the area of managing diversity around areas of spirituality and religion (Shafranske, 1996; Bernard & Goodyear, 1998; Prest, Russel & D'Souza, 1999; Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame & Belaire, 2002). There are, however, signs of hope with indications of increasing training being offered in the mental health field in Canada (Grabovac & Garesan, 2003) and in USA accredited counselling training programs (Young, Cashwell, Wiggins-Frame & Belaire, 2002). The focus of the literature is on supervision as part of the training of practitioners, rather than supervision as an ongoing part of professional practice. All literature available in this area pertained to the situation in North America.

## **RELEVANT RESEARCH**

Some exciting developments were reported in the literature on research exploring spirituality and supervision. Topics include: how spirituality might emerge in supervision, healing work and the consequences for supervision, the prevalence of

spirituality and religion in supervision, impediments to discussing spirituality in supervision and the impact of the therapists' faith for their work and supervision. Miller, Korinek & Ivey (2004) developed the (SISS) Spiritual Issues in Supervision Scale from examining supervisees' perceptions of the degree to which spirituality is addressed in supervision. It was a convenience, non-probability sampling method undertaken with mental health professionals around the United States who either were receiving supervision currently or had received supervision recently from professionals in their fields or programmes. The sample size was small, given the method chosen but seven factors were identified as areas where spirituality might emerge in supervision either covertly or overtly. These areas were named as: Gender and Identity Issues, Acceptance Issues, Family Role, Morality and Loss Issues, Diversity Issues, Value of Life Issues and Supervisory Process. Spirituality was acknowledged as a multi-faceted construct and difficult to measure. It was also difficult to find words and terms that applied universally. A wider study is currently being undertaken using the SISS.

West (1997) conducted a qualitative study of thirty counsellors or psychotherapists whose work also included healing. Healing and spirituality are often intimately connected (Burkhardt & Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 25). The working definition of healing adopted for the West (1997) study was very broad and included intuition, presence, inspiration, shamanism, altered states, (spiritual) healing methods, subtle energy work, channelling and the use of spirit guides among other things. Research participants, of whom 75 percent were women, had been practitioners for an average of over ten years. The main themes that emerged were: the transition by the practitioner towards the use of healing, the taboo concerning talking about spiritual and healing experiences reported by the participants, the nature of healing as distinct from therapy; the supervision difficulties that arose when participants engaged in both counselling/psychotherapy and healing with clients, and the concept of spiritual space.

The comment was made that a number of well-known therapists and theorists (e.g. Heron, 1992; Reich, 1969; Rowan, 1993; Rogers, 1990) have begun to take an interest in spirituality and the part it plays in their work as they have matured professionally. The majority of respondents described their approach as person-centred or humanistic, and nearly 75 percent regarded their work as spiritual in nature. Ninety-

three percent of the respondents indicated that they had been brought up within a religious tradition, and 53 percent were active members of a religious or spiritual group.

The seven main findings emerging from the study were: mostly respondents expressed their spirituality through membership of spiritual or healing groups rather than by conventional church attendance, their transition to healing was complex and often involved a number of personal experiences, healing was considered as both deliberate and incidental, the most common healing named was the presence of healing energies, feeling part of something bigger than self and client, and healing through the laying on of hands. Healing experiences were often named as energetic interconnectedness. The concept of creating or holding spiritual space gives permission to explore spiritual issues and enables the spiritual to be present in some form in the therapy session. Respondents found the work was difficult to label and describe.

This raised a number of important issues, particularly relating to supervision. Healing created difficulties for supervision for the respondents in a number of ways. Some felt unable to tell their supervisors about their work or found their supervisor had been unable to help them. For some this had been a lonely and painful experience. Therapists who become healers tended to lack supervision for the healing side of their work. These findings were supported by West (1995a cited in West 1998), who found similar patterns of therapists not taking client material to supervision where conflict with the supervisor was expected, and therapists down-playing or generally being cautious about spirituality. Such conflict was worse in situations where the therapist was not easily able to choose their supervisor.

West (1998) also conducted a qualitative phenomenological study which involved interviewing nineteen Quakers who were either counsellors or psychotherapists about the impact of their spiritual beliefs on their work. The spiritual faith of the therapists was found to impact on their work in several ways. They believed their own spiritual journey helped them understand their clients' spiritual journey and that the faith underpinning their work gave them something extra. This included inspiration, spiritual preparation before and between therapy sessions and prayer. For a minority



of respondents there were conflicts for them which resulted from their spirituality. These were sometimes expressed in supervision but 27 percent of respondents did not take issues to supervision where conflict with the supervisor was expected. This was most common when respondents were not able to choose their supervisor. There was acknowledgement of the implications of these findings in relation to training, supervision, and the secular settings in which the therapists mostly worked.

The problem of not wanting to discuss religious or spiritual issues in supervision was also investigated by Rosen-Galvin (2005) in her mixed method study of six counsellors and six supervisors. Some counsellors feared being judged incompetent or breaking some code of ethics, so avoided discussing such issues. Some worried that the supervisor did not initiate the topic and were unsure of the agency policy on whether discussing such issues was permissible or even relevant. This created a lack of safety around the issue. The serious implications of supervisees' fears of being judged were discussed in relation to high-risk situations. The study concluded that training needed to be more direct regarding the ethical requirement of including discussions about spirituality and religion in counselling and supervision sessions. The consequence of not doing this could mean among other things that clients are being misdiagnosed and that workers could be imposing their beliefs on clients.

Thorell (2003) investigated the prevalence of spirituality and religion in clinical supervision from both supervisors and supervisees reports. It was a quantitative study to answer four key questions: how often spirituality and religion are addressed in supervision, what training was received regarding spirituality and religion in counselling and supervision, the comfort level in addressing spirituality and religion in supervision, and how all these aspects combine to influence the supervision process. Supervisors and supervisees responses were paired across the USA. Those surveyed included 111 supervisors and 74 supervisees.

Results suggested that spirituality and religion are sometimes addressed in supervision. There was strong agreement between paired supervisors and supervisees regarding how often spirituality and religion were addressed in supervision, but significant differences in perceptions of how spirituality and religion were addressed. Supervisors from the study had received more training in spirituality and religion in



counselling than their supervisees, and more significantly they had received training in spirituality and religion in supervision. Supervisors who had specific training in spirituality and religion in supervision were more likely to address the topic. Also, supervisors who perceived that spirituality and religion were important to their supervisees were more likely to discuss this in supervision. Supervisors' and supervisees' comfort with discussing spirituality in supervision was positively correlated with how often spirituality and religion were addressed in supervision.

In conclusion, the studies above confirm the difficulties associated with finding universal language to describe spirituality. This and the nature of specific healing work have created barriers to the exploration of spirituality in supervision. Education and training and the value of knowing the worldview of your supervision partner are seen as important in resolving the dilemmas created.

## **EXISTING GAPS**

The most recent research on this topic, from both the supervisor and supervisee perspective, is encouraging. However, all the research reported above comes from the North American context. There is a need to undertake similar research in other contexts. The expectation of bicultural practice for social work in Aotearoa/New Zealand offers an ideal context for future research on spirituality in supervision. Qualitative analysis could be used to investigate how supervisors integrate theory with spiritual approaches, and to investigate how, when supervisors do integrate spirituality into their practice, what difference does this make and for whom? Nothing in the literature specifically related spirituality in supervision to social justice. An investigation into how spirituality in supervision empowers the worker for social justice work could be a useful contribution here.

Research on the importance and experience of some of the issues mentioned in this review such as the spiritual nature of the supervisory relationship and 'living a supervisory life', would add to the picture that is building in this field of practice. The use of language around spirituality is an issue. There is a need to get a wider

sense of differing ways of framing up the term in order to get a fuller picture of how it may be understood and applied in practice.

Education and training on this topic requires further extension in order to continue to break down the barriers to its consideration. By incorporating readings, lectures and discussions on religion and spirituality in supervision into course curricula, educators can have a direct impact on the next generation of supervisors. Professional organisations can also increase awareness and education in this area by sponsoring workshops and conference presentations on religion and spirituality in supervision. Supervision texts would do well to include this topic as they would other multicultural issues. Areas of competence for supervisors, in regard to working with religion and spirituality, also need to be outlined in the literature so that supervisors have confidence that they are practicing within ethical guidelines. Through the combination of further research and further education and training supervisors can gain a fuller understanding of the role of spirituality in their work and thus develop more effective supervision for the ultimate benefit of clients.

## **CONCLUSION**

This literature review has endeavoured to summarise, synthesise and critique some of the main themes that are currently being considered around spirituality in supervision. Differing worldviews inform definitions of supervision and this has an impact on the role of spirituality in practice. The literature reviewed was informed by a diversity of theoretical perspectives, including humanistic, social constructionist, indigenous and feminist. Research findings based around healing perspectives included a psychodynamic approach. At the conclusion of the previous chapter, I stated that much of the literature was integrationist and geared to concerns of spiritualising current work practices. My question was whether this was an indication of sacred/secular dualism. While that remains a live issue in relation to the literature reviewed in this chapter, the indigenous material and the work of Carroll (2001) portray spirituality as all-encompassing and relating to every aspect of their work. The challenge now will be to see how these positions are borne out in the research findings.

# **CHAPTER FOUR – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

This chapter discusses the research methodology and the rationale for choosing it. The project is located within the context of supervision as a developing field of practice and a renewed interest in spirituality as it relates to professional practice. The research objectives and design are explained and the ethical dilemmas that arose in using this approach are discussed. The processes and difficulties associated with the data collection and analysis for this research conclude the chapter.

## **CONTEXT**

The purpose of this research is to discover how spirituality is experienced and expressed in professional supervision from the perspective of both supervisors and supervisees. This is achieved through a four-stage collaborative inquiry process involving a professional development group of supervisors, the GG group, and their supervisors.

This research is located within a context of increased visibility and prominence of supervision in Aotearoa /New Zealand in the past two decades which is evident in the appearance of supervision journals, conferences and qualifications in supervision, the establishment of supervision interest groups and the proliferation of various helping professionals requiring supervision (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 58). While supervision has been enjoying an enhanced professional profile, during the corresponding time frame, there has been a resurgence of interest in spirituality and its place within professional practice (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 133).

Five recent studies (West, 1997; West, 1998; Thorell, 2003; Miller, Korinek & Ivey, 2004; Rosen-Galvin, 2005) have explored links between spirituality and supervision.

These studies use a mix of qualitative and quantitative methodologies with varied sample sizes. They raise some interesting questions around training related to spirituality in supervision, supervisor choice and dealing with such issues in secular settings. All these studies have been conducted in North America. No known studies have been conducted in New Zealand on spirituality in supervision although it is evident that this is an area of interest to practitioners (Davys, 2002; Hawkins & Worrell, 2001).

There is a maxim in the helping professions that the practitioner's greatest tool is themselves. If this is indeed the case, it is the researcher's contention that the spiritual self must find expression in the working process. This research seeks to investigate how the spiritual is experienced and expressed in supervision through repeated episodes of reflection and action by a group of peers (Bray, Lee, Smith & Yorks, 2000, p. 6). The research begins with a group of professional supervisors, of which the researcher is a member, and affirms their right and ability to generate knowledge about their activities. It focuses on reflective practice and consciousness raising to enhance professional control over their work practices (Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 40).

Collaborative inquiry is one of a number of named approaches and practices of action research (Bray et al, 2000, p. 48-49). These approaches are participative, grounded in experience and action-orientated, and have been informed by a wide range of traditions, assumptions and political commitments (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. xxiv). Action research is the most applied of all applied research, where the line between research and social action disappears (Hill & Capper, 2001, p. 243).

This research models action research which is usually undertaken by a team, including members of an organisation or group and a professional action researcher (Greenwood & Levin, 1988, p. 4). It endeavours to combine action and reflection, theory and practice as a communal endeavour. Action and evaluation proceed simultaneously through a process of continuous change (Reinharz, 1992, p. 178). The research is concerned with the emergence of living knowledge which is emancipatory in that it leads to the creation of new knowledge with the purpose of liberating the body, mind and spirit in search of a better, freer world (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 2; Greenwood & Levin, 1988, p. 1).

Feminist action research and critically reflective approaches influence the research design, selection of participants, data collection methods, the development of other research strategies and data analysis. On many occasions, as I sat at the computer processing information during the course of undertaking this research, I became quite weepy. This for me is an indication of a matter of profound importance. The choice of research topic and research design is very much a reflection of core values and beliefs, many of which coalesce with key themes that have emerged in feminist theory and research (Smith & Noble-Spruell, 1986; Simmons, 2001). Firstly, spirituality is important to every part of my life. This includes my working life, and my life as a supervisor and supervisee. For some involved in supervision practice, the spirituality of our work relates to our everyday lives and is therefore a place for potential transformation. I believe that spirituality has been marginalised in professional practice. This is something I would seek to change.

Establishing egalitarian, transparent, collaborative, respectful working relationships with people is something I strive to realise and I seek to place myself in situations where the opportunities for this can be maximised. I prefer to work in a team. Reciprocity is a very important value for me. I feel very uncomfortable about the conscious prospect of using others for my own purposes, without feeling that I can in some way repay that, even if it is by indirect means. These positions and values have very much influenced the research undertaken and the processes used. The collaborative inquiry held considerable appeal as a research approach in that it offered the potential for immediate conscientisation and the possibility of continuing the cyclical change process going through participants' ongoing supervision arrangements and their group membership. Reflexivity, the concern with ethics and the attention given to the emotional aspects of the inquiry process, are often distinguishing characteristics in feminist action-orientated research (Small, 1995, p. 947).

Because of my overt interest in spirituality and the dual relationships I have with inquiry participants, (I knew all but two of the inquiry participants), I needed to commit to a process of self-scrutiny and scrutiny by others during the research. There is recognition that the research carries my ideological assumptions which are reflective of this time in history and the position of power I hold within a culture and

sub-culture. These assumptions affect all phases of the inquiry, including the choice of topic, methods and analysis used, generalisations extending from the analysis as well as the choices I will make in publishing and presenting the results (Anderson & Braud, 1998 cited in Rowan, 2001). My management of these issues is discussed later in this chapter.

## **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH**

While action research can employ both quantitative and qualitative methods this research is qualitative because of its phenomenological nature that focuses on meaning, interpretation and subjective experience. It is argued that the qualitative approach was the most appropriate method to use for two reasons. One, it equates with one of the essential tasks of supervision, namely, that of deconstructing meaning and critically-reflective practice (Hawes, 1998; Porter & Vasquez, 1997; O'Donoghue, 2003). Secondly, it provides a suitable method for accessing participants' experiences and their interpretations of these in accordance with Bruner's (1986) theoretical framework outlined in Chapter Two.

## **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This research is about discovering how spirituality is experienced and expressed in professional supervision from both the supervisor and supervisee perspective. The knowledge generated from the discussions on the topic of spirituality in supervision is used to consider the implications of the research for future practice. The findings are then analysed against relevant literature on both spirituality in supervision and spirituality in the helping professions. This objective was achieved through a four-stage process. The first stage involved a professional development group of supervisors discussing the research question together. The second stage involved the above group reviewing and analysing a video recording of the above discussion together and sharing their reflections with each other. Stage Three of the research involved the individual members of the professional development group discussing the research question with their own professional supervisor. Once the findings of the first three stages had been collated, Stage Four involved the professional development



group coming together again to discuss the implications of the research findings for their practice. Finally, these accounts and experiences were analysed using the literature, and future practice considerations are suggested.

## **METHOD**

Action research is distinguished by its method, rather than particular techniques (Kemmis, 1993, p. 184). The method proceeds in a series of self-reflective spirals of cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting (Hart & Bond, 1995; Munford & Sanders, 2003). The method is participatory in that it involves participants in reflection on their practices and expresses a commitment to the improvement of these practices, practitioners' understandings and the settings of practice. Anything that group members are exploring around spirituality and supervision with clients, agencies and their professions could be pertinent to the inquiry. There is awareness that voices are constructed in the wider subculture and network (Pack, 2002) and are part of the action research cycles that spiral outwards (Treleaven, 2001).

## **METHOD OBJECTIVES**

The research is phenomenological in nature, fitting within the interpretive social science paradigm, and uses qualitative approaches and natural context specific settings to inductively and holistically understand human experience (Patton, 1990, p. 37).

The method objectives for this research were to secure ongoing participant engagement and to engage in critically reflective practice. Participation is a process that must be generated. There are no guarantees that it will occur (Hart & Bond, 1985, p. 57). Explicitness around value perspectives, the purpose of the project and the methodological approach are required from the outset in order to maximise participant ownership (Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 8-9). Choosing a topic of relevant mutual interest to the group participants was a key procedural approach. This was aided by the fact that the group were already committed to working together to advance and develop their professional practice. Maximising participant engagement



and ownership was also enhanced by the novelty of the subject matter under consideration. Moreover, the methods for exploring the research questions were familiar practices for participants.

This multi-method research involved three qualitative methods: semi-structured group dialogue, group observation of video recording followed by group reflection and analysis and semi-structured dyad dialogue. Dialogue and reflection are two of the principal methods of collaborative inquiry meaning-making, where participants must be prepared to explore the assumptions and structures of thinking inherent in their conversations and evaluate these (Bray et al, 2000, p. 95-97). According to Lather (1985 cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 185), the most effective emancipatory approaches are interactive interviews involving researchers who self-disclose, multiple, sequential interviews, group interviews, negotiation of interpretations, and dealing with false consciousness in ways that embrace resistance. These techniques for generating and accumulating information about practices are not unique but they are used in ways that seek to break down the power differences between the 'researched' and the researcher. It is expected that the quality of the relationships between the researcher and the participants is likely to assist in eliciting views (Pack, 2002).

## **RESEARCH DESIGN**

### ***Recruitment process***

The researcher is a member of a professional development group of four women who meet quarterly to explore supervision issues. The peer group, which calls itself the GG group, was established by participants in the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Services Supervision offered through Massey University as a way of continuing to develop their supervision practice following the completion of the Diploma. Three in the group have social work backgrounds and one has a background in counselling and psychotherapy. The researcher was not the instigator of the group but was invited to become a member. The group began meeting in 2003 on a Saturday in a member's home. Gatherings usually began around 10.30am with morning tea and a 'catch up'

before the working part of the sessions would begin. Sessions always involved a break for a shared lunch and sometimes included a walk in the mid afternoon to 'clear the head'. Sometimes we would go out for dinner together at a local restaurant before heading home. Agendas for the sessions were jointly negotiated and often involved role-playing supervision issues and preparing a workshop for a supervision conference.

Prior to the project's development it was evident the group had a general interest in spirituality. We had discussed ways that spirituality relates to our work with clients. The group knew I was interested in doing my thesis around the topic of spirituality and supervision. The group discussed ideas for a research question, and they were instrumental in arriving at the proposed question for research. Evidence of their acknowledgement of consultation and support for the research is attached (Appendix Two).

Once GG group members had given informal agreement to be involved they were encouraged to mention the nature of the research to their own professional supervisors. The rationale behind involving the supervisors was that it not only offered the possibility of extending the sample size but also provided the possibility of keeping the dialogue and exploration around the research question alive as part of the ongoing supervision relationship. Because there is a professional expectation that social work and counselling/ psychotherapy supervisors will also be receiving supervision for this work, it was expected that participants would be able to consider the research question from both the supervisor and supervisee perspective as they were in dual roles.

Letters were sent individually to the home addresses of the GG group members providing information on the research (Appendix Three) and consent forms for the four stages of the research (Appendix Four). GG members were given a one-month time frame in which to return the consents and their biographical details (Appendix Three).

Once these had been received the GG group members' professional supervisors were approached. The same information was provided on the research (Appendix Three)

and consent for Stage Three of the research. All the GG group members' supervisors agreed to participate.

### *Ethical issues*

In research where the researcher and participants are intricately involved with each other, the ethical implications are complex. Overlapping relationships and alterations in power dynamics need to be acknowledged. This impacted on this research on two accounts. Firstly, I am a group member. I am engaged in the research as an 'insider' or participant observer, fully engaged in experiencing all stages of the research process, while at the same time trying to understand the process through personal experience, observations, and discussions with my fellow participants (Patton, 1990, p.207). This raises the issue as to how free group members felt to enter into the inquiry. They may have felt obligated, not wishing to potentially jeopardise group cohesion. Group members were reassured that there were other methodologies available to me to complete the thesis and that their decision would not hinder that task. However, I did wish them to have the option of choosing an action research approach. Clear boundaries needed to be established around the work that pertained to this inquiry and the anticipated time commitment versus the normal group agenda. Participants were given the option of not being involved with all the stages of the research.

Secondly, it is the expectation that supervisees will play a key role in determining the content and/or agenda of a supervision session (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 21). When a supervisor is faced with a supervisee wishing to use a supervision session for research purposes, it is reasonable for them to decline. To do so, though, might place them in an ethical quandary, if it is their belief that undertaking such an activity fits within the realm of what they contracted to do in supervision. This was dealt with in two ways. Initially, supervisors were canvassed informally by their supervisee as to their interest in being a part of the research. They were informed that to decline would not jeopardise the research. Payment was offered for the session so that the research could occur in a time over and above the usual contracted supervision arrangement.

## ***Confidentiality***

Questions of confidentiality are magnified in small scale research in Aotearoa New Zealand as populations are small and often well known to each other. Participants were aware through the consents process that they could withdraw from the study at any stage and could request any of their recorded text to be removed. Care was taken that direct quotes did not betray the identity of participants or any reference to a third party. Participants were given copies of their transcripts for editing. Pseudonyms were used to protect participant confidentiality and the GG group members were given the full draft of the data presentation so that they were aware what quotes had been used and in what context. Some quotes were edited in places to provide a further confidentiality safeguard where it was considered that the way participants collected their thoughts betrayed their identity.

Transcripts, signed consents, audio and videotapes are stored by the researcher in a locked filing cabinet in her office and will be erased at the completion of five years according to Massey University policy. The videotape was only viewed by the GG group and only the researcher listened to and transcribed the audiotapes.

## ***Dealing with conflict***

It was anticipated that in a collaborative inquiry where the group has some control of the process that conflict might arise. It was important therefore to establish mechanisms for working through conflict in order to maintain solidarity and keep momentum (Cervin, 2001, p. 22-23; Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 8). This requires the researcher to have an array of attitudes and skills that would rarely be tested by those using traditional research methods (McNicoll, 1999). Building and maintaining communication and relationships contribute to the success and sustainability of action research and are key factors in determining the length of time needed for action research to be done well (Cervin, 2001, p. 28).

Conflicts were resolved through discussion and consensus decision-making. When it became apparent that one member was going to be unable to attend Stage Four of the process because of illness, the researcher contacted all participants to discuss options.

The decision was made to delay the session so that a sense of group solidarity and ownership could be retained. Subsequent to this, it was brought to the researcher's attention that two of the GG members' supervisors had not been given a copy of their transcripts to edit. The researcher had requested that GG group members forward email copies of the transcripts to their supervisors for editing but the process and responsibility for forwarding transcripts had not been discussed or agreed formally. Once again the situation was discussed with the GG group and the decision was made that I would write to the two supervisors involved, acknowledging the error that had occurred, enclosing a copy of their transcripts for editing, the authority for the release of tape transcripts (Appendix Five) and offering to be invoiced for the time involved.

Different choices around process and ways of participating were possible within the confines of the research, since GG participants had the opportunity to take part in the research on four differing occasions. This was useful from the researcher's perspective when she noted a desire to try to obtain an exhaustive coverage of research sub questions in Stage One as though the content was more important than the process. Fortunately, group members were assertive and able to signal when they had done enough. Members' assertiveness was critical in ensuring that their own needs were catered for within the research process.

### *Sampling size and method*

The realities of being engaged in a Masters thesis set clear parameters around what might be realistic for research of this nature. Purposive sampling was chosen (Babbie, 1992, p. 230) because the researcher was committed to pursuing the research question through a collaborative inquiry approach. This meant that the sample size was restricted to eight as there are four members in the GG group and each member chose one supervisor for research purposes. (Sometimes practitioners can have more than one supervisor, but no GG group member indicated that they wished more than one person approached in this capacity.)

## **DATA COLLECTION**

The research design specified four stages of participant involvement.

**Stage One.** Members of the GG group participated in a group dialogue on the research question: “How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?” The dialogue was held as the main agenda item at one of the group’s regular meetings. The researcher took initial responsibility for facilitating the semi-structured dialogue, however another group member took on more of an instigating role as the dialogue progressed. Details of this process are included in the next chapter. Facilitation in the group is usually shared but the researcher negotiated to take ultimate responsibility for the facilitation through the formal consents process. The dialogue was approximately two hours in duration.

Data collected was audio and videotaped. The audiotape recorded the dialogue and the video camera was static with no operator present. Consents for these modes of recording were obtained as part of the written consent. Prior to the audio taped session there was a discussion as to how confidentiality would be preserved in the transcripts. Most participants chose their own pseudonym for the research.

Videotapes are a way of capturing participants with emotions and bodies which are often ignored sources of our knowing (Treleaven, 2001). The researcher had noted that when the GG group had been discussing spirituality in relation to their practice prior to the commencement of the research, postural changes had occurred at significant times during the discussion. The researcher was keen to capture this as part of the research and to gain participants’ reflections on these movements. They are also useful in verifying who is speaking in a group situation (Davys, 2002, p. 46), although group members were asked to identify themselves by their pseudonym before they spoke which aided the voice identification process. Only GG group members had access to the videotape and members were notified that it would be erased at the completion of the study. Agreement to be videotaped was a criterion for participation. However, participants were notified that they had a right to request that the video be turned off at any time. This was not requested. Had this occurred, participants were notified that an agreement would be negotiated with the group as to how aspects of Stage Two of the research (see below) might occur.



**Stage Two.** The second stage of the research occurred on the same day as Stage One after a lunch break. Here GG members watched the video recording of their previous session for the purpose of analysing the content and emphases of the material discussed through observing themes and vocal and body movements shown on the video. The GG group decided how they wished to do this and what they wanted to focus on. All members made their own notes while they were watching the video. This stage was broken into two sections to enable group members to have a refreshment break. This was not prearranged; one of the members made the suggestion and the others agreed. Feedback was given after each section and participants used their notes as prompts for this purpose. These notes were retained by the researcher and used in the data collation and analysis process. Feedback from Stage Two was audiotaped. GG members were informed that it was optional to take part in this stage of the research. This session took two and a half hours.

**Stage Three.** Members of the GG group devoted one of their own professional supervision sessions to discuss the research question with their supervisor. This session was also audiotaped and facilitated by the GG group member. It needs to be noted that this stage of the research provided the opportunity for all the GG members to act in the role of co-researchers. Having to facilitate their own supervision session represented for some a change of role in this context. GG members were informed that financial reimbursement for this session could be made available and one participant took advantage of this offer.

Unfortunately, with one of the supervision dyads, not long after the recorded session started, there was a “click” and the recording stopped. The tape continued to play but there was no further dialogue recorded. Recording resumed on Side Two of the tape but most of the discussion had been lost. This was discovered very quickly after the recorded session. After discussion with my chief supervisor, the dyad was given options as to how they would like to proceed. The dyad summarised the key points of their discussion from memory and these were recorded by the GG group member and sent to the researcher by email.

**Stage Four.** GG group members were given a copy of the research findings and met again to discuss the implications of the research findings for their future practice. The



discussion was audiotaped. It was hoped that this session would occur approximately six months after Stage One, as part of one of the usual group meetings and take one and a half to two hours. However, by this time GG group members' circumstances had changed. One member had a new job in a new city and had shifted house. It became quite difficult to co-ordinate a suitable time. A time was finally arranged but was cancelled at the last minute, as one member was too ill to attend. The researcher discussed this matter with the other group members and the decision was made to delay further until all members could be present. This had been a journey that we had agreed to undertake together. Continuing without all members present did not seem right, so it was ten months before Stage Four finally occurred.

External pressures can have a major influence on action research because of the collective ownership required for research integrity. Group participants have other lives that compete strongly for use of precious time, thus the importance and meaningfulness of the project is critical in maintaining group involvement (Cervin, 2001, p. 34). Part of the change agent role may require negotiating for extra time to achieve an 'owned' outcome. Empowering action research requires the researcher to take a non-elitist role (Mies, 1983, p. 131; McTaggart, 1991, p. 45). This can raise some interesting ethical issues in terms of informed consent and participation. It can be difficult to determine initially just exactly what participants are consenting to, and if the process does actually belong to the group. The researcher has to be explicit about the limits of these issues, both with the participants and the ethics approval body (Cervin, 2001, p. 15; Darlington and Scott, 2002, p. 23). Fortunately, sufficient time had been allowed to make these adjustments, but GG members were given the latest date that I could stretch to. GG group members were informed that it was optional to take part in this stage of the research but all members agreed to do so.

Debriefing was encouraged after each stage of the research but participants often included this as part of their concluding comments.

All participants were asked to complete a baseline biographical information sheet which provided general descriptive and non-identifying information about characteristics relevant to the research topic (Appendix Three).

## **ORGANISATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA**

Data recorded on audiotape was transcribed verbatim. The researcher transcribed these as soon as they were completed. Consideration had been given to using a transcriber for this purpose, but given the small sample size, I decided to achieve maximum familiarity with the research material by doing the transcribing myself. The GG group dialogue was transcribed first followed by the review and analysis of this session. At times it was quite difficult to hear what was being said because one person might be giving encouraging comments such as “yes, yes”, while someone else was still speaking. This made it quite difficult to hear what the main speaker was saying. Some of this was retrieved by providing all participants with a copy of the transcripts for their correction or editing. However, in some instances exact recall was not possible and participants endeavoured to reconstruct the meaning from memory. The other issue that proved problematic in the transcribing process was the quietness of some participants’ voices. This made transcribing very difficult at times, despite every effort being made to trial differing tones and volumes on the dictaphone to make it easier to hear!

Once the amended and edited transcripts were returned from Stages One, Two and Three, the process of data collation and analysis began. Thematic analysis was used to group patterns of ideas and process. These themes then formed categories for analysis. Themes and theory from the literature were ignored at this stage to allow the participants’ ideas to take their own shape. In thematic analysis the position of the idea in the narrative is considered more important than the frequency of its appearance (Liamputtong Rice & Ezzy, 1999). Thus, subjugated experiences that are deemed significant, yet at variance with general opinion, are presented.

The process for the thematic analysis involved printing the edited transcripts and reading these to identify key ideas. These were written in the margin alongside where the idea appeared in the transcript. The notes were then studied to gain an overview of the range of ideas that had been expressed before a thematic grouping process was attempted. The grouping process was done section by section, stage by stage. For example, themes related to defining spirituality were grouped separately from the experiences and the expressions of spirituality in supervision, and Stages One, Two,

Three and Four were considered as units in their own right. This was to enable the progression of self-reflective spirals expected as part of the action research process to become apparent (Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 15).

Theme headings were chosen and spaced on a blank page so that examples of each could be recorded underneath, along with the code and page reference as to where the idea could be located. The researcher chose this approach as there was a need to maintain a visual overview of the whole while working with the parts, because so many of the themes interlinked. The transcripts were then reread and any additional ideas were written in the opposite margin. These were then incorporated into the thematic picture and a revision of themes occurred. Sometimes this meant themes were combined under a new name or a new theme was created.

Transcripts were then reread to gain an overview of the process of the research. The process of action research is as important as the outcomes and any knowledge gained from it (Elden & Chisholm, 1993, cited in Small, 1995). Paying attention to process is seen as important to the integrity of the research and to enable collective reflection on it. "We never know when we begin where the work will take us and those involved. The point is to learn and grow from doing and to celebrate the doing, no matter how flawed, small scale or less than ideal" (Maguire, 1993, cited in Cervin, 2001, p. 16).

In Stage Two of the research, themes, patterns and process were discussed by the GG group and the researcher has endeavoured to remain faithful in reporting these. Vigilance to one's own position(s) was essential to enable stronger "objectivity" (Harding, 1987). The researcher noted that there was an interesting dynamic that occurred in relation to the issue of "objectivity" when she became aware of her own irritation regarding the way one participant expressed her views. This dynamic was acknowledged to the supervisors as a way of reducing its effect. Another dynamic the researcher noted was a tendency to want to under-utilise her own quotes for fear that her own voice might dominate the others, and to make sure that there was a fair representation of quotes from each participant.

The GG group was encouraged to be reflexive and reflect in an ongoing way on connections and power differentials that existed between the researcher and other participants that could influence data analysis (Pack, 2002). Providing GG participants with a copy of the draft data presentation for Stages One, Two and Three prior to undertaking Stage Four provided the opportunity for a critique of what had been presented to occur. “Feminist grounded action research opens knowledge creation conditions to scrutiny, attempts to unsettle and equalise power relations between researcher and participants, facilitates conditions for empowerment and reciprocity, wrestles with dilemmas of representation and interpretation and experiments with polyvocal research accounts” (Kirsch, 1999, cited in Macguire, 2001, p. 66). While there was a sincere effort to grapple with the challenges posed by this statement, the researcher took responsibility for the final analysis and presentation of material. There are practical, professional and academic limits to community ownership of the work in submitting it as a Masters thesis, given that it will be graded and published as the researcher’s work with the only concrete recognition of the participants being in direct quotes and the acknowledgements. Once the work is published, participants have no say in terms of how their work may be construed or used (Darlington & Scott, 2002, p. 30). However, through the formal consents process participants were informed that the publication of a joint paper with members of the participating group, at a later stage, could be a possibility. In this way, it would enable the “researcher” as a full member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers to meet her obligations to the Code of Ethics, in particular Section 6, which refers to Responsibility for Research and Publications. “In any publication, social workers should accurately acknowledge sources of information and ideas, and give appropriate credit to contributions made by individuals and organisations” (NZASW, 1993, p. 15).

Each chapter involved with the presentation or analysis of data begins with a reflection on and/or critique of the research process as a statement on the primacy of process in action research methodology. Analytical frames are established that include data triangulation, that is, checking the consistency of the findings from the different stages of the research; investigator triangulation, the use of different researchers; and theory/perspective triangulation, using multiple perspectives or theories to interpret the data (Patton, 1990). These analytical frames include using

outstanding themes from the GG group dialogue, reflective analysis, the supervision dyads and the theoretical orientation of the literature, to explore areas of agreement and disagreement, juncture and disjuncture. I add my own voice to the voices of the participants and the voices in the literature in reflecting and analysing these outstanding themes.

### ***Limitations and strengths of the research design***

This research focused on the experiences of a very narrow sample of mature professionals with more than ten years of clinical experience. They were a homogeneous group; all of Pakeha/European ethnicity and all from Christian backgrounds. Because of this, results need to be applied very conservatively. Action research is situation-specific and one size does not fit all. The sample size was very small and was not assisted by the tape recorder failing in one of the dyad discussions. A further research stage could have allowed for dialectical theory-building with participants. This, in my view, would have contributed greater integrity to the research process.

Although all participants in the research are supervisees as well as supervisors, mostly participants responded to the research question from the supervisor perspective. Obtaining a supervisee perspective may have been possible with a more structured interviewing process rather than the open-ended one that emerged. A structured approach may have delivered greater content from a supervisee perspective, but the gains need to be measured against what can be achieved through an open discovery orientated reflexive process. Less reflexivity was evident in Stage Four where a more structured approach evolved. The participants in this research take the role of supervisor more often than they take the role of supervisee. Expecting participants to speak from the two speaking positions simultaneously was perhaps a design flaw. It may be possible to hear the supervisee voice more clearly when the practitioner is not acting in a supervisory role.

Limitations aside, the advantage of a design such as this relates to the possibilities it offers for participants to take the work to the next stage. Already, group participants are suggesting using the findings as the basis for a workshop at the ANZASW

Biennial Conference, 'Keeping our Balance'. Consideration is also being given to ways of further disseminating the findings through publication. These developments clearly signal a sense of ownership of the findings by the participants (Hart & Bond, 1995) and point to seamlessness between research and social action (Hill & Capper, 2001).

## **CONCLUSION**

Action research is inspired by the ideals of a 'bottom up' approach to problem solving and goal attainment through a democratic process among 'peer' participants. It follows that action research necessitates an overtly political researcher whose values and aspirations are owned and understood. This chapter outlines the reality of those aspirations as they pertain to this particular research project. While some critique between espoused and actual positions has been attempted, this will be canvassed more fully in the data analysis and concluding chapters.



# CHAPTER FIVE – PARTICIPANTS’ VOICES: STAGES ONE AND TWO

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## INTRODUCTION

The following three chapters take the reader through the four stages of the research by describing the process and responses to the research questions. These chapters occupy a substantial part of the thesis to enable the reader to trace the development of the participants’ voices as they progress through the collaborative inquiry process. The first piece of the research, Stage One, involved the GG group of four discussing the research topic. Stage Two involved a review and analysis of Stage One, by the GG group, after they have viewed the video of the previous session. Chapter Five summarises the data from Stages One and Two. Chapter Six presents the findings from Stage Three, the discussions between the supervision dyads. Finally, Chapter Seven considers Stage Four, the GG group’s reflections on the implications of the research for our practice. The journey begins with the participants introducing themselves through the biographical details they have provided on the non-identifying biographical details sheet (Appendix Three, Attachment Four).

Discussion ideas are presented thematically, although there is some artificiality in doing this as themes frequently intertwine. Consequently, there is some repetition of viewpoints to maintain faithfulness with all the various responses to the research questions that have been expressed. This is apparent in the data below where aspects relating to one question reappear in another section. Most participants chose their own pseudonym for the purposes of this research. Quotations from the transcript appear in italics and ‘...’ indicate an editing process. Spacing signals whether quotations are presented in dialogue or single comment form. Concluding comments are made at the end of the chapter.

## THE PARTICIPANTS

Eight women in total participated in this research. Four of these women were members of the GG professional development group that had been established by participants in the Post Graduate Diploma in Social Services Supervision offered through Massey University and included the 'researcher'. The other four women were the supervisors of the GG group members. Ethnically, seven of the group described themselves as Pakeha with one sub-categorising this as Irish Catholic. The eighth participant described herself as Scottish.

All participants were mature in years with all but one being between forty and sixty years of age. They were all experienced practitioners whose years of clinical experience ranged from ten to thirty years. Participants' supervisory experience ranged from five to twenty years. All participants were able to choose their own supervisor but only five of the participants' supervisees were free to make their own choice of supervisor. Two participants acknowledge that their supervisees had limited choice of supervisor as they were limited to the supervisors available within their organisations. One participant was involved in two separate supervision arrangements: one where she acted as an external supervisor, so supervisees had choice, and the other where she was the line manager, so supervisees had no choice.

All participants had received supervision training. Four were graduates of the Massey University Diploma in Social Service Supervision, four had completed the Central Institute of Technology Course, and one participant had also completed a Post Graduate Certificate in Social Service Supervision from Massey University.

All participants identified being raised in a Christian home and named this as being part of their spiritual formation and relevant to this inquiry. Three named this as Catholic, two as Anglican, one as Presbyterian and two did not specify a denomination. Five of the participants referred to the influence of alternative spiritualities and belief systems as affecting their current spirituality. For some this had occurred through living and working with other cultures and societies. Three participants mentioned the influence of involvement in the feminist movement in their ongoing spiritual journey. Three participants mentioned the influence of their work

involvement as enhancing particular aspects of their values and ethics. For others, life experiences had led to a questioning of the parameters learnt through being part of organised religion and were embracing spiritualities that they saw as more inclusive.

## **STAGE ONE**

### ***Introduction***

Stage One of the research involved the four members of the GG group discussing the research questions as the main agenda item at one of our usual professional development group meetings. This chapter firstly outlines consideration of the discussion process. It then goes on to look at how spirituality was defined, as this was the first question that participants considered in their discussion. Participants' responses to the key research question: "How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?", are summarised next. This is followed by a brief consideration of how participants believed their own spiritual journey influenced their experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision. The chapter concludes with participants briefly acknowledging ethical concerns around spirituality in supervision and placing the research in an historical context.

### ***The process of discussion***

As the researcher, I initiated the discussion, encouraging the participants to consider how they might wish to structure the session and encouraging them to state their pseudonym each time they spoke to aid in the transcribing process. I suggested a possible approach in terms of the main research question: "How is spirituality experienced and expressed in terms of supervision?" One participant (named instigating participant from this point) noted that her attention was drawn to the question, "What is spirituality?", so the decision was made to begin with defining spirituality and then move into how it is experienced and expressed in supervision. Consequently, defining spirituality is the first theme of the discussion reported below.

The instigating participant ensured that everyone had a turn to present an initial comment in terms of defining spirituality. From then on the discussion proceeded in a

series of loops, similar to an action-reflection process. For example, participants connected back to link their thoughts with others' views, or forged ahead into a new aspect of discussion by asking questions like: "how do you prepare for a session?" or "when people are connecting with their spirituality, do people go inwards or do people go outwards?"

Generally, the discussion flowed in a fairly open-ended way. Occasionally, a participant would hold onto a point and bring it forward later if the discussion had moved in a different direction. Discussion was marked with laughter and clapping in places, although it was generally thoughtful and considered as participants worked hard to articulate their views.

The instigating participant frequently took the lead in suggesting we move onto another aspect of the discussion or take a water break. She ensured that an all-encompassing position be considered on many points. For example, in response to the above question regarding whether people go inwards or outwards to connect with their spirituality, she suggested they did both. She questioned where was the spirituality in death and destruction when another participant positioned spirituality as that which was lifegiving. She also encouraged participants to consider spirituality in the ordinary aspects of supervision as well as the extraordinary.

Some participants frequently used the discussion to question themselves regarding their own practice or to pinpoint what they saw happening. This was reminiscent of Hawes' (1998) dialogic reflexivity where parties to supervision turn a critical gaze back on both themselves and the professional, historical and cultural contexts that constrain their capacity to think and act in the relationship. Examples of this included: noting the cultural conditioning of "going out there as if we are heading up to heaven rather than down there to a cat or a tree", questioning the practice of only being explicit about spirituality in supervision with people who have articulated a faith context inherent in their work, or who are clearly of another ethnicity.

Having completed an overview of the whole discussion, the above represents the main features of the dialogue that stood out for the researcher from both a participant and

observer perspective. Participants' responses to the question: "What is spirituality?" are now considered.

## **SPIRITUALITY DEFINED**

Many different facets of spirituality were highlighted by the GG group in the process of defining spirituality. There was general acknowledgement that there are many different facets to spirituality which make it difficult to define. The transcript was littered with questions that arose for participants while they were exploring the research questions, creating an impression of openness and lack of certainty. Although the discussion raised a lot of questions and uncertainty, all the participants expressed a belief in spirituality. Eight aspects of spirituality have been identified as representative of a cluster of ideas. They begin with the aspect of spirituality that was highlighted most but are only ranked in this order to aid the flow of the discussion.

- Spirituality as universal mystery
- Spirituality as paradox
- Spirituality, the darker side
- Spirituality as meaning and purpose
- Spirituality is greater than the self
- Spirituality as connection
- Spirituality as wholeness
- Spirituality as separate from religion

### ***Spirituality as a universal mystery***

Spirituality was seen as being a universal phenomenon present in everyone and everything, including animals and nature. While there was acknowledgement of spirituality's link with culture, spirituality could not be contained by culture. Language was seen as a cultural limitation that prevented the possibility of defining spirituality in its entirety.

Some people were believed to be more conscious of spirituality than others. The reasons for this were not explored. Consciously or unconsciously, humans were believed to participate in spirituality in different ways and on different levels.

Mollie: *So does it (spirituality) have to be on our part or does it happen for us?*

Rosie: *I like the word that we are participants; we are not the centre of it*

Gertrude: *Yes*

Mollie: *So if you are a participant and you come in line, does it also mean that we choose to go off that path of alignment and working with the spirit and...*

Rosie: *I think 99.9% of the time we're off, because I do think probably if we were spiritually honed, my sense is we'd be in it fully, full time in alignment.*

Mollie: *...but is spirituality bigger than us, that it works in spite of us?*

*Like my cousin* (Mollie had previously shared the story of visiting her cousin, whose son had died at 28. Her cousin had said to Mollie that she used to think she was caring too much for her son as she used to always stay home for him, but now that he had died she understands why she kept on being at home for him. Mollie did not think her cousin would call herself a spiritual being or rate spirituality very highly)

Gertrude: *Yes, you see that's that unconscious dimension, because that was the bit that came through, you know it's as though she's been doing this stuff having no idea what this was all going to mean in the end, but she has been an unconscious participant hasn't she?*

Mollie: *Yeah*

The above quotes provide a useful example of dialogue (Bray et al, 2000, p. 95) showing how the GG group worked together in exploring questions with participants sharing insights from their own stories and experiences.

Much of what was referred to above was described as the mystery of life because it was not clearly understood. Various phrases were used to convey this sense of mystery: "an extra dimension", "another dimension". Some participants related this mystical aspect of spirituality to themselves in ways that were both integrated and separate.



Mollie: *I think spirituality for me is intertwined within my life*

Sha: *Spiritual life isn't a separate piece from the rest of our life*

Gertrude: *...there is a part of us that is eternal*

Sha: *I think there is a part of us that seeks or desires to know the spiritual*

The mysterious aspects of spirituality were conveyed in the questioning stance of the participants:

Mollie: *...I wonder if it's done to you, whether it's something that happens within you, that connects you?*

Mollie: *Is some spirituality 'good'? Like, when you're talking about positive parts of spirituality*

Rosie: *What do you mean by 'good'?*

Mollie: *Well, positive, and well, positive to whom? I guess I'm thinking about, like, there's a whole lot of stuff happening with management at work, which I'm not directly involved in, but I know the things I hear and see really frighten me deep down in here, so whatever is happening out there is affecting my spirit, in here.*

This questioning stance serves to highlight some of the paradoxes that became apparent as spirituality was being defined.

### ***Spirituality as paradox***

Many ambiguities were juxtaposed in participants' responses when they were describing spirituality. Words such as "inner and outer", "light and darkness", "resurrection in death", appearing side by side, created an impression of spirituality that was all-encompassing, incorporating both positions.

Sha: *...I think spirituality is that bigger thing and it's also the really deep inner part of me that is intangible, the bit you can't quite define, that bit that you can't quite put your finger on, the bit that's really deep but that is also bigger than you, I don't*

*know... that's about the only way I know how to explain it...it is really is hard to put into words because it is so deep that I normally define it, that it's so deep it's spiritual*

Rosie: ... (Spirituality) *feels out of the ordinary and yet not...that which is not necessarily obvious and it is still there*

The paradoxical aspect of spirituality was focused on more specifically during the discussion of what for us was seen as a darker side to spirituality.

### ***Spirituality, the darker side***

There was acknowledgement that not all spirituality appeared good. At the time of the discussions the Beslan tragedy<sup>2</sup> was unfolding and the Destiny Church was marching against the Civil Union Bill<sup>3</sup>. Participants recognised that those involved were expressing a spirituality that arose out of their belief system. However, from our perspective, these were not belief systems that we supported.

Discussion of the darker side of spirituality also included spirituality in death and destruction and the 'black night of the soul,' (an adaptation of St. John of the Cross' 'dark night of the soul'), when what is to come or the meaning and purpose of these times is clouded from view.

Mollie: *...because in spirituality you have the black night of the soul, and you have the darkness and that's not actually joy but it's still a deep spirituality, like, even this whole year I see there's something going on that's greater than me and I still would say that it was something really spiritual and something really deep within me but it is*

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<sup>2</sup> The Beslan Tragedy occurred in early September 2004 when Chechen militants stormed a Russian School in Beslan taking hundreds of children hostage over several days. Over 300 were killed and a similar number injured.

<sup>3</sup> The Destiny Church, a Christian religion established in Auckland in 2000, which upholds traditional family values, has participated in military style political protest against social reforms such as the Prostitution Law Reform Bill and the Civil Union Bill.

*certainly not a joyous time but it is still very spiritual and even though I feel quite shrivelled up in lots of ways spiritually ...it's still been quite spiritual.*

The paradoxical aspects to the discussion illustrate the differing meanings and purposes that can be attached to experiences and expressions of spirituality.

### ***Spirituality as meaning and purpose***

A constructive, active dimension of spirituality was described which combines meaning and purpose, hope and the direction of energy. Ideas used to encompass this aspect of spirituality included: belief in a Universal provision, moving forward in ways that were lifegiving and sustaining, and persevering when things were tough.

*Gertrude: Yes, yes, no, I am just thinking back to one of my really dark times and you know, losing track of way or the light or, that thing of 'would I ever come out of this?' Being in that dark night, and a friend saying to me, "you know it will be great when you can look back and realise that this is just part of one of the shadows of your whole life and that it's just a strand that's been woven in that has contributed to your and others' life story". That gave me such hope – somebody else that wasn't in the place that was able to bring that hope – and I just held onto it – I had nothing else.*

For some, the hopeful aspect of spirituality included belief in a consciousness beyond themselves.

### ***Spirituality as greater than the self***

This aspect of the research described spirituality as something bigger, something more than what could be attributed to human action alone. Sometimes this was referred to as 'God', the Universe, and one participant referred to it as the Irish spirit.

*Sha: So in that sense you can have those God moments or those moments where something greater has happened where we recognise that something bigger than us has happened...*

Mollie: *...being able to trust that at times there are things going on that are bigger than me...*

As I have mentioned earlier, the various aspects to spirituality were closely intertwined. The connectedness between belief in a greater consciousness and providing meaning and purpose for one's life is perhaps self-evident and highlights another feature of spirituality.

### ***Spirituality as connection***

Most participants identified a connectedness aspect to spirituality that covered a vast spectrum of possibilities. These included connections within relationships, past, present and future, connections with nature, connections with symbols, and connections through dreams.

Sha: *...I think there is a part of us that seeks or desires to know the spiritual and to be connected with the Universe or connected with God but be connected and be fully ourselves by having that connection. ... if you thought about that, the air we are breathing is the air that has always been breathed, so I guess it is about eternal, because life just keeps going on, and the breath that we take, generations will be taking that breath in years to come, and all that kind of aspect, so I think it is about, yeah, being connected.*

Mollie: *...my spirituality, my connectedness ...is somehow connected with my Irish grandmother, who I don't even know. Something there is a belief that somewhere she is sort of here, in me...*

Gertrude: *Yeah, when I was thinking about that whole notion of connection around spirituality it connects me to beauty, to others, it's a sense of meeting place and communion that you can have with other people or with nature etc but it was also the thing it actually connects me to my roots, to my ancestry and to the pain of that ...*

The notion of connectedness was also reflected in the concept of spirituality as wholeness.

### ***Spirituality as wholeness***

The wholeness dimension of spirituality incorporates the ideas of order, harmony and balance. For some participants, these ideas included the notion of alignment where several factors come together simultaneously to enable something positive to happen.

Sha: ... *the world is ordered, creation is ordered, um, there are seasons, there are reasons for those seasons...*

Gertrude: ...*part of my understanding is that there is, like, it's part of the wholeness dimension in a sense – being in harmony and balance – so maybe spirituality helps me to recognise if things are out of order...*

Mollie: ...*I knew I was out of kilter... I don't have that deep sense of being inside of me. I don't feel really connected with the world and I'm having trouble with spirituality at the current time...*

This latter example implies a self-care component. Spirituality is seen as part of how we look after ourselves, how we listen to ourselves and how we follow our instincts or intuition.

### ***Spirituality as separate from religion***

The interrelationship between religion and spirituality appeared on a number of occasions during the discussion. While there was some acknowledgement of one's spiritual beliefs having religious origins, the two were not seen as necessarily related. Negative aspects of religion were also highlighted.

Mollie: *And I think what can get in the way of my spirituality is when I get confused between spirituality and my religious upbringing. When I get into my religious upbringing then I can get quite confused and think I hate spirituality and then I have to separate, and so I have to make some conscious choices about how I think of my spirituality.*

Gertrude: *Mmm.*

Mollie: *Cause religion could really send me off, off the path.*

Sha: *I was reflecting on that when I drove up today and kind of having an understanding about how spirituality is separate from culture, whereas religion is so bound by culture and values and ideologies of the day... like I was thinking about the Christian upbringing that I was raised in was kind of really fundamental I guess, and it's very much in tune with what everyone believed then ...*

The connections between religion, spirituality, culture and context were introduced in the GG group discussion. Further development of this interrelationship occurs throughout the thesis.

This concludes this section related to the defining of spirituality. Participants appeared generally unfazed that spirituality was in a sense nebulous and indeterminate. That said, they were happy to offer what they could in endeavouring to define an aspect of life that was to a certain extent elusive. The above themes represent threads woven through the discussion and cannot be considered in isolation from each other. Once participants had offered their definitions of spirituality the discussion moved to consider experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision.

## **EXPERIENCES AND EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION**

I have chosen to separate the experiences from the expressions of spirituality using the distinctions made by Bruner (1986). Expressions of spirituality have been classed as observable and conscious actions as distinct from ways of interpreting experiences based on feelings, expectations and the construction of meaning. All participants were able to name and acknowledge experiences that they constructed as spiritual in relation to supervision. These experiences have been grouped under the following headings: magical moments, ordinariness, levels of connection and choosing a supervisor.



## *Experiences of spirituality in supervision*

### **Magical moments**

The idea of magical moments in supervision was referred to in a number of different ways. Consideration was given to how these occurred and what role the supervisor played in their occurrence. Magical moments contain elements of surprise, mystery, and could occur after a supervision session was completed. Participants were unclear as to how much of a role they themselves played in enabling these moments to occur. There was a sense that it was not essential to understand this, but that what was important was the transformative nature of these moments. Trust and trusting the process was seen as important in enabling the possibility of a magical moment. It was deemed important to not always control the direction of discussion in supervision. Part of the magical moment involved noticing and celebrating what had occurred.

Sha: *...I had a couple of those moments, I didn't know it was going there, I had thought in my head that I need to question them in this way. We're just going round and round the mulberry bush, and suddenly – shebang – something has happened here and it was connection and luminous and lifegiving and movement and that was so that change could happen because of that.*

Gertrude: *Something was transformed.*

Sha: *But I hadn't done it.*

Gertrude: *Yes, yes.*

Rosie: *But you'd been a part of it, you had participated in it.*

Sha: *I'd participated and they'd participated but I hadn't done it.*

Gertrude: *Yes, yes*

Sha: *...and I think there are a lot of times in supervision when, although you are working together as supervisee and supervisor, you are leading and questioning and asking, but there are those odd moments when I am aware that ...I was in the room but I didn't actually do that... that's how I feel about it anyway.*

Mollie: *In those moments when I've been leading it, I've often found that the magic moment hasn't happened immediately. It may actually be something that I offer somebody, I put something out there someone else accepts and takes it away and then*

*their spirituality happens within time and then they come back and say, 'when we talked about that, we started the process' and the process ended somewhere else, but you sort of know that there was something that you were guiding – something that didn't add up, is often how it's been it for me.*

*Mollie: I know for me in supervision there's been those times when we've got an issue in front of us ...and I say, "let's buckle in and go for the ride" (laugh, laugh) and it's sort of like that – trusting – and then at the end of it we're saying, "what a mystery – look where we've come out" and we sort of celebrate where we have come to and the mystery of what we've gone through ...I suppose that is how I acknowledge that spirituality within – it's something greater than us – than what we even knew about – and I acknowledge that with the person I am working with. It's 'wow', the mysteries that happen within supervision and then name it.*

### **Ordinariness**

While there was acknowledgement of spirituality in the magical moments in supervision, there was also acknowledgement of spirituality in the ordinariness of supervision. This was reflected on in terms of the influence of a holistic approach and what we bring from our own spiritualities to the supervision process.

*Mollie: Yeah, so I find it a really interesting thing, is spirituality connected with the process of supervision rather than the content?*

*Rosie: I say no, it's both and is it not spiritual to sweep the path? For me it's different layers. It's like, that little Buddhist thing – what happens after enlightenment?*

*"Fetch water - chop wood, fetch water - chop wood".*

### **Levels of connection**

Various levels of connection were named as experiences of spirituality in supervision. These included connections within the supervisory relationship, connections with whakapapa, and connections with the supervisees' culture. The major emphasis named around experiencing spirituality in supervision concerned the connection of the supervisory relationship. Some believed this was present in all relationships to a certain extent. However, it was not always really clear as to why one could achieve a

greater sense of connection with some than others. The importance of connecting with the language and culture of the other party was seen as important in helping to build connectedness, and enabling the freedom for participants to be who they are irrespective of gender or spiritual differences.

Trust was seen as a critical ingredient in building connectedness:

Mollie: *...trust comes with connectedness...*

Gertrude: *...I have a profound sense of being loved in supervision. It's just absolutely magnificent...part of that is because we have worked together now for probably about five years and it has just built and built, the level of trust. It's truly very, very sustaining...*

The duration of the supervision relationship was believed to be a significant indicator of connectedness, where parties had chosen to stay together because levels of honesty and truth were continuing to build a lifegiving relationship.

Sha: *I have noticed ...that there is that difference when you go past that milestone because of that connectedness ... if you are still able to be honest and use that trust well, then it is not stale, it is still life.*

The final level of connectedness referred to concerned a connection with one's forebears and how they were brought into the supervision session.

Mollie: *... I just thought, how does our ancestry impact on our spirituality, our whakapapa, in how we bring that into the room, and what about the other person's whakapapa that comes into the room, and that whole spirituality...*

### **Choice of a supervisor**

One participant shared how spirituality influenced her choice of a supervisor. This involved being open to the extraordinary, and following a dream in terms of guidance as to who to approach for her next supervisor.

Rosie: *I was thinking just a little example of being open to more, just in a way of seeing how things came into alignment, was following a dream in terms of choosing my supervisor...*

Mollie: *Yeah*

Rosie: *And I told my supervisor about the fact that I had dreamt about her having a baby at 52 and ... I don't do that very often, but I thought right from go, to assume this dream was a bit of guidance from somewhere more...*

Magical moments, ordinariness, connectedness and choice of a supervisor were ways the GG group named experiences of spirituality in supervision. Also named were a variety of expressions of spirituality. These are now discussed.

### ***Expressions of spirituality in supervision***

As a context for this section, the comment was made that spirituality was not necessarily mentioned in supervision. One participant spoke of how some supervisees come with an explicit faith base to their spirituality that they wish to work from in supervision. Explicit expressions of spirituality included preparing for supervision, outlining one's model of practice, working with differing ethnicities, dealing with difficulties in supervision, and the use of 'spiritual' language in supervision.

#### **Preparing for supervision**

Several participants spoke of a variety of ways that they prepared for supervision as expressions of their spirituality. The first of these involved using one's own supervision to prepare, particularly where this involved dealing with something that the participant was finding difficult or that involved a level of ethical risk. Other forms of preparation included asking for guidance before a session or evoking what one felt was needed. Yet another form of preparation included taking time for stilling, calming and quietness as part of moving into the session.

### **Outlining model of practice**

One participant described introducing spirituality in supervision as part of explaining her model of practice. When explaining the contexts that could be considered as part of addressing an issue in supervision, she states that they sit within a spiritual context, thus providing an invitation for spirituality to be acknowledged as part of supervision.

### **Working with differing ethnicities**

The comment was made that when one is working with supervisees who are clearly ethnically different from oneself, this had led to greater overtness in discussing with the person how they might wish their spirituality to be expressed in supervision.

### **Dealing with difficult situations**

Various strategies were employed in dealing with difficult situations in supervision. These included silent prayer, self-talk and breathing as a way of encouraging the supervisor to remain calm and allow the process to provide ways forward or, alternatively, using silent prayer as a way of supporting a supervisee in distress. One participant shared discussing the use of rituals with a supervisee to positive effect

*Mollie: Yeah I was just thinking about one supervisee...we started talking about rituals...because it was about when she got stressed – her relationship with her son – she didn't have as much time in that relationship – shooting off to work and school and that ...so I talked about rituals with her, and the ritual she came up with was the karakia at the end of the day for both of them, so that was something that she started to do and they both found really connecting.*

### **Ways of naming and asking questions**

Several participants mentioned the importance of using the supervisees' language around matters of spirituality to ensure discussions were according to their own frames of reference. Ways of opening up the area of spirituality included asking questions in the following ways:

Rosie: *“What’s your sense of meaning?” or I might say “spiritual” but I am careful to say “the big picture” or “the sense of connections” or “something bigger” – use those sorts of terms.*

Gertrude: *I might say “How is this lifegiving for you?” or “How does your spirituality assist you with this?”*

Sha: ... *“what does your faith do for you here?” ...*

Rosie: *...I often ask very deliberately, “what is it that holds people through those times?” Is there something that they hold onto when everything else is going? Is it a sense of hope, a sense of meaning or some sense of ‘all is not lost’, it is not all there is. I am looking for whatever might help them when everything is disappearing...*

### **Other named expressions of spirituality**

A variety of other expressions of spirituality were named as featuring in supervision sessions. These included being with the supervisee, sitting with questions, sitting with silence and sitting with uncertainty. It also included expressions like laughing, clapping and celebrating.

Mollie: *...I don’t know how much we really named spirituality within my supervision specifically, but I think it is allowing a person to be, whether it is in their tears that they are working through, or whether it is at the end of our mystery, when I say, ‘wow, let’s celebrate’ sort of thing, and then we name what happened here.*

At this point in the discussion participants were beginning to signal that they thought they had shared as much as they wanted to say. I reminded participants that they would have another opportunity to consider the research questions with their own supervisor. The instigating participant drew our attention to the second to last question: ‘What of your own spiritual formation and journey influences how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision?’ Participants immediately responded, highlighting many of the points that had been made previously and linking these with their own personal spiritual journey.



### ***Influences of participants' own spiritual formation and journey on how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision***

Participants were quick to see the links between their spiritual journeys and how they experienced and expressed their spirituality in supervision. There was immediate acknowledgement of things like the importance of celebration and matching the language of the supervisee where an explicit faith component had been owned in the supervision process. Participants did not dwell on this question to any great extent but it led into a consideration of participants' concerns around spirituality in supervision.

### ***Ethical concerns***

Concern was expressed that, given the variety of understandings around the use of the term 'spirituality', one should not be seen to be colonising the other with their version of spirituality. There was acknowledgement that the area is open to misinterpretation and that the supervisor would not wish to impose spirituality on the supervisee's world.

It was signalled that the videotaping had stopped but the audiotape was still running when some final comments were made in relation to the question: 'What, if anything, is it about this point in time that influences the experience and expression of spirituality in supervision?'

### ***Contextual influences on experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision***

One participant was about to commence supervising a Maori worker. She was questioning herself about her responsibilities pertaining to the Treaty of Waitangi with regard to being conscious of how the parties participate, how they are both protected, and how they are in partnership. I took this as an opportunity to encourage participants to consider the above question with their supervisors. Although participants had indicated they had done enough in this session, two participants acknowledged that where they were in their spiritual journeys meant that the

perspective from which they were engaging with the research question now was vastly different from the perspective that they would have adopted ten to fifteen years ago. They saw that perspective as being located in a patriarchal religious context. Another participant was interested in the current developments from a postmodern vantage point.

*Gertrude: ...the whole challenge to the dominant discourse, to what is pertinent in practice...we have a permission I believe ...as women, feminist perspective to challenge the professional dominant discourse around the relevance of spirituality in our practice and also, I think, very strongly, the whole thing about being in Aotearoa/NZ, the Maori renaissance. Spirituality – they've never compartmentalised it. It has always been a key isn't it? Just absolute. They never even think about, 'is there a spiritual dimension?' – it's just, you know, spirituality.*

This discourse led to a discussion on the influence of Irish and Celtic spirituality on our thinking and the influence of Irish movies and stories in challenging modernism. The discussion concluded at this point. Participants had a break for lunch before reviewing and analysing the video.

This concludes the summary of Stage One of the research which initially provided a general overview of the dialogue process before focussing on participants' definitions of spirituality. Defining spirituality highlighted several aspects: mystery, paradox, meaning and purpose, the darker side, beyond the self, connectedness, wholeness and separateness from religion. Experiences of spirituality in supervision focused on magical moments, ordinariness, levels of connection and choosing a supervisor. Expressions of spirituality in supervision included preparing for supervision and dealing with difficult situations through calming oneself or asking for guidance, overtly questioning about spirituality and outlining a model of practice. The session concluded with participants acknowledging some fears about spirituality in supervision, considering the influence of the Treaty of Waitangi and their own spiritual journey of experiencing and expressing spirituality in supervision.

## **STAGE TWO – REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE VIDEO**

### **RECORDING OF STAGE ONE**

GG group members watched the video recording of Stage One in two sections and then shared and discussed their reflections relating to what they saw and heard after each section. The first section included the bulk of the discussion relating to defining spirituality and the second section related primarily to participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision. Participants took notes while they were reviewing and analysing the video and these were used as prompts for the discussion that followed. What was shared during this time included summaries of the content of Stage One and further reflections on what had occurred.

#### ***Section One***

The reflections that participants shared included new understandings or questions about what they had heard. Some of the reflections included:

- the culture of spirituality and how this might affect supervision;
- how all supervision is spiritual, because the connectedness in supervision impacts on spirituality, even for those who may not have been consciously seeking spirituality;
- always experiencing cross-cultural supervision because of the difference between the common threads and the uniqueness of our own spirituality.

Summaries at this stage concluded that the discussion had raised many questions about spirituality and that our ability to describe spirituality was limited by language. The beliefs expressed were that we were all conscious or unconscious participants in spirituality, connected to each other, our roots and our environment. Spirituality was seen as being present in supervision.

#### **Observations of our own behaviour**

Time was spent analysing our process and movement throughout the video. Comments were made on the way we discussed the topic, bodily movements and the sharing of imagery from this. These are presented below in extended dialogue form

rather than as separate quotes to highlight for the reader how the reflective process operated between group members.

### **Process**

A suggestion was made that the topic for discussion influenced the way we interacted with each other. This comment could only have been made in relation to prior experiences of working together with the same group of people and therefore, I believe, was highly significant.

*Mollie: I've just had an observation that our behaviour in this discussion compared to other times we've met...we were slower speaking, more thoughtful and more considered than previous group processes and we didn't talk over each other and there was a different kind of being with each other and a more thoughtful and probably, I was going to say more respectful, but I am not actually sure it was respect, or whether there was a different energy.*

*Rosie: Sacred.*

*Mollie: Yeah...it was still lively but it was a different kind of beat way, and I wonder whether that had to do with what we were talking about, you know, spirituality...*

### **Bodily movements**

Group members spoke about their own physical movements and body language that they had noticed while watching the video. One member regularly pointed to the place in her body where she experienced her spirituality. Another signaled the link and connection she saw between various aspects of the discussion by pointing between the different participants. Another member noted her body language was thoughtful and quiet.

*Sha: ...Another thing I noticed was in my discussion at one point when I was talking, the place that I referred to as 'that deep place' at whatever area ...*

*Gertrude and Mollie: Yeah*

*Sha: ... just circulated, to notice that I kept coming back to pointing (Sha indicates to lower abdominal area) when I talk about deepness...*

*Rosie: Might be a chakra?*

Sha: *Well, I don't know about those things, but I noticed, watching the video...*

Rosie: *You were sensing something...*

Sha: *I noticed, watching, that I kept on pointing...*

Rosie: *To the centre, an energy centre...*

Sha: *Mmm*

Gertrude: *Just in terms of movement, I suppose for myself, I am aware I would ...point a finger ... linking with the ideas connecting ...with what others have said...*

Rosie: *...and in terms of what you have observed, I'm noticing that ...when I look at myself, I see myself thinking a lot, I see myself thinking away and coming back, and sort of enjoying that sort of quiet time and quiet space.*

### **Imagery**

The above focus on movement led to further reflections where participants named images and metaphors for what they observed. In this way participants showed different ways of connecting to the experience of being involved in this kind of discussion.

Sha: *'Sacred' – it's the only word I can think of...*

Mollie: *And the word I get, it's sort of like, we're in a dance*

Rosie: *Mmmm*

Mollie: *And I suppose I have this picture that we are dancing around with spirituality... sort of coming in and out and going with the flow*

Sha: *Beautiful imagery, isn't it? Dancing naked around a fire. When you say that (laugh, laugh) that's my Wiccan coming out*

Rosie: *Yes, wonderful*

Mollie: *I sort of see the dance, spirituality*

Rosie: *I love the way that all truths, even old Brian Tamaki has some truth, even though I don't like his truth much, it is all part of us, you know? The dance around the fire is just as much part of it as other parts – there are many facets*

Gertrude: *Mmmm*

Rosie: *Especially when it is way past my own little mind*

Mollie: *I'm getting that picture of climbing Jacob's ladder and dancing Sarah's circle – like the Tamaki climbing Jacob's ladder – the masculine, and the feminine – what we're doing here – sort of dancing Sarah's circle*

The discussion regarding more than one truth, led to one participant sharing her reflections that spirituality encourages us to consider others' truths, whereas religion is inclined to encourage adhering to one's own position. This was a development from Stage One where the contribution of Brian Tamaki, as the leader of the Destiny Church, was acknowledged.

The question was then raised as to whether tolerance was an aspect of spirituality. While there was acknowledgement that this might be the case, caution was noted. We were reminded that as social workers much of what we are about is making judgements and challenging what is deemed intolerable for some sectors of society. These kinds of perspectives brought the non-dualistic tenor of the discussion to the fore and highlighted that spirituality in supervision leads to a life of reflection (Carroll, 2001).

## ***Section Two***

Section Two of the GG group's review and analysis of the video focused on experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision. Like Section One, it included a mixture of content summary and further reflections, questions or challenges.

### **Connectedness**

The connectedness of the supervisory relationship featured strongly in the summaries as a key to the experience of spirituality within supervision. This varied depending on whether one was in the role of supervisor or supervisee. For the supervisee, spirituality was experienced most profoundly when they felt that they could be as “free, spontaneous, truthful and real as possible”.

One participant concluded that all supervision was spiritual after outlining a line of reasoning that brought her to that point.



Sha: *...if spirituality is the fulfilling of relationship, ie, connectedness, therefore all supervision is spiritual, and if we are created in God's image, ie, to be relational and connected beings, in whatever relational or connectedness is, then definitely all supervision is spiritual because we are spiritual by the notion that we are created to be connected beings...*

For this participant the discussion had led to a revisiting of old narratives, adding deeper richness to them and had been a merging of her professional and spiritual self.

The question of duality and the place or role of spirituality in supervision also featured:

Gertrude: *...I think what has come through in terms of us sharing our experiences – we see that spirituality is the whole – it is imbibed in every aspect, whether it's the special zingy moments that you mentioned about Sha, or just the more sort of hum drum, it doesn't require our naming of it to actually be. We don't have to be conscious or fully conscious of it but we nonetheless are stating that we believe that spirituality is somehow present in it all*

The connectedness theme was further advanced with reflective questions including:

- how the ancestry and whakapapa of the supervisee and supervisor impacted on supervision; and
- how we experience how we live, is how we live our spirituality and this in turn is how we live our supervision.

This section of the GG group's review and analysis of the video concentrating on experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision was relatively brief.

Participants were happy to leave questions open because they knew that they would have another opportunity to consider the issues further in Stage Three and Stage Four.

It had been a long day. Participants had worked very hard, concentrating, questioning, reflecting and sharing. It had been four hours of focused activity and participants acknowledged that they were very tired. Not only had this exercise been

undertaken at the end of a full working week for most, but also, participants were giving expression to thoughts, ideas and experiences that they had not necessarily put together in such a way before.

In conclusion, Stage Two proved most interesting in that the opportunity to review what had been shared a couple of hours earlier led to further clarifications or understandings, further reflections and further questions. Participants did not appear so interested in summarising what they saw, but rather used the time to reconsider what they had seen and experienced and to develop this further. This was apparent both in participants' reflections regarding observations of their own behaviour and in their reviews of the discussions that occurred.

# **CHAPTER SIX – PARTICIPANTS’ VOICES:**

## **STAGE THREE – THE SUPERVISION**

### **DYADS**

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#### **INTRODUCTION**

Stages One and Two of the research highlighted some key themes. Spirituality was difficult to define and discussing the research questions proved challenging. Participants used the research process to define and develop their ideas. All participants expressed a belief in spirituality and saw it as being present in supervision. The beliefs expressed were that spirituality was universal and that we were all conscious or unconscious participants in it; we were connected to a greater consciousness, each other, our roots and our environment. Spirituality in supervision was identified as both ordinary and magical and caution was expressed about the way spirituality was managed in supervision. These themes reappear in the discussion below. The reader gets less sense of the challenges posed by the research questions in Stage Three but gains more of a sense of the importance of the meaning, purpose and integrity aspects of spirituality.

#### **SETTING UP THE PROCESS**

The four supervision dyads spent time at the commencement of their discussion negotiating how they would proceed with the research questions. The amount of attention given to this varied. Attempting to define spirituality generally occurred first. Three of the supervisees took more of a facilitative role in the discussion with their supervisor; their primary concern appeared to be to ensure that the supervisor’s views were captured. Sometimes the views were directly related to the research questions but not always. In the fourth dyad, the supervisee and supervisor took similar roles, both sharing their reflections on the questions. In this scenario the supervisee shared again her views from Stage One and Two but also extended this with further reflections. This did occur in the other dyads but to a lesser degree. One

dyad was very unstructured. Their discussion came across as more of a sharing rather than interviewing where aspects of their own stories were used to illustrate points. Much of what was shared in the dyads covered similar ground to Stage One. This section will focus on presenting newer material as well as reinforcing repeating ideas.

## DEFINING SPIRITUALITY

### *Spirituality as a universal mystery*

There appeared to be less difficulty in defining spirituality in the dyads with only one supervisor commenting on how difficult it was. The universality of spirituality expressed in different cultures was once again acknowledged as something that people are socialised into. If they are not, then a major life event might precipitate interest in spirituality.

When the GG group referred to the idea of things coming into alignment as an aspect of spirituality, here the terms synchronicity was used to describe this phenomenon.

Minnie: *...but everything just came together in a rightness and an appropriateness that I thought that clearly there is something*

Gertrude: *Synchronicity*

Once again, supervisors related spirituality to themselves, focussing on interiority and a sense of knowing:

Minnie: *...and the kind of sense of it is within ourselves, in terms of that interior place we go to in our way of being.*

Minnie: *...is not intellectualised, it is something that is felt.*

The GG group had grappled with the question of their role as participants in spirituality. In Stage Three one supervisor referred to herself as a tool whereby she is

used by the Universe, as an agent of change in a way that can be experienced as magical. Here again was an acknowledgement of spirituality as greater than the self.

There was acknowledgement that one could only know the human aspect of spirituality and that a sense of humility was called for, since one could not pronounce the last word on the topic:

Valda: *...I don't think we are ever going to know. I don't think we can know for sure, it is a belief system – it has to be, it doesn't have to be proven...*

### ***Spirituality as paradox***

The paradoxical aspect of spirituality did not feature strongly in the dyads. Only one supervisor commented that for her spirituality was “both the big stuff and the small stuff”. No comments were made on the darker side of spirituality.

### ***Spirituality as meaning and purpose***

The values that underpin the rationale for being involved in social work became the focus for one dyad's exploration, because it helped them to make sense of and give meaning to their work.

Valda: *... you wouldn't be in this sort of work where there is that relentless, unremitting sort of job you do, if it wasn't for...the values that brought us here... because the job is too hard. It would be too difficult unless you had a very strong base from which you operated. It can be...death through suicide or when people get physically attacked while working on the ward, you know, to do this kind of work – why would you bother? You would not put yourself in that kind of situation if it was just for the money. You wouldn't, because there are lots of other jobs out there that you could do that would earn you a lot more money ...I wouldn't be working in the mental health field. I would be working downtown in some corporation earning real money, but I have been there, done that, and it wasn't satisfying to work just for money and I needed to work in a way that was helping people create change in their lives – that's why I chose this profession*

## ***Spirituality as connection***

The connection between spirituality and work was one of a number of connectedness aspects to spirituality discussed in the dyads. These included connections with ancestors, children and others in general. One dyad acknowledged their ancestors as spiritual guides who they believed guided and helped them in their work.

Another dyad expressed concern about the spiritual formation of their children, both for those who were and were not being raised in church environments. The importance of having and developing a spiritual life was seen as something one wanted for one's children.

*Gertrude: ...I guess it is that sense of connection you have with your kids because we are so connected with them. I mean, it is such a big part of the whole spiritual thing...*

*Minnie: You've got all these things about development, that you strive to get right and ... I worry about that, I mean, it is a long time since I have done anything about, you know, things like Lent ... I don't know whether it teaches spirituality, but it does provide that kind of foundation I guess, in a weird kind of a way... it does provide a sense of otherness or doing something outside of yourself.*

Another aspect of the connectedness of spirituality portrayed a belief that good being done or prayer being conducted in one place sends good energy into the Universe that can benefit the rest of humankind.

*Violet: ...I do believe a very important aspect of spiritual life, people in living totally a religious life, dedicating themselves to religious practice, I see that as improving the world in some way.*

In endeavouring to describe a sense of connection, one supervisor spoke of knowingness, a completeness that is supportive to experience but that you can give



back, so it is reciprocal. She stressed there was a need to nurture this kind of spiritual connection with clients.

### ***Spirituality as wholeness***

Once again, balance and self-care featured as important to wholeness, with emphasis being given to the need to tend to the spiritual aspects of self-care.

One dyad considered the relationship between spirituality and the capacity to reflect and questioned themselves as to how an activist might experience spirituality. There was acknowledgement that exercise could be determined as spiritual and that people can experience connectedness in many differing realms.

Sarah: *I can determine exercise as a spiritual experience...there is a sense that it can be like that...*

### ***Spirituality as integrity and congruence***

The values of integrity and congruence featured as demonstrations of spirituality that resonated with some supervisors.

Sarah: *... so yeah I think for me spirituality is about integrity as well, but kind of who I am as a person, my hopes and how I live that out...*

Gertrude: *...like people I suppose whose spirituality is more exuded, if you like...*

Minnie: *For me, it is very, very congruent, you know, where they*

Gertrude: *Surely, surely that's a key thing isn't it – congruence?*

Minnie: *Congruence – and some people can't help exude that*

Gertrude: *That's right and it is just lovely, truly lovely*

### ***Spirituality as different from religion***

The connection and distinction between spirituality and religion received minimal consideration in Stage Three. Spirituality was seen as more personal and individual,

whereas religion was deemed to be a collective position. Religion was compared with the deficit approach to problem solving and needing to be perfect, whereas spirituality was linked with the need to be whole.

In summary, the connectedness theme featured most strongly in the dyads' defining of spirituality. Its influence is apparent in the other themes represented. This influence continues below in participants' experiences of spirituality in supervision.

Participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision are once again separated as they were in Stage One.

## **EXPERIENCES OF SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION**

This section sees the re-emergence of themes apparent in Stage One and Two. Once again I have chosen to separate the experiences from the expressions of spirituality using the distinctions made by Bruner (1986). Expressions of spirituality have been classed as observable and conscious actions as distinct from ways of interpreting experiences based on feelings, expectations and the construction of meaning. Of special note are the comments relating spirituality in supervision to strength-based practice and the discussions about the dyads' experience of spirituality within their supervision relationship.

### ***Connectedness in the supervision relationship***

A greater sense of connection was experienced in some supervision sessions than others. One supervisor believed connectedness could be built up in a relationship through getting to know the person so that they felt safe. When supervisees felt confident to raise spirituality or faith-related matters, this was regarded as a measure of the level of safety in the supervision relationship. Acknowledging beliefs was considered important in developing a relationship since they are part of who you are and your use of self. One supervisor described a significant milestone in a supervisory relationship, when one of her supervisees described the kind of connection she had with some clients which she found difficult to manage. She seemed to know in advance of clients' deaths, either through dreams or through their situation suddenly coming to mind. The supervisor reassured her:

Minnie: *...sometimes there's a knowing and I don't know where it comes from, but you connect with clients and we take in huge amounts of information about them, that isn't necessarily verbal ...and energy, you absorb that from them, it sounds bizarre but you do...there is something out there that is going on that you are privileged to, so when we talked about it, I just said to her that it is something basically that was just a part of her practice...that it is a really important part of her practice and that it must be tended to...*

Another dyad referred to this type of knowing as intuitive knowing. Intuitive knowing involves getting a sense or instinct about a client or situation that could lead to ringing a client before the expected scheduled time to check on them, or reprioritising appointments in order to respond to what one feels needs priority. It involves taking risks and knowing when to take them. Ancestors were seen as being important in this process, helping the practitioner in their work, helping them to know what questions to ask and when to ask them.

### ***Memorable Moments***

Times of real insight occur that are named as spiritual. These are not necessarily shared between the supervisor and supervisee. Participants named specific aspects of supervision that stood out for them as being particularly spiritual. The honouring of the supervision space was one of these.

Sarah: *...I think it is like the space that each person gives to the supervision relationship, the people that I work with who prepare, who are focused...they kind of create a space around supervision so there is the honouring of the space...that's when I feel supervision is at its most spiritual ...*

The honouring space was referred to by another participant as “sacred time” which involves being with the person in a total sense. Others referred to this as allowing the person to be: to be in their tears, in their celebration, or in the expression of their own spirituality.

One participant mentioned working with someone who was very creative, who liked to use art and go for walks during supervision as a way of working through things. This was considered quite spiritual because it involved components other than words.

### ***Strength-based practice***

Two dyads explored strength-based practice as expressions of their spirituality, given its core values and beliefs around relationships. This was believed to enhance the connectedness of their relationship because they shared similar belief systems around supervision, working in a collaborative, non-hierarchical manner. The importance of hope and the belief that people can change and get better featured strongly for workers in the mental health field.

### ***Choice of a supervisor***

One dyad spent time exploring how the spiritual might have influenced their choice of a supervisor. One participant spoke of seeing her supervisor as a spiritual being, a kaumatua:

*Sarah: ...I think for me, in terms of who I chose to ...be my supervisor...he is a kaumatua, so for me he is a spiritual being in the way he is. So I think for me supervision with him is (although it is not something we have actually talked about ever I think) ...but yeah, that is my experience of it, so the process of it and how he is with me, which is really helpful ...*

### ***Spirituality in our relationship***

All dyads took the opportunity to discuss spirituality in relation to their supervision relationship. Time was taken to acknowledge the working relationship that had developed and to express gratitude for the opportunity of working together. For three of the dyads this was a new way of considering their relationship. Constructing relationships in this way was acknowledged by one dyad as restating what had previously been shared, using different language.

One participant took the opportunity to ask her supervisor to attend to her energies in supervision and provide feedback on the basis of this.

Acknowledgement of the importance of spirituality by both participants meant there was a framework to deal with spiritual issues. When this is considered a crucial part of supervision, the issue of changing one's supervisor becomes more problematic because of the levels of connectedness in the relationship. The term, 'spiritual supervision', was coined as a way of meeting the need for the spiritual in supervision and as a challenge to the discourse that it is beneficial to change one's supervisor regularly.

*Minnie: ...I thought, I know what I can do – people can have cultural supervision – I can have spiritual supervision...*

One dyad decided a paper needed to be presented on this, giving consideration to the question: "When is a time to end?"

Parties expressed commitment to supervision as a way of life and part of who they are as people. This led onto naming one's work as a vocation, a sense of calling, being wedded to it for better or worse.

Some participants began to consider what being involved in this discussion meant for them in terms of implications for their ongoing practice. They were challenged to be more overt about the spiritual in supervision and to consider ways that this might be done. As one participant said:

*Violet: ... in fact it [spirituality] really needs to be acknowledged in having a role in supervision because if one doesn't acknowledge it, how it's done, but believes it is happening anyway, there is a kind of dishonesty in a sense with the supervisee that you haven't, that you are expecting to pick up by osmosis, that you have a spiritual dimension and work with a spiritual dimension – perhaps it should be more explicit?*

## **EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION**

This aspect of the discussion was brief and has been clustered under the headings: use of ritual and ways of naming and asking questions. One participant commented that she never mentioned spirituality unless the supervisee raised it. Another stated that she tends not to discuss it and challenged herself how to alter this situation, given that she saw many benefits in considering spirituality in supervision. These included: greater openness, catering to a holistic approach and the development of the person.

### ***Use of ritual***

Asking for help and discussing the use of karakia (prayer, blessing) in supervision were ways spirituality was expressed. One supervisor shared a story about how a house blessing had led to a major breakthrough for a client. She stated that she had done a very risky thing in suggesting it.

One dyad spent time considering the difference between what they termed spirituality as an 'action' and spirituality as a 'being'. The fact that they had been involved in supervision that had begun and ended with a karakia/reflection but had not necessarily led to the experience of a great deal of spirituality or connectedness during those supervision sessions was discussed. It was concluded that ritual alone did not necessarily make an experience spiritual.

### ***Ways of naming and asking questions***

Knowing what questions to ask and when to ask them was seen as important in managing spirituality in supervision. Some supervisees come with an explicit faith base to their spirituality that they wish to develop as strength in their practice. Reference was also made to situations where clients had presented with specific spiritual issues for resolution, and that these had been referred to appropriate resource people.



## ETHICAL CONCERNS

All dyads expressed concerns about spirituality in supervision. These included issues of power, safety, responsibility and concerns about the personal nature of spirituality. There was acknowledgement that the area is open to misinterpretation, and that the supervisor would not wish to impose spirituality across the supervisee's world.

*Valda: No, if a client talks about it with me I would acknowledge their belief, but I would never raise my beliefs with the client because I think that is imposing on vulnerable people and that could be very frightening or it could be very, if somebody was psychotic, it could be really damaging, and I would never thrust my beliefs on other people*

This particular supervisor was adamant that spirituality was "absolutely private" and said she would not instigate a discussion with a client around spirituality. Another supervisor described spirituality as "very personal" and a part of family culture. If spirituality was to be discussed, it was important to know that the supervisor could deal with it, for supervisees do not wish to be viewed as "going off the rails" or having "unsafe practice".

*Sarah: ...It's quite interesting, I had a supervisee who challenges me, he actually thinks about things that he can bring to supervision to test me out on (laugh, laugh) particularly things about his faith and he doesn't tell me 'til afterwards (laugh, laugh), so that's been quite an interesting thing but that's about him needing...to know (he is as a leader of his Church) exactly where I stand on some things or what my reaction will be actually – will I fall off my chair, when he is talking about spiritualism... or exorcism...*

Some participants questioned themselves as to why they kept quiet about the spiritual dimension in supervision. Reasons given for this included not wanting to appear as though one knew too much, not wanting to sound as though one had a defined position, fearing others' judgement who perhaps see spirituality as some "hallelujah Sunday morning worship" or "touchy feely" thing.

Concern was also expressed about the degree of responsibility involved in dealing with spirituality in supervision. This concerned the aspect of spirituality that was defined as “a sense of knowing”. One participant acknowledged feeling a bit unsafe with the responsibility of it. Another spoke of the need to balance and filter the ‘sense of knowing’ so that it is not personally dangerous.

Minnie: *...because if I get too much of it, it is unbalancing, it is personally dangerous.*

### **THE INFLUENCE OF THIS POINT IN TIME ON THE EXPERIENCES AND EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION**

This question was responded to in a variety of ways and confusion may have been avoided had it been worded more clearly. The intention had been to get participants to consider this question from the standpoint of this time in history, as a way of stimulating reflexivity and the temporal dimension named in Bruner (1986). Perspectives taken included: self-care in the workplace, greater understanding and use of the term ‘spirituality’ and the influence of multiculturalism.

The challenges of the current working environment were considered to be a significant feature of working life and thus provided further rationale for the importance of spirituality in supervision.

Gertrude: *...people need sustenance ...we need to be reminded about why we are doing what we're doing, what is the point and the purpose? Because boy, it would be easy to lose sight...*

The importance of taking note of one’s instincts in terms of self-care was seen as an important tool of preservation in the workplace. However, currently the system encouraged negation of instincts by expecting too much of workers, thus increasing the likelihood of burnout. This was referred to as:

Valda: *...punching on your spirituality...*

Currently, the words 'holistic' and 'spirituality', were believed to be in common usage and no longer just associated with belonging to a religious group or church, so they were therefore appropriate to consider in supervision. One supervisor noted that the younger generation of social workers have not necessarily been raised in a church and so were bringing a diversity of worldviews into social work. This diversity of worldviews is reflective of our contemporary society. Openness and vigilance is required in dealing with these differences and how the spiritual component comes into play. Tending to the Treaty of Waitangi and bicultural practice is one of the ways that spirituality is mentioned in supervision. For many, though, it is compartmentalised if it is not part of their lived reality.

Spirituality as a lived reality leads to the final research question.

## **HOW DOES SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION MAKE A DIFFERENCE TO HOW YOU LIVE YOUR LIFE?**

As with other questions, there was a variety of ways in which participants chose to respond to this question.

One participant commented that she had accrued insight that influenced the way she worked and the ways she supervised. Another commented that it led to a greater sense of celebration and joy in acknowledging the goodness in others through connecting with them in small ways.

Several participants spoke of the reflective aspects of their lives being enhanced: a deeper searching and questioning, claiming space to reflect on who they are in the big picture, and the need to change pace to do that. There was mention of the privilege of being involved in supervision working with the potential and goodness in people.

One participant spoke of being able to fall back on spirituality as a reaffirming and nurturing aspect of oneself when all else was not working well. It also provided an incentive for a congruence check and a personal "warrant of fitness". Another

participant also mentioned the challenge to authenticity as an important consequence of spirituality in supervision.

*Sarah: ... for me...it is a two-way process in terms of the impact on me as much as I have an impact on anybody else. I mean, everybody I work with in supervision leaves a mark and some experiences, it is very fundamental in terms of who I am. I think for me it is that authenticity... It is not good enough to be out here talking about it if I am not actually living, and I mean that's what Michael Carroll talks about – living the supervisor life. I am not saying I am perfect at it because I am not but that is the future picture... so saying, listen, this is how I want to live my life and all my relationships as much as possible.*

The particular contribution of Stage Three of the research is the emphasis given to matters related to congruence, integrity and authenticity. This was reflected not just in the responses to defining spirituality but also when considering the impact of spirituality in supervision on other aspects of one's life. The dyads gave more attention to these issues rather than sticking solely to the main research questions. They also reflected how the changing nature and complexities in contemporary society meant there was greater consciousness of spirituality and holistic approaches and the importance of self-care.

Across Stages One, Two and Three the only theme that features in all stages was that of connectedness. This is the aspect of spirituality in supervision that has received the greatest attention and perhaps encapsulates the essence of participants' experiences of spirituality in supervision. Spiritual experiences of magical moments in supervision and choosing a supervisor were common themes between Stages One and Three as were concerns about spirituality in supervision and ways of introducing the topic. Stages One and Three shared several themes in defining spirituality. These included: the universal mystery of spirituality, meaning and purpose, beyond the self, connectedness, wholeness and the difference between spirituality and religion. While there are areas of concern in terms of the management of spirituality in supervision, participants expressed interest in pursuing ways of making spirituality more overt in supervision. This is the task for Stage Four when the GG group considers the implications of the research for their practice.

# **CHAPTER SEVEN – PARTICIPANTS’ VOICES: STAGE FOUR – IMPLICATIONS OF THE FINDINGS FOR FUTURE PRACTICE**

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Stage Four concludes the presentation of data from the research. The purpose of Stage Four was to enable the GG group to discuss the implications of the research findings for their future practice. The summaries presented represent a combination of data and analysis. This is reflective of the style of participant engagement with Stage Four. Fewer direct quotes are used in presenting the data for this stage. In many cases, the development of an idea could not be demonstrated in a succinct quote. The chapter begins by outlining the process of the group discussion and recording group members’ satisfaction with the data summaries for the first three stages. Participants then discuss aspects of their practice that have already altered as a consequence of doing the research before considering future implications of their findings.

## **PROCESS**

The session began with the researcher reminding the GG group of the question for consideration: “What are the implications of the research for our practice?” Participants were invited to pursue the question in whatever direction they wished. The process of the discussion proceeded in a somewhat different fashion from the previous stages. I took much more of a lead, as I sensed this was what was expected. It had been ten months since we had undertaken Stages One and Two and much had happened in the participants’ lives. One participant was particularly concerned that answers were given to the questions I had posed. The discussion proceeded in a much more linear fashion than the previous stages. I raised topics for consideration in a sequential manner, as if in the role of an interviewer. Towards the later stages of the

session, I seemed to be preoccupied with getting through my notes and jottings rather than spending time checking whether others wished to comment further on that particular topic. There was more of a sense of getting through an agenda rather than spending time fully exploring a topic. I was concerned about adhering to the time frame agreed in the formal consents process so as not to ask too much of others.

Once the group had begun considering some of the implications of the research a degree of anxiety was expressed about what we were doing. Would it be considered subversive? There was acknowledgement that we had articulated an undercurrent in our working relationships that we wished to make explicit, adding greater depth to their own self-questioning in the process.

The familiar laughing and clapping continued to punctuate the transcript and was accompanied by teasing, humour and checks on others' comfort and welfare. Stories were shared to illustrate points in a way that suggested participants had achieved a greater degree of reflexivity around the research. Although the process of self-questioning continued in Stage Four, the discussion appeared less tentative than the ponderings of the previous sessions, given that participants used the opportunity to set some directions for their future practice.

## **SATISFACTION WITH DATA SUMMARIES FOR STAGES ONE, TWO AND THREE**

Participants were asked to consider how faithful the representation of the data summaries were from their perspective. Generally, participants were happy with the way data had been summarised. This is not to say that the themes chosen were the way they would have done it. Elements of surprise were acknowledged as to how some ideas had been clustered. One participant noted an initial balk at the theme, 'spirituality, the darker side', but then on reflection thought it was representative of life, the good and the bad. She would have framed this aspect using psychoanalytic language, which may have conveyed quite a different meaning. The comment was made that what was proposed was 'a' definition of spirituality, not 'the' definition.

## WHAT HAS CHANGED ALREADY GIVEN OUR INVOLVEMENT IN THE RESEARCH?

### *Conscious practice*

All participants were able to name ways that their practice had altered during the process of being involved in the research. This was not necessarily seen as a direct causal link, since other aspects of life and practice may have influenced changes. These changes could perhaps be summarised as conscious practice. One participant acknowledged being more aware of where she was at, and how the nurturing of her spirituality influenced how present she was to spirituality in supervision. Another participant acknowledged a greater sense of “mindfulness”. Spirituality was being acknowledged more in supervision using the supervisees’ language. Supervisees were now bringing stories of celebration to supervision.

One participant was having a break from supervision practice. She had decided that when she returned she would focus on being more existential, exploring the Code of Life and belief systems that clients live by. She is keen to explore how these help her clients and how they want things to be. Stories were shared about the principles we were aware of that guided us in certain situations and the advantages of making principles more conscious.

Another participant said she had also decided to do something similar, involving greater in-depth questioning of supervisees to understand their frame of reference. She was concerned about the timing in doing this. Timing was seen as crucial to the establishment of trust. Supervisors can model by sharing their own frame of reference, but it was seen as important that trust be established before supervisees are questioned about how key aspects of their own life story influence how they approach their work.

One participant, who always explains her framework for practice to new supervisees as sitting within a spiritual context, commented that supervisees were discussing spirituality more often in supervision. She was unsure as to whether it was because



supervisees were aware that she was involved in the research. Sometimes supervisees that the participant would not have anticipated being interested in spirituality, initiated these conversations!

### ***Use of questions and appropriate language***

Participants mentioned questions that they were now asking in supervision pertaining to spirituality without necessarily using the term. Questions like:

Gertrude: ... *'What is lifegiving for you here? What is keeping hope alive? How are you maintaining your self in all of this? ...*

Mollie: *And that is something not only with my supervisee but with my clients that I have been starting to talk about is...What is going to be lifegiving for you? Because it is so broad, because there is no judgement around it and I found that a really helpful way of working with people, and so I suppose, if I am looking at that, it has gone a step further for me and not just in my supervision, but thinking about the spirituality inside my work with clients now, and it is one of my favourites now.*

This was acknowledged as very strength-based questioning and led into a discussion on the wider influences of having been involved in the research.

### ***Integrity, self-reflection and wholeness***

Participants spoke of questioning themselves about what was lifegiving and actually making lifegiving changes. An ecological perspective was adopted as we considered how what was happening around us, in the work environment, nationally and internationally, influenced us. The challenge was issued:

Rosie: *...it has to make sense at every level to make sense, I believe. Whatever the principles we are living by, national, global justice, as well as justice that occurs one-to-one in the supervision counselling work.*

Participants shared stories of experiences of genuineness and incongruence in their life and how the former had brought hope and transformation whereas the latter had brought confusion. The role of hope became a key point in the next phase of discussion as participants considered further questions that had arisen for them as a consequence of being involved in the research.

## **FURTHER IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

### *Hope*

This section commenced with a participant questioning the role of hope in supervisees' work. This was a further example of participants asking more probing questions of their own practice.

*Gertrude: ...how is hope substantiated? How do you assess the hopefulness? Are you just viewing it with rose-tinted spectacles? I am asking that of myself too...What is the role of hope in our work? How does that influence what we are doing and what we are seeing?*

These questions were responded to on a number of different levels in the discussion that followed. The point was made that hope is the reason for being involved in our work and that change will occur, it is just a matter of timing. Participants talked of "holding hope" in their work and supervision, of "holding the story" or "holding the journey", as sometimes there are not really any answers. Participants also spoke of how hope operated in their own lives, particularly as it related to major issues like global warming, and how the past suggests "that new ways of living, being and problem solving will continue to emerge".

One participant shared her belief about hope as an exchange of energy that is fostered by what is attracted and focused on. Challenges to hope were also suggested such as the diagnosis of cancer or death of a child. This led once again into the connectedness theme and the need to enhance connectedness in all spheres of life.

## ***Connectedness***

Ways of building connectedness in supervision were considered from a variety of different perspectives. One participant spoke of the personal challenge of achieving connectedness with a supervisee who spoke very quickly, maintaining that it was difficult to process information fast enough in order to raise critically-reflective questions. Adopting a critically-reflective stance was seen as important given that connection could easily become “collusion” or “colonisation”. The fine line between connection, collusion and colonisation was portrayed as a dance that does occur and as such requires supervision partners to reflect and evaluate how they are with each other.

The use of imagery, metaphors and rituals was seen as enhancing connectedness and spirituality in supervision through the powerful means of story-telling. This led into a discussion on the use of language and how we varied this depending on the connection we were wishing to establish with our audience. One participant articulated a challenge from this position, suggesting that the question “What do you notice you are not telling me?” be asked.

The question was raised about building connectedness with those who appear to have no sense of the spiritual. This was considered from the supervisee and supervisor perspective and created some debate. This led to a discussion about training and supervisor choice.

*Sha: ...but if you are a person who doesn't feel a connection to the spiritual, you can't get training on that, but you can be professional and choose to know that you can't work in that area...*

## ***Choice of supervisor***

Participants spent time considering the implications of the research for supervisor choice. It was acknowledged that it may not be possible to have the spiritual aspect of practice met in the supervision relationship where there was no supervisor choice. Yet this may be important to the practitioner's professional development and thus

requires consideration. The suggestion was made that 'spiritual supervision' needs to be afforded consideration along with line management, clinical and cultural supervision. For practitioners who have choice, the suggestion was made that:

Sha: *...perhaps consciously or unconsciously we are choosing supervisors who will work on the spiritual level, because it does have big implications for people who don't have the choice.*

All participants were able to share stories where they had not chosen their supervisors and the experience had not been positive.

Mollie: *...I was thinking about this, a couple of times where I haven't been able to choose my supervisor...I found it life-sucking not lifegiving.*

However, the question was raised as to whether this was necessarily bad (Davys, 2005, p. 17), and the challenge was how to deal with this. It was conceded that the issue of power was a significant one from the supervisee perspective. In the case of the new practitioner, the challenge was complicated by the need to be socialised into supervision. One participant who is experienced with internal, managerial, no-choice supervision, believed effort needed to be put into the following: engaging with the worker, being overt about the power one had within the organisation, discussing how to make the relationship work and constantly reviewing this, and reconstructing supervision and how it is seen as a relationship. It was agreed that the voice of the supervisee needs to become more visible in the literature to gain a more balanced approach to some of these issues.

### ***Advertising services***

Following this, participants then discussed the question of how they might advertise their services. Very different perspectives were taken on this question. Two participants were clear they wanted to be defining about this aspect of their practice. One participant was not clear as to how she wanted to do this other than being clear that she no longer wanted to be neutral. The other participant wanted to use the word, 'magic', as part of what she sought to describe. A third participant was clear that she

would not indicate anything about this aspect of practice. She was concerned about assumptions and labelling that can occur and wished potential clients to meet her and then decide rather than prejudge on the basis of an advertisement.

## **IMPLICATIONS OF THE RESEARCH FROM AN AGENCY PERSPECTIVE**

The history of spirituality in social work was paralleled with what is being experienced in mainstream Western society where there is now a divergence of spiritual beliefs and experiences. The belief was that it would be more acceptable now than perhaps twenty years ago to start having a conversation about spirituality as an expression of culture. Maori and Pasifika worldviews were seen as having strongly assisted this process in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Pakeha were seen as also needing the option to explore spirituality, otherwise a double standard would be operating. Sanctions on talking about some sort of spiritual form in mental health would be strongly contested, particularly in light of the four cornerstones of health, Te Whare Tapa Wha. So the conclusion was that there should be no impediment to addressing the spiritual in the work situation, otherwise practice cannot be deemed holistic. The session concluded with the group checking their Irish origins and noting some similarities between Maori and Irish culture by singing, "If you're Irish, come into the parlour".

## **CONCLUSION**

It is evident that participants had already begun the process of questioning and modifying their practice as a consequence of participating in this research. New ways of being more overt about spirituality in supervision were being explored using language that clients understand. Language was also a consideration when participants considered how they might advertise their services. Supervisor choice and issues around building connectedness once again featured as areas for further investigation. Participants concluded that there should be no agency impediment to exploring spirituality in supervision as a legitimate aspect of culture and holistic practice.

## **CHAPTER EIGHT – DATA ANALYSIS**

“We never know when we begin where the work will take us and those involved. The point is to learn and grow from doing and to celebrate the doing, no matter how flawed, small scale or less than ideal” (Maguire, 1993, cited in Cervin, 2001, p. 16).

### **INTRODUCTION**

This research breaks new ground in Aotearoa/New Zealand. It sits alongside other quantitative and qualitative studies of spirituality in the helping professions, most of which come from North America. The sample size is small and relatively homogeneous, consisting of women of Pakeha and European ethnicity, who are experienced professional practitioners. However, this does not negate the change process that participants shared as part of the collaborative inquiry. In analysing the data I have begun with an analysis and critique of the research process as a declaration of the primacy of process in action research methodology. The analysis continues using the voices of the participants and the voices in the literature to reflect on the outstanding themes presented in this research. My own voice amplifies two of these themes when I argue how a negative view of religion in Aotearoa/New Zealand and the belief that spirituality is predominantly a personal rather than a professional matter, impact on the research findings. The chapter concludes with a portrayal of the dynamic picture that has emerged from the research.

### **PROCESS**

The process of action research is as important as the outcomes and any knowledge gained from it (Elden & Chisholm, 1993, cited in Small, 1995). Paying attention to process and enabling collective reflection on it, is seen as important to the integrity of the research. In this research design, collective reflection on the process of the research only occurred in Stage Two. GG participants had the opportunity to read my reflections on the process of Stages One, Two and Three but were not actively

involved in creating these summaries. The GG group's supervisors were not involved in any collective reflection on the process of the research. In this way, this research is not a pure application of a participatory worldview which implies democratic peer relationships as the political form of inquiry in all stages of the research from research design to analysis, theory building and publication (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 9).

Ultimately, the responsibility for bringing the research to a concluding point is my responsibility. The restrictions imposed in submitting this work as a Masters thesis have been mentioned earlier. This external constraint limits the integrity of the research from my perspective. This was highlighted most profoundly for me when I theorise on how a negative view of religion and the belief that spirituality is a personal rather than a professional matter is evident in the research findings. If the research had fully demonstrated a participatory worldview as outlined above, the theorising and its implications may have been completely different. It is important that I state this, for to not do so, would represent an undermining of the GG group philosophy.

A distinguishing feature of action research is that it is usually undertaken by a group, team or members of an organisation (Greenwood & Levin, 1988, p. 4) and not by a focus group brought together specifically for research purposes alone. While the GG group was an established peer group, their supervisors were not, so they played a marginal role in the process. Could all of the participants have been more involved? They could have been more involved with a different research design, however they were not given the choice to be more involved. Part of the dynamic involved here, apart from the restrictions imposed by a Masters thesis, concerned my belief that one must not ask too much of people. I decided what was too much without checking with those involved. Although the GG group members were consulted about the research design, the option of involving their professional supervisors in all stages of the research, albeit with a differing research design, was never discussed. The articulation of this dynamic has been a powerful learning experience for me.

Collaborative inquiry is an open process that seeks answers to questions that have no preset answers. The inquiry is discovery orientated rather than designed to confirm or validate a position (Bray et al, 2000, p. 89). The method aimed to use democratic



peer relationships to engage participants in cycles of planning, acting, observing and reflecting on their practices. Moreover, the method expresses a commitment to the improvement of these practices, practitioners' understandings and the settings of practice (Hart & Bond, 1995, p. 15).

Were these objectives achieved? Cycles of participation are apparent in the research design. Participants' commitment to improving their understanding and practices around spirituality in supervision are evident in Stage Four of the research. The question of how much the research contributed to a commitment to improve the settings of practice remains to be seen. Several of the participants are involved in private practice. The setting of their practice is the wider professional arena rather than the agency. Only time will tell whether they choose to make a contribution for change at that level.

The process of continuous change is a goal of feminist action research (Bologh, 1985, cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 178) and research is only considered feminist if it is linked to action (Lather, 1988, cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 175). One dyad expressed an interest in presenting a paper on "When is a time to end?" in relation to the question of the length of supervision relationships. Participants also expressed positions that suggest intentional change. These included how they might advertise their services, supervisor choice and dealing with anticipated challenges to the role of spirituality in their work. Positions such as these are political and have implications for the context in which supervision occurs.

The methodological objectives of the research were to secure ongoing participant engagement and to engage in critically-reflective practice. Have these objectives been realised? Is there congruence between the participation espoused and the actual work accomplished? Do further questions arise from the work to promote further knowing? Is there a living interest in the work that will live on in the absence of the initiating researcher(s)? Have the participants found new ways of acting because of the research? Does our theoretical framework enable us to re-see the world? (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, p. 448-449). The question: 'Is there a living interest in the work that will live on in the absence of the initiating researcher(s)?', has already been considered above.

With the question: 'Is there congruence between the participation espoused and the actual work accomplished?', it could be argued that the research was successful on its own terms in as much as planned participant involvement was maintained throughout the research. It would appear from participants' comments in Stage Four that a transformative process had occurred that meant that they were already seeing and behaving differently as a consequence of the research. The research design meant that the ongoing participation of the GG group's supervisors is unknown.

Participants challenged their own presumptions and justifications as part of the critical reflective process of the research. It was not a matter of answering research questions. Dialogical reflexivity was evident in the group processes of Stages One, Two and Four. Attending to one's listening and exploring the assumptions and structures of thinking inherent in statements became a pattern of participation (Bray et al, 2000, p. 95). Even in Stage Two when members were supposedly reviewing and analysing Stage One, members used the time to reconsider what they had seen and experienced and developed this further rather than summarising what they had seen. Further questions continued as part of considering the implications of the research for practice. Here the group could be seen taking responsibility for its own emancipation from the dictates of unjust habits, customs and precedents (Kemmis, 1993, p. 187).

The emancipatory effectiveness of the research design as proposed by (Lather, 1985, cited in Reinharz, 1992, p. 185) dialogical discussions that require self-disclosure on the part of the researcher are apparent. Moreover, a sequential process that facilitates collaboration and deeper probing of the research issues. Some participants were also engaged in the interpretation of meaning but the research did not go as far as participants engaging in an ideological critique of what causes them to believe and act in the ways that they do. Therefore, regarding the question: 'Does our theoretical framework enable us to re-see the world?' it could be argued that in proposing that the shape of these research findings is influenced by a negative view of religion and spirituality in Aotearoa/ New Zealand and a belief that spirituality is predominantly a personal rather than a professional matter, I am merely pushing my own 'pet theory' (Lather, 1991, p. 64) and usurping the theory construction and validation role of my co-researchers. A further research stage could have allowed for dialectical theory-

building, which would have, in my view, contributed greater integrity to the research design.

Despite the acknowledged limitations of the research design, the collaborative inquiry has proved a useful transformative process for the participants involved, with full advantage being taken of the opportunities for discovery and change. The details of this discovery and change will now be analysed, using the literature.

## **DEFINING SPIRITUALITY**

There is acknowledgement, both in this research and in the literature, that spirituality is multi-faceted and difficult to define, describe and explain (Miller, Korinek & Ivey, 2004; West, 1997). It would appear that as soon as one has described or endeavoured to explain spirituality, there is a sense of not having done justice to it. This has meant, for some, reluctance in attempting a definition of spirituality (Coombes, 1996), while at the same time acknowledging its existence. Participants in this research believed spirituality was universal and that we were all conscious or unconscious participants in spirituality, connected to a greater consciousness, each other, our roots and our environment. Spirituality was portrayed as a belief structure that provides meaning and purpose to participants' lives and, as such, constitutes a rationale of hope for their involvement with their work. While the views expressed refer to the self in ways represented by Jung (Strohl, 1998; Sermabeikian, 1994), they represent more of a social constructionist, relational spirituality which sees the connections between relationships, social justice, ethics and the wider world (Carlson and Erikson, 2002, p. 4).

Social constructionism here is based on the idea that what is real is decided collectively through the sharing and organisation of knowledge. What is considered real can differ between groups, as can the social meaning attached to social conventions and practices (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 60). For the social constructionist, the self is viewed in relationship with others. How I am in supervision will influence how the other is in supervision. This stance was evident in the connectedness themes expressed in Chapters Five, Six and Seven. Social constructionism sees the moral

consequences of acting in a supervisory role and calls for a just and ethical response. Participants identified ethical concerns as important to managing spirituality in supervision. The naming and choice of categories and themes below are indicative of this theoretical stance.

## **A DELICATE PARTNERSHIP**

This research is located within the context of a resurgence of spiritual awareness characterised by religious and spiritual diversity. The connection between spirituality and religion has been noted in the literature review. Spirituality's association with religion has sometimes meant that it is viewed negatively (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p. 15). Both in the literature and the research undertaken, spirituality and religion are at times juxtaposed, with religion's portrayal being considered less desirable. One participant associated religion with a deficit approach to problem solving and the need to be perfect and associated spirituality with wholeness. Such contrasts were used to demonstrate a developing spiritual journey for some who had emerged from a religious background into a less prescribed spirituality.

Carroll (2001) uses spirituality and religion as metaphors to portray opposing views of supervision. Supervision, when equated with religion, is deemed to have all the answers, is well mapped and invites obedience, whereas spiritual supervision is the opposite, characterised by its searching, thinking through, 'being with' approach. Carroll equates the religious approach with the way many organisations and institutions currently operate in Britain, promoting a quick-fix, pragmatic approach in order to outwit their competitors.

## **SPIRITUALITY AND THE AOTEAROA /NEW ZEALAND**

### **CONTEXT**

Remnants of the above approach named by Carroll (2001) are familiar in the policies of economic rationalism, which have exerted a profound influence on professional practice in Aotearoa/New Zealand over the past two decades (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 46). Economic rationalism supports programmes that are able to deliver measurable

outcomes in a timely, cost efficient way. Participants spoke of the pressures created through working in such an environment that seeks to ask too much of workers. Spirituality, because of its multi-faceted, difficult-to-describe attributes, does not fit neatly into the economic rationalist paradigm. Using Carroll's framework above, suggests that the 'religious' approach would achieve ascendancy in this environment.

However, alongside the influence of economic rationalism, social constructionist approaches, such as narrative, solution-focused and strength-based approaches, have continued to gain support (O'Donoghue, 2003, p. 50-51). While spiritual approaches are not limited to those informed by social constructionism, participants acknowledge that there are multiple voices influencing the practitioner in the current practicing environment, creating a very diverse picture.

Although polarised thinking was evident in considering the relationship between spirituality and religion in the research, other research participants often challenged such thinking. For example, spirituality was connected with both the process and content of supervision and reflecting and activism were both deemed to be spiritual activities. Even Carroll (2001), who does favour the process and reflective aspects of supervision as critical ingredients in fostering spirituality in supervision, states that, in the final analysis, the whole exercise is about integrating shifts in mentality from isolation to connectedness, exterior to interior, sameness to surprises, into a unified whole.

## **MY POSITION**

That said, I would argue that two threads weave amongst these research findings and thus influence their shape. Firstly, there is a negative view of religion, and of spirituality because of its association with religion, prevalent in Aotearoa/New Zealand. This view can be recognised in the media in the way religious positions on moral issues are commonly portrayed. An example of this was given in Chapter Five concerning the media coverage of the Destiny Church's opposition to the Prostitution Law Reform and the Civil Union Bill. Secondly, there is a belief that spirituality and religion are personal rather than professional matters. These views were articulated in

the research. I have added my own emphases to these positions as part of the data analysis process. The trend of this research encourages greater openness in naming spirituality both in the ways that it is understood to operate in practice and also in how services are advertised. There is, however, a degree of ambivalence about this, and this is where, I believe, the societal, personal and professional constraints mentioned above become apparent.

On the one hand, some participants wish to become more overt about spirituality in supervision and part of this includes how they advertise their services. Others wish to be more overt but do not want to advertise this because of the fear of being misjudged. My argument is that the negativity associated with religion and spirituality and the belief that spirituality is a personal rather than a professional matter, helps to shape this position. This creates a constraint to be overcome to successfully address spirituality in supervision. The use of language and other appropriate cultural expressions were seen as ways of overcoming the reticence in addressing spirituality and dealing with diversity.

## **LANGUAGE AND OTHER CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS**

Interconnectedness, language and culture were deemed the three indispensable characteristics of spirituality in Whittingham (2004). The use of language and other cultural expressions are seen as central to productively addressing spiritual diversity in supervision. Participants considered themselves successful in addressing spirituality in supervision when they have been able to phrase and ask questions in ways that do not alienate the supervisee. Whittingham (2004) emphasised the importance of asking the right kind of questions to understand what was going on culturally and not to impose one's own beliefs.

Using the supervisees' language, metaphors and stories are seen as ways of assisting connectedness in supervision. There is a skill in 'hearing' the clients' language and using this to engage clients in dialogue around spiritual issues (Whittingham, 2004). The language that the supervisee uses may not necessarily be construed as spiritual by the supervisor. In this research, the terms, 'magical moments' and 'memorable



moments', have been used to describe aspects of participants' experiences of spirituality in supervision. These terms have not been identified in the literature, although Hawkin & Worrall's (2001) intangible "hard to describe" special experiences that hover in the air are perhaps akin to some of those described in the research. This perhaps serves to illustrate the differing ways spirituality is constructed through language. Both Thorell (2003) and Rosen-Galvin (2005) noted a significant difference between supervisees' and supervisors' perceptions of discussions involving spirituality and religion in supervision. This is suggestive of the multiple understandings of spirituality that were demonstrated both in this research and that of Thorell (2003) and Rosen-Galvin (2005). Thorell (2003) suggests it is supervisors' responsibility to facilitate a mutual understanding of spirituality within supervision as a way of modelling approaches relevant to clients when discussing issues conveyed in ambiguous terminology.

Modelling one's own frame of reference was regarded as useful in providing supervisees with a model of what they can choose to tell. Timing and the way spirituality is introduced are deemed important in the current context. This stance needs to be considered alongside other issues discussed in supervision where less delicacy is required. It is indicative of the kind of uncertainty that was apparent in Rosen-Galvin (2005) where supervisees' concerns about relevance, competency and ethics created impediments to the exploration of the spiritual in supervision. These findings serve to illustrate the vulnerability and mystique surrounding spirituality in supervision. Further discussion related to these issues will be considered below.

Activities and rituals such as the *karakia*, laughing, clapping, breathing, silent prayer, celebrating and "being with" are all cultural forms that participants named as expressions of spirituality in supervision. Carroll (2001) and Simmons (2001) both acknowledged the importance of celebration as a cultural form in supervision. The literature provides many examples of spiritual practices such as praying, meditating and breathing (Okundaye et al, 1999; Whittingham, 2004; Canda et al, 2004). Positions such as these invite an examination of cultural expressions within supervision.



It is expected that practitioners are able to articulate their own cultural context as part of professional practice (NZASW, 1993). Scrutinising how one's cultural context impacts on the culture within supervision through a reflexive process was encouraged by both Carlson et al (2002) and Bishop et al (2003). This research would tend to suggest that, as a general rule, such an exploration is not occurring around issues related to spirituality in supervision.

## **THE TREATY OF WAITANGI**

However, constraints to considering spirituality in supervision are tempered by influences in the wider supervision context. The influence of Maori, the Treaty of Waitangi and the ANZASW Bicultural Code of Practice were recognised as providing a mandate for addressing spirituality in supervision. Addressing spirituality in relation to Maori is an issue of baseline competent practice for members of ANZASW. Nonetheless, it would appear that the consideration given to spirituality in relation to Maori does not necessarily easily transfer to all ethnic groups. One participant challenged herself that spirituality was not fully integrated into her practice, with the realisation that she was more vigilant to this aspect of practice when working with others who are clearly ethnically different from her. Another supervisor concurred that spirituality was compartmentalised in this way. In acknowledging the compartmentalisation of spirituality, participants were challenging themselves to achieve a greater sense of congruence in their practice.

## **CONNECTEDNESS**

The desire for congruence can be linked to the connectedness aspect of spirituality. This theme pervaded the research and enjoys a high profile in the literature (Carroll, 2001; Simmons, 2001; Hawkins & Worrell, 2001, Whittingham, 2004). Both spirituality and supervision involve connections (Carroll, 2001, p. 17). It was in acknowledging this that one participant deemed all supervision spiritual. This view states an all-encompassing position. It is similar to the stance adopted in Whittingham (2004) where spirituality is viewed as everything about a person's life. It is what we live by, so therefore must by definition include one's work. If life is a

spiritual process, where therapy is one component, spirituality and life cannot be separated. Such a position challenges the view that spirituality is something that is practiced in a separate time and place and that spirituality is a personal rather than a professional matter. It also suggests that practice is not viewed as inherently secular.

Connectedness is viewed as the heart of spirituality, and healthy supervision is seen as a bridge to others (Carroll, 2001). As such, connectedness and building connectedness was seen as critical to enabling safe exploration of spiritual and faith-related matters. Lack of safety was one of the reasons given for supervisees not wanting to discuss spirituality in supervision (Rosen-Galvin, 2005). West's (1997) research indicated how difficult participants found it to discuss such matters in supervision. This research supported that view through participants acknowledging their fears of being misjudged and their position being misconstrued.

In this context, being able to discuss spirituality and faith-related matters are thus seen as a measure of safety within the supervisory relationship. Taking time to get to know each other is crucial to the establishment of trust. Honouring and creating space for supervision by preparing for supervision help to create an environment for connection and trust to occur. Okundaye et al (1999, p. 375) use the term 'sacred space' to refer to the necessity of creating both a safe physical and psychological space for students to feel safe and grow within the fieldwork relationship. Psychological safety can be assisted through clear discussion around the boundaries of confidentiality.

Although explicit discussion around boundaries and their role in the creation of safety did not occur in this research, participants were very mindful of not wanting to overstep boundaries in imposing their own spirituality onto supervisees. Canda et al (2004) and Whittingham (2004) both reiterated the importance of this in their research. Safety concerns are accentuated in an environment where practitioners still experience so much uncertainty about the standing of spirituality in their practice. Whittingham (2004) believes that therapists are still in the first step of letting clients know that spirituality is not off limits. Should these steps become more secure, the connection between spirituality and practice may become better acknowledged.

## RECIPROCITY

Reciprocity is a particular aspect of connectedness that received attention in the research. One participant spoke of connections where there is knowingness and completeness that is supportive of experience that you give back at another level (p. 21). Another participant developed this concept around hope as an exchange of energy that is fostered by what is attracted and focussed on. Okundaye et al (1999) caution about the positive and negative power of reciprocity in supervision, the concept which they call 'karma'. They acknowledge that every action and word in some way changes or moulds the relationship. Moreover, this change affects both the teacher and student and brings a sense of integrity to each step of the fieldwork process. The application of karma to the field instruction relationship holds the supervisor accountable for their role as an active participant in the formation of a growth experience with the student. Okundaye et al (1999) suggest that the concept and implications of karma should be fully discussed with the student at the outset of their relationship.

When the GG group were considering the implications of this research for their practice and looking at ways of building connectedness in supervision to enhance the spiritual in their practice, a critically-reflective stance enabled them to appreciate that building connectedness is not an end in itself. Colluding and colonising dynamics can filter into a supervision relationship where the supervisor may either go along with or impose their views on the supervisee. This was symbolised as a dance. The reader is encouraged to picture a partner dance where the actions of one necessitate a response from the other. The dynamic that is set up is reflective of karma. Hawes (1998) proposes that in order for the parties to supervision to monitor this dynamic, they need to enter into an explicit process of dialogic reflexivity. That is to say, they turn a critical gaze back on themselves as well as the professional, cultural and historical understandings that constrain their capacity to think and act in the context of a relationship. Such a process can stimulate creativity while monitoring the power of the voices influencing the supervision arrangement.

## HOLISTIC PRACTICE

Spirituality challenges personal and professional congruence when it comes to matters of holism and holistic practice. There is an expectation that social work involves a holistic focus (ANZASW, 2000a). Working for social justice is at the core of social work practice and the heart of a truly holistic spirituality (Consedine, 2002, p. 45). It requires a commitment to the common good, a concern for global sustainability, wisdom and the nurturing of a spirituality that is connected to its roots. While concerns for national and global justice and challenging what is deemed intolerable for some sectors of society were acknowledged, the focus of the research was on participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality within supervision. Hence, much of the discussion was focussed in this direction.

Greater attention was given to the need for sustenance and self-care as it related to the contexts in which we work. Consedine (2002) reflects on a negative and life-destroying spirit that can pervade institutions. An example of this was given in the research when a participant spoke of being deeply frightened about what was happening in relation to management at her workplace. This has implications for supervision practice, particularly in light of harsh working environments described by participants. How hope is actualised to confront such scenarios in supervision may influence the longevity of employment and be an important vehicle for change. Participants spoke of the importance of "holding hope" or "holding the journey" in supervision as part of the contribution to the change-making process.

The connection between spirituality and self-care also focussed on the importance of balance, order and harmony, principles that were named by Ruwhiu (1999) as important to Maori well-being and Maori cultural supervision. The research also focussed on listening to your self, looking after yourself and noting and following instincts and intuition as important to spirituality and self-care. Tending to the spiritual and tending to the sense of a spiritual connection with clients were also mentioned as important in this respect. These have implications for the monitoring of self-care in supervision. Acting on one's instincts or a "sense of knowing" are aspects of ethical practice relating to self-care referred to in the research. They align with types of healing work described in West (1997). Haug (1998a) suggests that

practitioners need to be modifying and developing their own subjective experiences, vitality and health to enhance their ethical capabilities. This is particularly important when the work is of a highly subjective nature.

Consedine (2002, p. 47) believes that individual and collective ways of nurturing the spirit need to be built into everyday life to prevent burnout. Eastham (2002) contends that for practitioners who see their work as a vocation, this can operate as a protective factor in times of turmoil and burnout. One participant acknowledged seeing her work as a vocation. A sense of calling is a profound experience. Feeling able to declare such a frame of reference may enable one to engage more fully in the supervision process. For practitioners who understand their work in this way, it may make a difference as to how times of turmoil and burnout are managed.

The struggle for justice can only be sustained through connecting with one's spiritual roots as part of developing a holistic spirituality (Consedine, 2002, p. 44).

Participants spoke of connecting with their spiritual roots often in the research: experiencing their ancestors as spiritual guides and companions, revisiting old narratives and adding deeper richness to them, the influence of Irish and Celtic spirituality and the power of the images and metaphors for those who have been brought up in the Christian faith. These illustrations form part of what the practitioner brings to the practice and supervision arena and clearly impact on the work undertaken. Purposeful exploration of these and other aspects of our spiritual lives and how they influence our work and relationships with others (Carlson & Erikson, 2002, p. 9) are crucial to understanding clients' spiritual journeys (West, 1998; Whittingham, 2004).

Carroll (2001) considers the establishment of healthy relationships as important to the spirituality of supervision. For Carroll, this involves looking after your loved ones in the same way that you look after your clients, and taking care of yourself as well as you take care of your clients. Taking responsibility for one's own emotional, mental and physical health and maintaining respectful relationships with colleagues are ethical responsibilities for social workers (NZASW, 1993, p. 13). Caring for one's spiritual health, while not mentioned specifically in the Code of Ethics, is surely implied here in light of holism, Te Whare Tapa Wha and the Bicultural Code of

Practice. A healthy therapist is one who is physically, mentally and emotionally healthy (Whittingham, 2004).

## **INTEGRITY**

Living a supervisor's life and supervision as a way of life are aspects of holism discussed in the research. For Carroll (2001), living a supervisor's life is about modelling a life of self-supervision and reflection. These sentiments were reiterated in the research through ideas such as self-congruence, personal "warrant of fitness" and the challenge to authenticity. These concepts are important when one considers the issue of choosing one's supervisor. Participants shared how the spiritual dimension was important in this regard. This research encourages supervisors to reflect on how the life that they are living promotes their services and what this means for those who choose them as a supervisor.

## **CHOOSING A SUPERVISOR**

The issue of supervisor choice, which is a feature in the literature, was also evident in the research. The work of West (1997, 1998) highlights the kinds of impasse that can occur for supervisees around matters of spirituality. The ethical implications of not feeling able to talk to one's supervisor about aspects of or conflicts in one's practice are serious, given the nature of the work being described. Supervisor choice was one of the factors implicated here. In this research, when participants had choice, they chose a supervisor where they believed connection was possible.

Where connection is achieved and may involve spiritual acknowledgement, and the relationship is continuing to foster growth, the expectation that one needs to change one's supervisor at regular intervals becomes problematic. When participants are involved in a supervision arrangement that has continued to build levels of honesty and truth, this is not something they would easily trade. Hawkin & Worrall (2001), when reflecting on their reciprocal mentoring supervision, acknowledge receiving more supervision at a deeper level of reflection than ever before, where the significance of relationship, connectedness and stillness allow the wisdom and



knowing within to emerge. Whilst Hawkin & Worrall (2001) do not stipulate how long they have been working together or express an opinion on the length of supervision relationships, they do comment that the more they meet, the more they find to bring to supervision and that their ability and willingness to share has become deeper with time. They acknowledge courage to share their inadequacies and remark that this is no easy feat in the continuous change of existing practicing environments, which can leave people feeling vulnerable and insecure.

This raises the question of the implications for supervisees who do not have choice. This research would suggest that connectedness in a relationship can be built through preparing for supervision, the creation of a safe supervision space and using the supervisee's language, metaphors and stories. When supervisees do not have a choice of supervisor, effort needs to be put into engaging with the worker, being overt about the power one has within the organisation, discussing how to make the relationship work and constantly reviewing this, and reconstructing supervision and how it is seen as a relationship. Supervision such as this which emphasises the context of the relationship, open discussion and the analysis of power, bears the hallmarks of feminist supervision (Portez & Vasquez, 1997; Hawes, 1998). Such a relationship, however, sits within an agency and professional context and it is to the professional context that we now turn.

## **TRAINING**

Enhancing the profile of spirituality in supervision can be encouraged not only through the literature but also through the education and training that occurs around the issue. Training was not a focus in the research and lack of training was not seen as an impediment to dealing with spirituality in supervision. It was not deemed possible that one could be trained to experience a connection to the spiritual. The research focussed on being able to articulate how participants experienced and expressed spirituality in their practice. This in itself creates a knowledge base. Being knowledgeable about spirituality in one's own life, as part of self-awareness, was seen as enabling the ethical use of self (Strohl, 1998; Canda & Furman, 1999; Aponte, 2002). However, if this is the only knowledge available to practitioners, those who do



not name spirituality as part of their lived reality, will be considerably disadvantaged and clients will be limited to the knowledge and worldview experience of the practitioner. Further attention will be paid to this issue in the concluding chapter.

## **ETHICAL ISSUES**

The point has been made, both in this research and in the literature (Carlson & Erikson, 2002) that spirituality cannot help but influence our work. The question of concern is how our spirituality influences those we are working with in ways that are ethical and safe. Ethical concerns expressed in the research included the use of power, being construed as an expert, being misunderstood, honesty and the issue of responsibility. The literature suggests several ways of addressing these concerns. Haug (1998a) proposed encouraging practitioner spiritual self-examination, creating space for spiritual discussions, referring on, neither imposing beliefs nor ignoring client beliefs, connecting through using client language and roles and obtaining training. The research of Canda et al (2004) also reinforced the need for training and agency support in addressing spirituality. Their respondents also emphasised the need for being non-judgemental, ascertaining clients' interest in spirituality before going further, refraining from efforts to evangelise, avoiding demeaning clients' beliefs and exercising caution not to exacerbate religiously-related delusions or vulnerabilities. The latter issue was not discussed in this research.

Concerns about being misunderstood and honesty provide scope for Haug's (1998a) suggestion of the need to create space for spiritual discussions. In Stage Four of the research, participants were engaging in such an activity or at least had the intention of doing so. This was in addition to Haug's (1998a) proposal to connect with the client's worldview through their language which was a facet of Stages One, Two and Three in this research.

Haug (1998a), Carlson & Erikson (2002) and Canda et al (2004) all discuss the importance of the practitioner undertaking purposeful exploration of their own spiritual lives as a mechanism for ethical and risk management concerns. In Stage Four one participant acknowledged being aware of where she was spiritually

influencing how present she was to spirituality in supervision, and thus how important it was to nurture her spirituality. Spiritual self-awareness was also expressed by another participant as being 'out of kilter', thus requiring a balancing self-care response. The importance of practitioner self-care as a way to assist in enhancing ethical conduct has already been mentioned (Haug, 1988a; Consedine, 2002).

One supervisor was concerned about the burden and degree of responsibility she felt in managing what she referred to as a "sense of knowing" in practice. This particular supervisor was aware that this issue needed exploration in supervision with a supervisor who had a framework that included the spiritual dimension, since there is a need to develop a critical response to new 'knowledge' as part of ethical practice (NZASW, 1993, p. 13). Fears around the ethics of spirituality in practice have led to supervisees withholding discussion of such issues in supervision (Rosen-Galvin, 2005; West, 1997). Concern has previously been expressed about this practice. Fears can be reduced if the worker formally notifies that spirituality is on the agenda (Whittingham, 2004). Once again this brings into focus the issue of training, supervisor choice and the need to acknowledge one's professional limits and consult and refer on when necessary.

## CONCLUSION

This research breaks new ground in exploring experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision in Aotearoa/ New Zealand. It sits within the context of a resurgence of interest in spirituality which is encouraged professionally by the Treaty of Waitangi and the ANZASW Bicultural Code of Practice. However, this encouragement is tempered by what I argue is a negative view of religion prevalent in Aotearoa/ New Zealand and the professional reserve about the role of spirituality in practice. Hence, supervisors in both the research and the literature tread carefully, mindful of safety and their use of language so as not to alienate the supervisee.

The cultural embodiments of spirituality, including language, vary greatly. Throughout the literature practitioners are encouraged to discuss these to ensure supervisees know that spirituality is relevant in supervision, to ensure they understand each other's spiritual language and to provide an ethical safeguard. Ethical issues are

exacerbated in the current environment as practitioners seek to navigate uncharted waters, particularly if they are not able to choose a supervisor with whom they experience some kind of connection.

While the literature focuses on the importance of training in addressing some of the ethical issues related to spirituality in supervision, self-awareness and self-care were more of a focus for participants. For although engagement with spirituality in supervision may be tentative, spirituality was deemed part of holistic practice. It was also seen as an integral part of self-care, sustaining workers in what were often hostile environments. The implications of these findings and suggestions for future research will be considered in the final chapter.

# **CHAPTER NINE – CONCLUSION**

## **INTRODUCTION**

This final chapter begins by summarising the research findings and includes the research process as part of these findings. The implications of the research findings are then discussed and suggestions are included for future research. The implications of the research are considered solely from the social work perspective in Aotearoa/New Zealand, even though two of the research participants had backgrounds in counselling and/or psychotherapy. I do not consider it appropriate to comment beyond my own experience and knowledge base. The chapter concludes with recommendations for practitioners and the profession.

## **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS**

### ***Process***

This research used an open, collaborative inquiry process, underpinned by a feminist approach to explore the question: “How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?” The inquiry involved the GG group and their associated supervisors in a four stage process of dialogue and reflection about the above research question. Participants challenged their own presumptions and justifications as part of a dialogical reflexive process in all stages of the research. It would appear that for some participants a transformative process occurred as a consequence of being involved in the research. This meant that through the course of the research programme they were already seeing and behaving differently in practice. They had taken responsibility for their own emancipation from previous customs and constraints (Kemmis, 1993, p.187). However, not all participants were engaged in the interpretation and meaning process of the research. Moreover, the research stopped short of engaging participants in an ideological critique of what led them to believe and act in the ways that they did around spirituality in supervision. A further

dialectical theory-building stage would have been useful to enable this to occur and to give greater integrity to the research design.

### ***Defining spirituality***

Participants in this research believed spirituality was universal, a mystery that we were all conscious or unconscious participants in. Spirituality connects us to a greater consciousness, each other, our roots and our environment. Spirituality was regarded as a belief structure that provided meaning and purpose for participants and, as such, a rationale of hope for their lives and their involvement with their work. There is a challenge in living one's spirituality through aspiring to demonstrate integrity and congruence between one's beliefs and values. Spirituality is not necessarily connected with religion but can be. Participants in this research did not view positively a "darker side" to spirituality, where beliefs can lead to what appears to be "controlling the ways of others' thinking" and taking others' lives. Spirituality can sometimes appear paradoxical, involving experiences of light and darkness, resurrection in death, and inner and outer realities. These aspects serve to illustrate a holistic dimension inherent in spirituality, where order, balance and harmony are believed to be important not only for the individual but also for the common good of humanity and the environment (Ruwhiu, 1999; Consedine, 2002).

Many of these ideas have become a part of my own definition of spirituality as a consequence of my involvement in this research. Prior to this research my own definition of spirituality was quite person-centred and very much focused on the experience of synchronicity, where several components of a situation come together simultaneously to enable something positive to occur. This aspect of spirituality is closely aligned with the 'magical moments' and connectedness themes discussed in the research. Now I see spirituality as a more all-encompassing concept that concerns everything about life and the environment and incorporates ideas such as balance, wholeness and justice. Examples of many of these aspects of spirituality appear in participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision that are summarised below.

## **EXPERIENCES AND EXPRESSIONS OF SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION**

The focus of this research was on participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision. In presenting the findings participants' phenomenological experiences of spirituality in supervision were separated from their expressions of spirituality in supervision. This was done to highlight the differences between interpretations relating to feelings, expectations and the construction of meaning and observable and conscious demonstrations of spirituality.

### ***Experiences of spirituality in supervision***

Magical moments experienced in supervision were described as containing elements of mystery and surprise. These are moments of insight that are not necessarily shared between supervisor and supervisee and could occur after a supervision session was completed. What is important is the transformative nature of these moments in as much as they mark a moment of change. Trust and trusting the process were seen as important in enabling the possibility of a magical moment to occur, and it was not always considered important to control the direction of discussion in supervision. Part of the magical moment involved noticing and celebrating what had occurred.

Connectedness within the supervisory relationship was a major emphasis named in experiencing spirituality in supervision (Ruwhiu, 1999; Okundaye et al; Carroll, 2001; Hawkins & Worrall, 2001; Simmons, 2001). Some believed this was present in all relationships to a certain extent. It was not always clear as to exactly why one could achieve a greater sense of connection with some than others. Trust and connectedness were experienced as closely intertwined and are demonstrated when participants have shared experiences of intuitive knowing, taken risks in supervision, and knowing when to take such risks. The duration of the supervision relationship was believed to be a significant indicator of connectedness, where parties had chosen to stay together because levels of honesty and truth were continuing to build lifegiving relationships (Hawkins & Worrall, 2001). This was particularly so when spiritual exploration was seen as an important part of supervision. Spiritual qualities and experiences have also influenced participants' choice of a supervisor.



Connecting with the language and culture of the supervisee was seen as being important in helping to build connectedness and enabling the freedom for participants to be who they are, irrespective of gender or differences in spirituality (Whittingham, 2004). Some participants experienced strong connections with their whakapapa in supervision to the extent of experiencing their ancestors guiding them in their work (Ruwhiu, 1999; Webber-Dreadon, 1999; Hawkins & Worrall, 2001).

For some participants, strength-based practice was named as spiritual and reflective of their own beliefs and values. When both participants in supervision share a strength-based approach, it is experienced as enhancing the connectedness of supervision since they share core values and beliefs around relationships. Supervision was also experienced as a way of life for those who choose to use the critically-reflective aspects of supervision to evaluate their wider life on the basis of the principles they espouse to live by (Carroll, 2001).

### *Expressions of spirituality in supervision*

Different spiritual practices were described as expressions of spirituality in supervision (Okundaye et al, 1999; Whittingham, 2004). These were used to help prepare for supervision and deal with difficult situations and included taking time for stilling, calming and quietness, silent prayer, evoking what one felt was needed, self-talk and breathing.

Rituals such as karakia were also used in supervision and other named expressions of spirituality included being with the supervisee, sitting with questions, sitting with silence and sitting with uncertainty. It also included expressions like laughing, clapping, celebrating and outlining one's model of practice.

Ways of naming and asking questions and knowing what questions to ask and when to ask them were seen as important in managing spirituality in supervision, using the supervisees' language to ensure discussions were in line with their own frames of reference (Haug, 1988a; Whittingham, 2004).

## ***Historical context***

Differing frames of reference and worldviews present in contemporary society were seen as assisting greater openness about spirituality and thus providing encouragement to address spirituality in supervision. The influence of the Treaty of Waitangi and the importance of practicing biculturally and holistically were also viewed as providing a mandate for dealing with spirituality in supervision. Current working environments were experienced as challenging and hence practicing spiritual self-care was deemed all the more important to be sustained in the workplace (Consedine, 2002).

Participants believed that there were positive consequences to addressing spirituality in supervision. These included the increased insight gained about the way one worked and supervised which can lead to greater openness in supervision, personal development and practicing holistically. It can contribute to an enhancement of the reflective aspect of life, challenging practitioners to greater authenticity and serving to remind some that their work is a vocation. A greater sense of celebration and joy was also experienced as a consequence of addressing spirituality in supervision through acknowledging the goodness in others and connecting with them in small ways.

This concludes the summary of participants' experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision. Ethical and other concerns related to addressing spirituality in supervision were also considered in the research. These are now summarised along with the changes that participants noted in their practice as a consequence of their involvement in the research.

## ***Ethical and other concerns***

Participants believed that their spirituality did influence their work (Carlson & Erikson, 2002). In the previous chapter the colluding and colonising dynamics that can filter into a supervision relationship were discussed, where the supervisor may either go along with or impose their views on the supervisee. Because of this, practitioners acknowledged the need to be reflexive about how they used their power and spirituality in supervision, particularly when this involved the subjective "sense of

knowing”. Reference was made to the work of Haug (1988a) and Hawes (1998) as ways to address this. Acknowledging where one was at spiritually was also seen as important in minimising the possible misuse of power in supervision (Haug, 1998a; Carlson & Erikson, 2002; Canda et al, 2004).

Participants spoke about holding back from exploring spirituality in supervision for fear of being misjudged or misconstrued. I related this to a negative view about religion and spirituality prevalent in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Others held back for fear of being cast as an expert on spirituality. This is another way that power could be misused in supervision. Seeing spirituality as a personal rather than a professional matter was a further reason given for restraint in exploring spirituality in supervision and one that I also reinforced. However, not to address spirituality in supervision was deemed a negation of holistic practice and evidence of a lack of honesty and integrity – qualities participants valued and qualities that were named as important to feminist supervision (Porter & Vasquez, 1997). Acting with integrity requires a satisfactory resolution of such a dilemma.

### ***What changed for participants as a consequence of being involved in the research?***

In action research the line between research and social action disappears (Hill & Capper, 2001, p.243). As a consequence of being involved in the research, GG group participants were engaged in what was named as more conscious practice. This included more discussion about spirituality in supervision in general and greater mindfulness about acknowledging spirituality in supervision through using the language appropriate to the supervisee. These changes are examples of ethical responsiveness described by Haug (1988a). Spiritual self-awareness was a further example of ethical responsiveness described by Haug (1988a) and identified by participants as having developed as a consequence of being involved in the research. Being aware of where one was at spiritually and nurturing one’s spirituality influenced openness to it in supervision. Participants were also challenging themselves to live with a greater sense of integrity by acknowledging their own principles and understandings and actually making life-giving changes on the basis of these (Carroll, 2001). There was a desire to include clients in this by inviting them to

lives of greater integrity through exploring with them their life code and beliefs and how these helped them achieve what they wanted. Such a position demonstrated living interest in the work that may endure (Reason & Bradbury, 2001, pp. 448-449).

The next section will consider the wider implications of the research, both from the perspective of the participants and from the perspective of the social work profession in general. It does this by encouraging wider debate and discussion on the relationship between spirituality and practice and spirituality and self-care. The implications of this research for future research, training and the choosing and changing of supervisors are also considered.

### ***Opening the books on spirituality in supervision***

As previously stated, GG group participants were actively committed to being more open about spirituality in supervision as a consequence of being involved in the research. They were committed to more in-depth questioning of supervisees about their frame of reference and life story and, particularly, the role of hope and how that influenced their work. For this to occur in a more general sense, debate needs to continue about the role of spirituality, both in supervision and in practice generally, and how this may be influenced by contemporary society. I proposed that a negative view of religion and spirituality prevalent in Aotearoa/New Zealand and a belief that spirituality was a personal rather than a professional matter created some resistance to including spirituality as essential to holistic practice. At the commencement of this research one of the questions posed concerned the influence of Dualistic Western philosophy which splits the spiritual and the physical into two mutually-exclusive spheres. The secular and the sacred have been dichotomized leading to the institutionalisation of dualism (Burkhardt and Nagai-Jacobson, 2002, p. 17). How has the sacred/ secular dualism influenced supervision practice? This research did not attempt to address that question directly, however, it is suggested that ongoing debate around these issues occur as a way forward in securing spirituality's role in practice.

This research encourages practitioners to have conversations using dialogic reflexivity about how their own spirituality/ethics/culture is experienced and expressed in practice and supervision. Participants argued from the position of culture and holistic

practice that there should be no agency impediment to exploring spirituality in practice. The argument was that if it is viable to explore spirituality as part of bicultural practice, it must also be viable to explore spirituality as it relates to our own and others' ethnicities. Articulating one's own spirituality was considered part of self-awareness and the ethical use of self (Haug, 1998a; NZASW, 1993; Carlson & Erikson, 2002; Canda et al, 2004).

Ethical use of self includes a self-care component (Haug, 1988a; Consedine, 2002). The research encourages practitioners to consider how they tend to the spiritual as part of their self-care. If the profile of spirituality in practice is raised, the social work profession could consider ways of supporting the role of spirituality in self-care by signalling its importance to holistic practice. A suggestion might be including this as part of the current review of the Code of Ethics.

### ***Future research***

As mentioned above, participants expressed interest in pursuing with supervisees how hope was actualised in their work. The relationship between spirituality, hope and self-care requires further exploration. If work environments are challenging, then how can hope and spirituality help build resilience to enable practitioners to survive and thrive in these environments? The focus of this research was on how spirituality was experienced and expressed in the internal workings of the supervision relationship. Useful further research might consider the wider impact of spirituality in supervision such as how might hope and spirituality help build resilience to enable practitioners to survive and thrive in their work environments and engage in the struggle for justice?

Regarding the issue of further research, this study represented the views of a very small group of practitioners. Replicating the research with other groups represented in our professions would be useful to compare and contrast the emerging themes and to consider the implications of greater diversity. For example, it would be worthwhile inquiring into those groups from non-Christian backgrounds, those with less practice experience, those who are supervisees but not supervisors and those who only experience internal supervision to see what areas of emphasis and difference emerge.

It would be interesting to see whether the connectedness of the supervision relationship receives such prominence when there is no choice of supervisor.

This research has focused on the importance of language in capturing participants' cultural context. Three of the dyads involved in this research acknowledged that they had never discussed spirituality previously in relation to supervision, although one of these dyads understood it as restating what had previously been shared using different language. How do the words people use to describe experiences of spirituality in supervision compare with other experiences practitioners have in supervision? For example, Davys's (2002) research on practitioners' experiences of 'good' supervision highlighted some similar themes to those identified as important to spirituality in supervision. Comparative research may serve to highlight common ground between different ways of constructing supervision that assist practitioners in extending their understanding of spirituality in supervision.

### ***Training***

Despite 73 percent of those surveyed by Canda et al (2004) stating they had received no religious or spiritual content in their social work training, it was nonetheless apparent that they were guided by key ethical principles in their work around spirituality. However, the research of Rosen-Galvin (2005) and West (1997 & 1998) showed that fears around the ethics of spirituality in practice have led supervisees to withhold discussion of such issues in supervision. Participants in this research were aware that in their desire to build connectedness in supervision they needed to critically reflect with the supervisee to make sure they were not imposing their own spirituality on them or covertly acting together with them. I believe these issues are currently exacerbated because practitioners are unclear whether it is appropriate to talk about such matters in supervision. Increasing training and education around spirituality in practice should send clearer signals to practitioners about the importance and relevance of this issue.

While it is acknowledged that training alone cannot deliver a sense of the spiritual, literature and training related to spirituality in supervision and in practice generally, signals to practitioners an expectation around competent holistic practice. The



importance of foundational knowledge on spiritual development, religious and other types of diversity and the ethical issues involved, form part of the US Educational Policy and Accreditation Standards of the Council on Social Work Education (2001) (Canda et al, 2004). While their research would indicate that the policy is still yet to be fully implemented, Thorell's (2003) survey showed that supervisors who had specific training in spirituality and religion in supervision were more likely to address the topic in supervision. They were also more likely to discuss it if they perceived that spirituality and religion were important to the supervisee.

The literature mentions that spirituality is often subsumed under the topics of culture, ageing, grief and loss when it is taught (Nash & Stewart, 2002). Moreover, priority is given to other areas of difference such as gender, ethnic minorities and sexual orientation (Hodge, 2004). Mostly, the literature focuses on the training of new practitioners (Grabovac & Garesan, 2003; Young et al, 2002) rather than ongoing professional development for experienced practitioners. This picture is changing in Aotearoa/New Zealand, given that postgraduate papers are being offered on Spirituality and Social Work/Social Practice at Massey University and Unitec. These developments are important in raising the profile of spirituality in practice. This research would tend to suggest that when practitioners do have the opportunity to explore the meaning and relevance of spirituality in their practice, it can bring about changes in how they are practicing. Such changes contribute a further dimension to holistic practice. If the profile of training and education in spirituality, as it relates to practice, continues to increase, practitioners' expectations about competent holistic practice should continue to expand.

Thorell's (2003) survey demonstrated that supervisors who had specific training in spirituality and religion in supervision were more likely to address the topic in supervision. It is important from the supervisor perspective that this training take place at an advanced level as part of ongoing professional development. It is encouraging that postgraduate papers in spirituality are being offered at Massey University and Unitec. That said, it is also important that such training occur at the undergraduate level so that practitioners gain an understanding of the relationship between spirituality and practice to gain confidence in bringing such matters to supervision. This does not address the question of what exactly is to be taught, by



whom and how (Nash & Stewart, 2002, p.137). However, what this research served to highlight is that when practitioners have the opportunity to explore spirituality in relation to their practice, this exercise provides a knowledge base in itself that inspires confidence to engage with the question in an ongoing way.

### ***Choosing and changing a supervisor***

This research supports the importance of supervisor choice where connectedness enables the building of a lifegiving relationship. The issue of supervisor choice in Aotearoa/New Zealand is a troublesome one in light of differences in agency policies. Some agencies provide more choices for workers, in terms of who is available to act as supervisors within the agency and with the funding of external supervision. Professional supervision arrangements need to provide for competent accountable performance, personal support and continuing professional development (Morrison, 1993). Achieving these objectives can occur through a variety of different forms: internal supervision, external supervision, managerial supervision, consultation, and cultural supervision, to name a few (O'Donoghue, 2003). Is there a place for spirituality and spiritual supervision in all of this?

It is the contention of this research that all supervision is spiritual. Consulting another professional on a spiritual matter or referring a client on if one feels the issue falls outside one's expertise are taken as given. That is not the issue at stake. This research would argue that connection with a supervisor is fundamental in enabling the functions of supervision to be realised. If a worker is not able to connect with their supervisor, supervision can become a matter of going through the motions. As the work of West (1997 & 1998) indicates, the objectives of supervision, then, fail to be fully achieved. Where supervisees do not have choice or reduced choice, supervisors need to engage in anti-oppressive practice to ensure a productive working relationship.

The agency discourse about supervisor choice is often constrained by financial and risk management issues. These are important bottom lines. Encouraging different forms of supervision such as inter agency or peer supervision that respect these considerations and yet provide more supervision choices for workers may be a way

forward. The professional discourse in relation to spiritual connectedness in supervision is still developing. The works of Okundaye et al (1999), Carroll (2001), Hawkins & Worrall (2001) and Simmons (2001) have made a significant contribution here with their focus on connectedness and integrity. The voice of the supervisee needs to be added to these to achieve a more balanced picture in the literature. For it is argued that when connectedness is not experienced in supervision and a lack of supervisor choice contributes to this, it is not just the supervisee who is disadvantaged. The wider supervision context of the client, the agency and the profession are also affected.

Connected to the issue of supervisor choice is the discourse concerning the expectation that practitioners need to change their supervisor after a certain time period. Participants who enjoy collaborative relationships that continue to foster growth in supervision where power issues are reduced or deconstructed express resistance to this expectation. This voice needs to be heard and considered against the discourse that encourages regular changes of supervisor. If the purposes of supervision are still being achieved, is it necessary to change your supervisor? Supervision contracts are usually subject to periodic review processes which provide parties with opportunity to terminate their relationship. If they choose to continue to work together over extended periods, is this necessarily a problem? What are some of the core characteristics that might signal that a supervision relationship needs to end or continue? Further debates about this issue in Supervision Policy reviews, conference and publication forums could be useful.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS STEMMING FROM THIS RESEARCH**

Six recommendations are proposed on the basis of the findings and discussion of this research.

1. Debate and research need to continue about the role of spirituality in supervision and practice generally and how this may be influenced by contemporary society. It

may be useful to deconstruct the sacred/ secular dualism as part of this exploration to expose the range of possible resistances to including spirituality as part of holistic practice.

2. Training and education in spirituality as it relates to social work practice need to increase as this signals to practitioners an expectation around competent holistic practice. This training needs to take place at both the undergraduate and postgraduate level so that practitioners gain an understanding of the relationship between spirituality and practice and the ethical issues involved. Practitioners will, then, have confidence in bringing such matters to supervision. The question of what exactly is to be taught, by whom and how needs to be grappled with by the ANZASW Education and Training Standing Committee and the Educational Advisory Group to the Social Work Registration Board.

3. As part of providing a knowledge base that enhances self-awareness and the disciplined use of self, practitioners need to be encouraged to explore, using a dialogic reflexivity process, how their spirituality/ethics/culture are experienced and expressed in practice and supervision.

4. As part of providing endurance for the challenge of their work and work environments, practitioners need to be encouraged to consider how they tend to the spiritual in their lives as part of self-care. The profession needs to support this by signalling the importance of spirituality to self-care and holistic practice through including this as part of the current review of the ANZASW Code of Ethics.

5. While many factors influence what practitioners look for in a supervisor, connectedness in a supervisory relationship is a priority for some. Agencies need to consider creative ways of maximising opportunities for supervisor choice when there are budgetary and risk management issues involved that prevent this being a matter of course. Agencies could consider inter-agency supervision arrangements across similar fields of practice as a way of maximising choice.

6. Forums such as conferences, publications and policy reviews should be used to debate the issue of the ideal length of supervisory relationships and when and under what circumstances the supervision relationship should end.

## CONCLUSION

Experiences and expressions of spirituality in supervision are many and varied, from magical, transformative moments to moments of quiet reflection and prayer. Such experiences and activities are a rich resource and provide benefits not just in supervision but also during work with clients and in the practitioner's wider life. While the focus in the literature was on integrating the spiritual into practice, this research emphasised that all of supervision is spiritual because of the connectedness of the supervision relationship. Although there is ethical caution around spirituality in supervision, resistance to its consideration was minimal. For most of the participants in this research it was the first time they had discussed spirituality in relation to their work. It is hoped that these beginnings will be a catalyst for change, and that spirituality in supervision will become reflective of the resurgence of interest in spirituality apparent in the wider society and the helping professions.

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## **APPENDICES**

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**APPENDIX ONE – NATIONAL APPLICATION FORM FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROJECT**

**APPENDIX TWO – SPIRITUALITY IN SUPERVISION CONSULTATION VERIFICATION**

**APPENDIX THREE – INFORMATION SHEET**

**APPENDIX FOUR – PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM**

**APPENDIX FIVE – AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TAPE TRANSCRIPTS**

# APPENDIX ONE

## Form EA 05/02

The application guidelines (**EA0502nt.doc**) are to be read before completing this form to ensure that the questions are answered appropriately.

The electronic version of this form is formatted the same way as the paper version so that, for example, where an answer needs 6 lines, 6 lines are formatted, but where it only needs 1 line, 1 line is formatted. Please note the number of lines allowed for a question before answering it, and make sure that no extra lines are used.

You may find it helpful to print out the application form before completing it to help you to keep to the page limits allowed. **No extra pages should be added**, except where specified, as appendices.

The “**Page Break**” and “**End of Section**”, breaks are not to be deleted as removing these breaks will seriously affect the formatting of the form.

# NATIONAL APPLICATION FORM FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF A RESEARCH PROJECT

## PART I : BASIC INFORMATION

Protocol number and date received (for office use only)

1. Full project title

Spirituality in supervision. A study of how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision.

2. Short project title (lay title)

Spirituality in supervision.

3. Lead Principal Investigator's name and position

Helen Simmons, Senior Tutor, Massey University

4. Address of lead Investigator

3 Riverside Dr
R.D. 10
Palmerston North

Work phone No.	063505799 Xtn 2819
Emergency No.*	
Fax	063505681
E-mail	helmik@paradise.net.nz

5. Lead investigator's qualifications and experience in past 5 years (relevant to proposed research)

Helen Simmons B.A. (Major Psychology and Mathematics), BSW, Certificate of Competency ANZASW, Post Graduate Diploma in Social Service Supervision (Distinction)  
In the past 5 years I have completed the above postgraduate Diploma and been involved in professional supervision of over 20 helping professionals. In 1999 I developed a feminist model of supervision practice, which was presented in the form of a workshop at the First NZ National Supervision Conference "From Rhetoric to Reality".

6. Co-investigators' name(s) and position(s) or, if multicentre, Principal Investigator at each site

- A
- B
- C
- D

7. Address of co-investigator A


Work phone No.  
Emergency No.\*  
Fax  
E-mail




8. Address of co-investigator B

	Work phone No.	
	Emergency No.*	
	Fax	
	E-mail	

9. Address of co-investigator C

	Work phone No.	
	Emergency No.*	
	Fax	
	E-mail	

10. Address of co-investigator D

	Work phone No.	
	Emergency No.*	
	Fax	
	E-mail	

(\* option for Committee's information only)

11. Where this is supervised work

11.1 Supervisor's name

Position

Day time phone number

Dr. Mary Nash and Dr. Catherine Brennan
Senior Lecturer and Senior Lecturer, Massey University, Palmerston North
063505799 Xtn 2827(Nash), Xtn (2620) (Brennan)

11.2 Signature of supervisor (where relevant)

Declaration: I take responsibility for all ethical aspects of the project

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12. List any other New Zealand Ethics Committees to which this project has been submitted and attach their letters of approval where available

N/A
-----

13. I wish the protocol to be heard in a closed meeting

If the answer is yes, provide reason why you wish it to be heard in a closed meeting

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	*	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

14. Proposed starting date (dd/mm/yy)

15. Proposed finishing date (dd/mm/yy)

16. Duration of project (mm/yy)

17. Proposed final report date (mm/yy)

17-09-04
28-02-06
2 years
28-02-06

## PART II : PROJECT SUMMARY

### 1. Multicentre proposals

(Important: read the guidelines, Appendix 1)

1.1 Is this a multicentre study? (if no, go to question 2)  Yes  No

1.2 If yes, name the primary ethics committee for New Zealand

1.3 Has the protocol been submitted to any other ethics committees in New Zealand? (If yes, attach copies of relevant correspondence)  Yes  No

1.4 Who is the lead investigator or institution in New Zealand?

1.5 List the other New Zealand sites involved

1.6 Have the Principal Investigators from secondary sites agreed to participate? (attach copies of signed Part V Declaration for each site)  Yes  No

1.7 If the study is based overseas, which countries are involved?

### 2. Gene Studies

Does this research involve any gene or genetic studies?  Yes  No  
If yes, complete section 16.

### 3. Scientific Assessment

Has this project been scientifically assessed by independent review?  Yes  No

If yes, by whom? (name and position)  
A copy of the report should also be attached  
If no, is it intended to have the project scientifically assessed, and by whom?

### 4. Data and Safety Monitoring Board (DSMB)

3.1 Is the trial being reviewed by a data and safety monitoring board?  Yes  No  
If yes, who is the funder of the DSMB?  Sponsor  HRC

## 5. Summary

Give a brief summary of the study (not more than 200 words, in lay language)

This research is about discovering how spirituality is experienced and expressed in professional supervision from the perspective of supervisors and supervisees. It is hoped to generate knowledge on the topic of spirituality in supervision and to consider this against relevant literature in the helping professions. Once this information has been collated, the implications of the research for future practice will be considered. It is hoped to conduct the research through a collaborative inquiry process, where a group of peers strives to answer a question of importance to them through repeated episodes of reflection and action.

## PART III : PROJECT DETAILS

### SCIENTIFIC BASIS

#### 1. Aims of Project

1.1 What is the hypothesis/research question(s)? (state briefly)

How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?

1.2 What are the specific aims of the project?

- 1) To conduct a collaborative inquiry on the above question. This will be done within a professional development supervisors group of which the "researcher" is a group member.
- 2) To generate knowledge on the topic of spirituality and supervision.
- 3) To consider the implications of the research for future practice.

#### 2. Scientific Background of the Research

Describe the scientific basis of the project (300 words maximum). Where this space is inadequate, continue on a separate sheet of paper. *Do not delete page breaks or renumber pages.*

Few, if any studies, on the experience and expression of spirituality in supervision have been conducted in NZ. Nevertheless, this is an area of growing interest to practitioners. Therefore, this research seeks to investigate the topic through a collaborative inquiry process. This consists of repeated episodes of reflection and action by a group of peers who strive to answer a question of importance to them ( Bray, Lee, Smith and Yorks,2000,p.6). The research begins with the group members and affirms their right and ability to generate knowledge about their activities. It focuses on reflective practice and consciousness raising to enhance professional and user control.

### 3. Participants

3.1 How many participants is it intended to recruit?	Up to 10
3.2 How will potential participants be identified?	They will be members of an established professional development group and their professional supervisors.
3.3 How will participants be recruited? (e.g. advertisements, notices)	Members will be approached individually.
3.3.1 Where will potential participants be approached? (e.g. outpatient clinic) If appropriate, describe by type (e.g. students)	Letters will be sent to their home addresses.
3.3.2 Who will make the initial approach to potential participants?	The "researcher" will approach the professional development group members <b>and on obtaining their consent to participate then</b> approach their professional supervisors.
3.3.3 Is there any special relationship between the participants and the researchers? e.g. doctor/patient, student/teacher	The "researcher" is a professional development group member.
3.4 Briefly describe the inclusion/ exclusion criteria and include the relevant page number(s) of the protocol or investigator's brochure	Because of the way this well established group functions, after individual letters have been sent, it is anticipated that the group will take time to discuss the implications for all members involved in this collaborative inquiry project.
3.5 If randomisation is used, explain how this will be done	N/A

#### 4. Study Design

4.1 Describe the study design. Where this space is inadequate, continue on a separate sheet of paper.  
*Do not delete page breaks or renumber pages.*

Session 1. The professional development group will discuss the research question, and the discussion will be audio and videotaped.

Session 2. The professional development group will then review and analyse the video footage. The group will decide together how to structure the review and analyse this part of the process. There may be both audiotaped and written data from this session.

Session 3. Each member of the professional development group will discuss the research question with their own professional supervisor and each session will be audiotaped.

The researcher will collate the discussion findings from the above sessions and these will be made available to the professional development group.

Session 4. The professional development group will discuss the implications of the inquiry for their future practice and this discussion will be audio taped.

The 'researcher' takes responsibility for the final analysis and presentation of material.

4.2 How many visits/admissions of participants will this project involve? Give also an estimate of total time involved for participants.

Visit One with the professional development group will include Session 1 (1.5-2hours) and Session 2 (2-2.5hours). Session 1 and Session 2 will be separated by a lunch break.

Visit One with the professional supervisor will involve Session 3 (1 hour).

Visit Two with the professional development group will involve Session 4 (1.5-2hours). It is anticipated that Session 4 will occur at least 6 months after Session 1.

Estimated total time involvement for professional development group 6.5 hours over 6 months.  
(Group members may choose to spend extra time in reflection around the topic.)

Estimated total time involvement for professional supervisors 1 hour.

N.B. The professional development group usually meets for one whole Saturday every three months.

4.3 Describe any methods for obtaining information. Attach questionnaires and interview guidelines.

Session 1. The professional development group discussion (see Discussion Guide Attachment One) will be audio and videotaped.

Session 2. Feedback from Session 2 will be audiotaped and there may be some written feedback.

Session 3. The discussion between the professional group members and their individual supervisors will be audiotaped.

Session 4. The final session discussing the implications of the inquiry will be audiotaped.

4.4 Who will carry out the research procedures?

In each group the 'researcher' will set up the group discussions. Facilitation in the group is usually shared but the "researcher" will take ultimate responsibility for the facilitation.

The professional development group members will facilitate the discussion with their own supervisor.

4.5 Where will the research procedures take place?

Group sessions will take place at the usual venue for the group meetings, which is in Waikanae at one of the group members' homes.

Individual sessions will take place at the usual venues for supervision.



4.6 If blood, tissue or body fluid samples are to be obtained, state type, use, access to, frequency, number of samples, total volume, means of storage and labelling, length of proposed storage and method of disposal.

N/A

4.7 Will data or other information be stored for later use in a future study?  Yes  No

If yes, explain how

4.8 Will any samples go out of New Zealand?  Yes  No

If so where, and for what purpose?

### 5. Research Methods and Procedures

5.1 Is the method of analysis :  quantitative  or qualitative?

If the method of analysis is qualitative, go to question 5.2.

If the method of analysis is **wholly or partly quantitative**, complete the following :

5.1.1 Describe the statistical method that will be used

5.1.2 Has specialist statistical advice been obtained?  Yes  No

If yes,  
from  
whom?

(A brief statistical report should be included if appropriate)

5.1.3 Give a justification for the number of research participants proposed, using appropriate power calculations.

5.1.4 What are the criteria for terminating the study?

5.2 If the method of analysis is **wholly or partly qualitative**, specify the method. Why is this method appropriate? If interviews are to be used include the general areas around which they will be based. Copies of any questionnaires that will be used should be appended.

Qualitative analysis is appropriate because of the phenomenological nature of the research, which will include elements of description and interpretation.  
A semi-structured format using open-ended questions will allow the respondents to express their ideas and experiences more fully.

## 6. Risks and benefits

6.1 What are the benefits to research participants of taking part?

Participants will get the opportunity to consider an aspect of their work with others involved in the field. Conscientisation may occur around spirituality in supervision, which may enhance professional practice.

6.2 How do the research procedures differ from standard treatment procedures?

N/A as there are no treatment procedures involved.

6.3 What are the physical or psychological risks, or side effects to participants or third parties?  
Describe what action will be taken to minimise any such risks or side effects.

There are no physical or psychological risks as all participants are robust professional practitioners.

6.4 What arrangements will be made for monitoring and detecting adverse outcomes?

Debriefing will occur at the end of recorded sessions.  
Participants are aware through the consents process that they can withdraw from the study at any stage and can request any of their recorded text to be removed.

6.5 Will any potential toxins, mutagens or teratogens be used?  Yes  No

If **yes**, specify and outline the justification for their use

6.6 Will any radiation or radioactive substances be used?  Yes  No

*Note: If any form of radiation is being used please answer the following. If no, go to question 6.8*

6.6.1 Under whose license is the radiation being used?

6.6.2 Has the National Radiation Laboratory (NRL) risk assessment been completed?

Yes  No

If **yes**, please enclose a copy of the risk assessment, and the contact name and phone number

If **no**, please explain why

6.7 What facilities/procedures and personnel are there for dealing with emergencies?

6.8 Will any drugs be administered for the purposes of this study?  Yes  No

If **yes** is SCOTT approval required?

Yes  No

Has SCOTT approval been given? (please attach)

Yes  No

**7. Expected outcomes or impacts of research**

7.1 What is the potential significance of this project for improved health care?

N/A

7.2 What is the potential significance of this project for the advancement of knowledge?

While there is a considerable body of knowledge available on spirituality in the helping professions, literature relating to spirituality in supervision is quite limited. This project aims to contribute to the knowledge base in that field.

7.3 What steps will be taken to disseminate the research results?

Research participants will be given a copy of the research findings.  
ANZASW quarterly *Social Work Review* may be used.

## PART IV: BUDGET AND USE OF RESOURCES

### 8. Budget

8.1 How will the project be funded?

The project will be largely self-funded with some assistance from the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work to attend a relevant conference.

8.2 Does the researcher, the host department or the host institution, have any financial interest in the outcome of this research? Please give details.

N/A

8.3 Will the researcher personally receive payment according to the number of participants recruited, or a lump sum payment, or any other benefit to conduct the study? If so, please specify:

N/A

8.4 What other research studies is the lead investigator currently involved with?

N/A

### 9. Resource Implications

9.1 Does the study involve the use of healthcare resources?  Yes  No

If yes, please specify:

Three potential participants are D.H.B employees. One 1 hour supervision session would be required for the purposes of the research. Group sessions are held in member's own time that is during a weekend.

9.2 What effect will this use of resources have on waiting list times for patients ie., for diagnostic tests or for standard treatments?

Nil

### 10. Financial Costs and Payments to Participants

10.1 Will there be any financial cost to the participant? Give examples including travel.

Group members would be required to travel to the usual meeting venue. This is not over and beyond what is normally required in being a group member. For group members who personally pay for their supervision sessions, consideration would be given to meeting this expense as it relates to this research.

10.2 Will the study drug/treatment continue to be available to the participant after the study ends?  Yes  No  N/a  
 If **yes**, will there be a cost, and how will this be met?  
 A summary of research findings will be made available to participants. No cost will be involved.

10.3 Will any payments be made to participants or will they gain materially in other ways from participating in this project?  Yes  No  
 If **yes**, please supply details

**11. Compensation for Harm Suffered by Participants**

(refer to Appendix 3 of the Guidelines)

Is this a clinical trial under accident compensation legislation (see form guidelines)  Yes  No

If **yes**, please answer the following:

11.1 Is the trial being carried out principally for the benefit of a manufacturer or distributor of the drug or item in respect of which the trial is taking place?  Yes  No

(a) If the answer to 11.1 is **yes**, please complete **Statutory Declaration Form B** and answer questions 11.2, 11.3 and 11.4

(b) If the answer to 11.1 is **no** please complete **Statutory Declaration Form A**

11.2 What type of injury/adverse consequence resulting from participation in the trial has the manufacturer or distributor undertaken to cover? (please tick the appropriate box/es)

	Yes	No
a) any injury (mental or physical)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) only serious or disabling injuries.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) only physical injuries	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) only physical injuries resulting from the trial drug or item, but not from any other aspect of the trial	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) physical and mental injury resulting from the trial drug or item, but not from any other aspect of the trial.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) any other qualification (explain)	<input type="text"/>	

11.3 What type of compensation has manufacturer or distributor agreed to pay?

	Yes	No
a) medical expenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b) pain and suffering	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c) loss of earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d) loss of earning capacity	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e) loss of potential earnings	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f) any other financial loss or expenses	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
g) funeral costs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
h) dependants' allowances	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

11.4 Exclusion clauses:

a) Has the manufacturer or distributor limited or excluded liability if the injury is attributable to the negligence of someone other than the manufacturer or distributor? (such as negligence by the investigator, research staff, the hospital or institution, or the participant).  Yes  No

b) Has the manufacturer or distributor limited or excluded liability if the injury resulted from a deviation from the study protocol by someone other than the manufacturer or distributor?  Yes  No

c) Is company liability limited in any other way?  Yes  No  
 If **yes**, please specify

## 12. Information and Consent

Consent should be obtained in writing, unless there are good reasons to the contrary. If consent is not to be obtained in writing the justification should be given and the circumstances under which consent is obtained should be recorded. Attach a copy of the information sheet and consent form.

12.1 By whom, and how, will the project be explained to potential participants?

The "researcher" will explain the project to participants in oral and written form. Group members will then repeat this with their own supervisors.

12.2 When and where will the explanation be given?

The "researcher" will approach group members individually via email and post written information.

12.3 Will a competent interpreter be available, if required?

Not required

12.4 How much time will be allowed for the potential participant to decide about taking part?

1 month

12.5 Will the participants be capable of giving consent themselves? - if not, complete Part VI

Yes

12.6 In what form (written, or oral) will consent be obtained? If oral consent only, state reasons.

Written (Attachment Three)

12.7 Are participants in clinical trials to be provided with a card confirming their participation, medication and contact phone number of the principal investigator?

Yes  No

## 13. Confidentiality and Use of Results

13.1 How will data including audio and video tapes, be handled and stored to safeguard confidentiality (both during and after completion of the research project)?

Audio and videotapes will be stored by the researcher in a locked filing cabinet in her office and erased at completion of 5 years. After the interviews audiotapes will be hand delivered to the researcher. Pseudonyms will be used to protect participant confidentiality.

13.2 What will be done with the raw data when the study is finished?

These will be stored in a locked filing cabinet for 5 years.

13.3 How long will the data from the study be kept and who will be responsible for its safe keeping?

The data will be stored for 5 years. The "researcher" will be responsible for its safe keeping.

13.4 Who will have access to the raw data and/or clinical records during, or after, the study?

The "researcher"

13.5 Describe any arrangements to make results available to participants, including whether they will be offered their audio tapes or videos.

Group members will be given an opportunity to view video footage and all participants will be given their transcripts.

13.6 If recordings are made, will participants be offered the opportunity to edit the transcripts of the recordings?

Yes  No

13.7 Is it intended to inform the participant's GP of individual results of the investigations, and their participation, if the participant consents?

Yes  No



If **no**, outline the reasons

Not relevant

13.8 Will any restriction be placed on publication of results?  Yes  No

If **yes**, please supply details

Publication will be in accordance with the Information and Consent forms.

**14. Treaty of Waitangi**

- 14.1 Have you read the HRC booklet, "Guidelines for Researchers on Health Research involving Maori"?  Yes  No
- 14.2 Does the proposed research project impact on Maori people in any way?  Yes  No
- 14.3 Explain how the intended research process is consistent with the provisions of the Treaty of Waitangi

N/A

- 14.4 Identify the group(s) with whom consultation has taken place, and attach evidence of their support

N/A

- 14.5 Describe the consultation process that has been undertaken **prior** to the project's development

N/A

- 14.6 Describe any ongoing involvement the group consulted has in the project

N/A

14.7 Describe how information will be disseminated to participants and the group consulted at the end of the project

N/A

**15. Other Issues**

15.1 Are there any aspects of the research which might raise specific cultural issues?  Yes  No

If yes, please explain

15.1.1 What ethnic or cultural group(s) does your research involve?

The professional development group and their supervisors are all Tauwiwi.

Describe what consultation has taken place with the group prior to the project's development

The professional development group has a general interest in spirituality. We have discussed ways that spirituality relates to our work with clients. We have discussed ideas for a research question, and they were instrumental in arriving at the proposed question for research.

15.1.2 Identify the group(s) with whom consultation has taken place and attach evidence of their support

Consultation has occurred with the professional development group mentioned above. Evidence of their acknowledgement of consultation and support is attached.(Attachment Two)

15.1.3 Describe any ongoing involvement the group consulted has in the project

The professional development group may choose to have further involvement with this project as outlined in Section 4.1 above once they have agreed through the formal Consents. (Attachment Three)

15.1.4 Describe how you intend to disseminate information to participants and the group consulted at the end of the project

A summary of research findings will be made available to all participants.

**16. Genetics Check List**

16.1 Does the proposed research study involve use of products made by genetic modification, analyses of DNA or clinical genetics?  Yes  No  
If it does not, proceed to question 17.

16.2 Have you read, and does your research comply with, the Guidelines "Ethical considerations relating to Research in Human Genetics? *Applicant responses to these questions may initiate a request from the Ethics Committee for more detailed information.*  Yes  No

16.3 Will the study involve administration of any products produced by genetic modification, other than licensed medicines?  Yes  No  
If yes, has approval from GTAC been obtained?  Yes  No

If yes please describe.

16.4 Information on Samples :

16.4.1 Is tissue or body fluid samples for DNA analysis to be taken for :

- a) immediate analysis
- b) storage for future analyses
- c) analyses outside New Zealand
- d) analyses by individuals or organisations other than the study investigators

(tick all boxes which apply)

<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No
<input type="checkbox"/>	Yes	<input type="checkbox"/>	No

16.4.2 Describe processes for storage and disposal of samples taken for DNA analyses

16.4.3 Up to what point would withdrawal of the sample or the data at the request of the participant be possible?

16.5 Is personal and health information from individuals and DNA analysis to be linked?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe how confidentiality will be assured.

16.6 Are samples to be obtained from Maori?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe any relevant issues additional to Section 16.4.1

16.7 Will the study involve participant contact with a clinical geneticist?

Yes  No

If yes, please provide :

- the name of the clinical geneticist, and
- describe the purpose

16.8 Will provision be made where appropriate for genetic counselling?

Yes  No

If yes, please describe the process.

## 17. Ethical Issues

17.1 Describe and discuss any ethical issues arising from this project, other than those already dealt with in your answers?

### **Boundary issues**

Given that the “researcher” is a professional development group member this may make it more difficult for group members to freely enter into the inquiry. They may feel obligated and not wish to potentially jeopardise group cohesion. Group members need to be reassured that there are other methodologies available to the “researcher” to complete the thesis. Clear boundaries need to be established around the work that pertains to this inquiry and the anticipated time commitment versus the normal group agenda. In order to assist in the management of boundary issues the “researcher” commits to a process of self-scrutiny and scrutiny by group members, peers and supervisors during the research.

### **Dealing with conflict**

This is to be anticipated in a collaborative inquiry where the group has some control of the process. This will be resolved through discussion and consensus decision-making. Different choices around process and ways of participating will be possible within the confines of the research.

### **Ownership and publication**

The researcher accepts the practical, professional and academic limits to community ownership of the research in submitting it as a Master’s thesis. It will be graded as the “researcher’s” work, with the only concrete recognition of the participants being in direct quotes and the acknowledgements. However, the publication of a joint paper with members of the participating group, at a later stage, could be a possibility.

In this way it would enable the “researcher” as a full member of the Aotearoa New Zealand Association of Social Workers to meet her obligations to their Code of Ethics. “In any publication, social workers should accurately acknowledge sources of information and ideas, and give appropriate credit to contributions made by individuals and organizations” (NZASW, 1993, 15).

**Thank you for your assistance in helping us assess your project fully**

**Please now complete:**

- **the declarations (Part V)**
- **a drug administration form (if applicable)**
- **Form A or B relating to accident compensation**

**PART V: DECLARATIONS**

**Full Project Title :** Spirituality in Supervision. A study of how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision. \_\_\_\_\_

**Short Project Title :** Spirituality in Supervision \_\_\_\_\_

**1. Declaration by Principal Investigator**

The information supplied in this application is, to the best of my knowledge and belief, accurate. I have considered the ethical issues involved in this research and believe that I have adequately addressed them in this application. I understand that if the protocol for this research changes in any way I must inform the Ethics Committee.

NAME OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR (PLEASE PRINT): HELEN SIMMONS

SIGNATURE OF PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR:

DATE:

*A separate declaration will be required for each multi-centre site, signed by the principal investigator for that site.*

**2. Declaration by Head of Department in which the Principal Investigator is located or appropriate Dean or other Senior Manager**

I have read the application and it is appropriate for this research to be conducted in this department I give my consent for the application to be forwarded to the Ethics Committee.

NAME AND DESIGNATION (PLEASE PRINT): DR. MARY NASH

SIGNATURE:

INSTITUTION: MASSEY UNIVERSITY

DATE:

DESIGNATION: SENIOR LECTURER AND SUPERVISOR

- *Where the head of department is also one of the investigators, the head of department declaration must be signed by the appropriate Dean, or other senior manager.*
- *If the application is for a student project, the supervisor should sign here.*

**3. Declaration by the General Manager of the Health Service in which the research is being undertaken (if applicable)**

I have reviewed the proposal for cost, resources, and administrative aspects and issues regarding patient participation and staff involvement. The proposal has my approval subject to the consent of the Ethics Committee.

NAME OF GENERAL MANAGER (PLEASE PRINT):

SIGNATURE:

INSTITUTION:

DATE:



**FORM A**  
**DECLARATION OF ELIGIBILITY OF A CLINICAL TRIAL FOR CONSIDERATION OF**  
**COVERAGE UNDER ACCIDENT COMPENSATION LEGISLATION**

**Instructions:** This form is to be completed and the statutory declaration signed by the applicant. It should be forwarded to the primary Ethics Committee together with the documents seeking ethical approval for the proposed study.

*If the study is a multi-centre proposal, this form should only be sent to the primary committee.*

The information provided must be sufficiently detailed to enable the Ethics Committee to be satisfied that the proposed research is not conducted principally for the benefit of the manufacturer or distributor of the medicine or item in respect of which the research is carried out.

The provision of this information will enable the ethics committee to be satisfied that participants in the clinical trial will be considered for coverage under accident compensation legislation, for injury caused as a result of their participation in the research.

**DETAILS OF PROPOSED RESEARCH STUDY**

• Title of research project: Spirituality in Supervision

• Name of Research Director/Investigator: Helen Simmons

• Is the Investigator a Registered Health Professional Yes (No)  
*tick or circle as appropriate*

• Location/s of proposed study: Waikanae, Palmerston North, Wellington

• State number of participants: Up to 10

• Organisations providing support (\$ or "in kind") for the direct and indirect costs of the research.

Please provide names of organisations and the type of support provided. Capital Coast DHB and MidCentral DHB will provide one 1 hour supervision session to the research. For Capital Coast health this will involve one professional supervision dyad, that is, both the supervisor and the supervisee are Capital Coast DHB employees. For MidCentral Health only the supervisor is an employee. Both of these arrangements are fiscally neutral.

• Relationship of proposed research to the pharmaceutical industry or other company involved in health research. Please describe the involvement of industry in your proposed research, and provide details of support to be received from them. A small fund has been made available from the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Graduate Research Fund for travel to a relevant conference.

**STATUTORY DECLARATION:**

I, Helen Simmons, of Palmerston North solemnly and sincerely declare that as director of the proposed research, the proposed study is not conducted principally for the benefit of the manufacturer or distributor of the medicine or item in respect of which the trial is carried out.

And I make this solemn declaration conscientiously believing the same to be true and by virtue of the Oaths and Declarations Act 1957.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature \_\_\_\_\_  
this day of

before me

\_\_\_\_\_  
Name (please print) \_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

A Justice of the Peace, or  
A Solicitor of the High Court  
or other person authorised to take a statutory declaration.

**Warning:** Please note that it is an offence under part VI subsection 111 the Crimes Act 1961 to make a false statutory declaration.

**Note:** Applicants conducting a research study which is conducted principally for the benefit of the manufacturer or distributor of the medicine or item in respect of which the trial is carried out should complete Form B.



**INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR TRIALS INVOLVING ADMINISTRATION OF DRUGS CURRENTLY REGISTERED IN NEW ZEALAND.**

Trade name of drug:

Chemical name of drug

Pharmacological class:

Brief details of any special features:

(E.g., long half life, receptor selectivity)

Recommended dose range:

Form of administration in the study:

Known or possible interactions with non-trial drugs the participants may be taking:

Side effects and adverse reactions:

## PART VI: WHEN A PARTICIPANT IS UNABLE TO MAKE AN INFORMED CHOICE

To be completed when one or more participants in a project will likely not be able to make an informed choice about whether to take part. ***Do not complete this section if all participants in the study will be competent to make an informed choice and give informed consent themselves.*** Refer to the Guidelines for information about children in research.

1. Will any of the participants have a person with them who is available and entitled to make an informed choice on their behalf if they themselves are unable to do so. ye   
no

**If yes**, that person can make a proxy informed choice for the potential participant. Include an appropriate consent form for that person legally entitled. (Note: Where possible the incompetent person should also orally consent to the level of his or her understanding.)

**If no**, complete section 1.1

- 1.1 Is there any person interested in the potential participant's welfare who knows the participant (eg family member/friend/whanau) and is willing and available to express a view as to what the potential participant would choose were he or she competent and fully informed about the study. yes   
no

**If yes**, include an information sheet for the family member/friend/whanau statement as per page 24.

Please note: if it is appropriate that there be wider consultation with family, then this should be encouraged

**If no**, complete section 1.2

- 1.2 Explain why it is not possible for a potential participant to make an informed choice and why it is not possible for a proxy choice to be made or for a person interested in the potential participant's welfare to state what the participant would choose if he or she was competent and fully informed.

2. What would be the risks to the participants of taking part in this study?

3. Could the research be carried out on people who are able to consent

ye	<input type="checkbox"/>
no	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. Explain why approval is being sought to use this participant/population/.patient group.

5. What is the potential health interest for the group of patients/population of which the participant would be a member?

(to be on letterhead)  
(include the Lay Title at the top of each page)

**STATEMENT BY RELATIVE/FRIEND/WHANAU**

Lay Title \_\_\_\_\_

Principal Investigator \_\_\_\_\_

Participant's Name \_\_\_\_\_

I have read and I understand the information sheet dated \_\_\_\_\_ for people taking part in the study designed to \_\_\_\_\_. I have had the opportunity to discuss this study. I am satisfied with the answers I have been given.

I believe that \_\_\_\_\_ (participant's name) would have chosen and consented to participate in this study if he/she had been able to understand the information that I have received and understood.

I understand that taking part in this study is voluntary and that my relative/friend may withdraw from the study at any time if he/she wishes. This will not affect his/her continuing health care.

I understand that his/her participation in this study is confidential and that no material which could identify him/her will be used in any reports on this study.

I understand that the treatment will be stopped if it should appear to be harmful. **(if applicable)**

I understand the compensation provisions for this study. **(if applicable)**

I know whom to contact if my relative/friend has any side effects to the study or if anything occurs which I think he/she would consider a reason to withdraw from the study.

I know whom to contact if I have any questions about the medication of the study.

This study has been given ethical approval by the \_\_\_\_\_ Ethics Committee. This means that the Committee may check at any time that the study is following appropriate ethical procedures.

I believe my relative/friend would agree to an auditor appointed by the sponsoring pharmaceutical company and approved by the \_\_\_\_\_ Ethics Committee reviewing my relative's/friend's relevant medical records for the sole purpose of checking the accuracy of the information recorded for the study. **(if applicable)**

I/my relative/friend would like a copy of the results of the study. **YES/NO**

I believe my relative/friend would agree to his/her GP being informed of his/her participation in this study **YES/NO**

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Participant: \_\_\_\_\_

Address for results : \_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT BY PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR**

I (name of investigator) declare that this study is in the potential health interest of the group of patients of which (name of participant) is a member and that participation in this study is not adverse to (name of participant)'s interests.

**(if applicable)**

I confirm that if the participant becomes competent to make an informed choice and give an informed consent, full information will be given to him/her as soon as possible, and his/her participation will be explained. If the participant makes an informed choice to continue in the study, written consent will be requested and if the participant does not wish to continue in the study, he/she will be withdrawn.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Principal Investigator

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**(If applicable at a later stage)**

I \_\_\_\_\_ (participant) having been fully informed about this study agree to continue taking part in it.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Participant

Date \_\_\_\_\_

**STATEMENT BY INDEPENDENT CLINICIAN**

I confirm that participation in the study is not adverse to \_\_\_\_\_ (participant)'s interests.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_  
Clinician

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name : \_\_\_\_\_



# APPENDIX TWO

## Spirituality in Supervision Research

This is to verify that Helen Simmons has consulted with the members of the professional development group (known as the G.G.'s group) about her proposed research. She has consulted around the development of the research question. She has the support of the G.G. group for this research.

Name:.....

Signed: ..... (on behalf of the G.G. group)

# APPENDIX THREE

## Format for Information Sheet

An Information Sheet is a letter of invitation to potential participants explaining the nature of the research and what it involves for them, using language suitable for the target group. In addition it will also include the name and contact details of the researcher, supervisor and for ethical concerns the name and contact details of the Chairperson of the Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee. The Information Sheet is given to potential participants who take it away with them for reference. It should give them enough information to be able to come back to the researcher and ask any questions they may have about the nature of the research. Even if the potential participants are not literate an Information Sheet needs to be prepared in order to be read out.

For research involving Maori, consideration should be given to providing documentation in te reo Maori as well as English.

For research involving participants whose first language is not English all documentation should be issued in the language of the participant, as well as in English and copies lodged with the Secretary of a Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee. In the case of children the Information Sheet and Consent Form should be in the language of the parents and the information comprehensible to the parents. In the course of the research should anyone at any time require a translation, this should be provided by the researcher.

Interpreters or interpretation should be offered where written documentation is inappropriate. This would be applicable to blind or Braille readers or sign language users.

For research conducted in Massey University Departments/Schools/Institutes, where students in the Department/School/Institute of the researcher are prospective participants, the information given must include an explicit statement that neither grades nor academic relationships with the Department/School/Institute or members of staff will be affected by either refusal or agreement to participate.

The Information Sheet must be separate from the Consent Form.

**Prepare your Information Sheet/s based on the format on the next page remembering that it is an invitation to participate. The format indicates the different items of information that a prospective participant might need. However this will of course vary depending on the details of the specific research project. Please adjust the Information Sheet to the requirements of your specific project.**

**Please proof read to eliminate spelling and grammatical errors.**

# *Spirituality in Supervision*

## INFORMATION SHEET for the Professional Development Group

### The Researcher

My name is Helen Simmons and I am conducting this research to complete my Masters in Philosophy degree. Currently, I am contracted to Massey University to teach in the Bachelor of Social Work degree. I also have a contract with ANZASW to act as the Recertification Coordinator for their Competency Program. I supervise helping professionals as part of my private practice.

#### Contact details:

I am available to be contacted regarding any aspects of the research:

Helen Simmons

Phone: (06) 3505799 Xtn 2819      Voicemail is available in my absence.

Fax: (06)3505681

Email: [H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz](mailto:H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz)

My supervisors are Dr. Mary Nash and Dr. Catherine Brennan

Dr. Mary Nash may be contacted at :  
School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11 222  
Palmerston North  
Ph 3505799 Xtn 2827

Dr. Catherine Brennan may be contacted at the same address  
Ph 3505799 Xtn 2620

## What is this study about?

This research is about discovering from the perspective of supervisors and supervisees how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision. It is hoped to generate knowledge on the topic of spirituality in supervision and to consider this against relevant literature in the helping professions. Once this information has been collated, the implications of the research for future practice will be considered.

## What does the research involve?

**Stage 1.** Members of a Diploma in Social Service Supervision graduates professional development group (known as the G.G.'s group) will be asked to participate in a group discussion on the research question: "How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?" Supporting questions may be considered as part of the discussion (Attachment One).

If group members decide to participate in the research, it is hoped to hold the discussion as part of one of the group's regular meetings. The researcher will take ultimate responsibility for facilitating the discussion, which is anticipated to take 1.5-2 hours. The discussion will be audio and videotaped. The audiotape is to record the discussion. The video camera would be static and there will be no operator present. Only G.G. group members will have access to the videotape and it will be erased at the completion of the study. Agreement to be videotaped is a criteria for participation, however, participants have a right to request that the video be turned off at any time. Should this occur, an agreement would be negotiated with the group as to how aspects of Stage 2 of the research (see below) might occur. The purpose of the videotape is to identify the speaker and to provide an opportunity for group members to be involved in a second session.

**Stage 2.** This second session will involve analyzing the content and emphases of the material discussed in Stage 1, through observing the video. The G.G. group will decide how this will be done and what they would like to focus on. Ideally, this second session would occur later on the same day as the original discussion. It is optional to take part in this stage of the research. Feedback from Stage 2 will be audio taped and any written notes will be included in the data analysis process. The anticipated time frame for this session is 2-2.5 hours.

**Stage 3.** Members of the G.G. group are requested to consider devoting one of their own professional supervision sessions to discuss the research question with their supervisor. If they are agreeable, G.G. members are asked to discuss their participation in the research with their supervisor, and ask the supervisor if they would be interested in discussing the research question in a supervision session. If the supervisor agrees to take part, information sheets and consent forms will be made available to them. This session would be audio taped and facilitated by the G.G. group member. The "researcher" will only be directly involved with Stage 3 of the research with her own supervisor. Financial reimbursement for this session can be made available.

**Stage 4.** G.G. group members will be given a copy of the research findings and asked to discuss together the implications of the research findings for their future practice. It is anticipated that this session will occur approximately 6 months after Stage 1, as part of one of the usual group meetings and take 1.5-2 hours. It is optional to take part in this stage of the research.

Before audio taped sessions there will be discussion around how confidentiality will be preserved in the transcripts that is through the choice of pseudonyms.

Debriefing will occur after each stage of the research.

All participants will be asked to complete a baseline biographical information sheet, which will provide general descriptive and non-identifying information about characteristics relevant to the research topic (Attachment Four)

Publication of the key research findings may occur in *ANZASW Social Work Review*.

## What will participants have to do?

### G.G. group members

- ❖ Participate in a 1.5-2 hour discussion with other group members on how you experience and express spirituality in supervision.
- ❖ Observe the video of above discussion and share your reflections with the group (2-2.5 hours)
- ❖ Discuss the research question in supervision with your supervisor (1 hour)
- ❖ Discuss the implications of the research findings in the group (1.5-2 hours)

### G.G. members' professional supervisors

- ❖ Discuss the research question: "how is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?" with your supervisee in an audio taped supervision session (1 hour).

## What can participants expect from the researcher?

- ❖ All participants will be treated with respect and confidentiality will be assured regarding their participation in the research.
- ❖ To receive clarification on any matter relating to the research.
- ❖ The information collected will only be used for research purposes.
- ❖ Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work during the research and will be stored for 5 years before being destroyed.
- ❖ To receive a summary of research findings on completion of the research.

## Participant's Rights

*You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- *decline to engage in any particular aspect of the discussion;*
- *decline to engage in any segment of the research process;*
- *withdraw from the study prior to the completion of data collection;*
- *ask for the audio/video tape to be turned off at any time during the discussions;*
- *ask any further questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *be assured that all raw material, including audio and videotapes, will be destroyed at the completion of 5 years having been stored in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Massey University.*

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Application 04/91. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Sylvia V Rumball, Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee; Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz).

# *Spirituality in Supervision*

## INFORMATION SHEET for Professional Supervisors

### The Researcher

My name is Helen Simmons and I am conducting this research to complete my Masters in Philosophy degree. Currently, I am contracted to Massey University to teach in the Bachelor of Social Work degree. I also have a contract with ANZASW to act as the Recertification Coordinator for their Competency Program. I supervise helping professionals as part of my private practice.

#### Contact details:

I am available to be contacted regarding any aspects of the research:

Helen Simmons

Phone (06) 3505799 Xtn 2819      Voicemail is available in my absence.

Fax (06)3505681

Email: [H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz](mailto:H.Simmons@massey.ac.nz)

My supervisors are Dr. Mary Nash and Dr. Catherine Brennan

Dr. Mary Nash may be contacted at :  
School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work  
Massey University  
Private Bag 11 222  
Palmerston North  
Ph 3505799 Xtn 2827

Dr. Catherine Brennan may be contacted at the same address  
Ph 3505799 Xtn 2620

## What is this study about?

This research is about discovering, from the perspective of supervisors and supervisees, how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision. It is hoped to generate knowledge on the topic of spirituality in supervision and to consider this against relevant literature in the helping professions. Once this information has been collated, the implications of the research for future practice will be considered.

## What does the research involve?

**Stage 1.** Members of a Diploma in Social Service Supervision graduates professional development group (known as the G.G.'s group) will be asked to participate in a group discussion on the research question: "How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?" Supporting questions may be considered as part of the discussion (Attachment One).

If group members decide to participate in the research, it is hoped to hold the discussion as part of one of the group's regular meetings. The researcher will take ultimate responsibility for facilitating the discussion, which is anticipated to take 1.5-2 hours. The discussion will be audio and videotaped. The audiotape is to record the discussion. The video camera would be static and there will be no operator present. Only G.G. group members will have access to the videotape and it will be erased at the completion of the study. Agreement to be videotaped is a criteria for participation, however, participants have a right to request that the video be turned off at any time. Should this occur, an agreement would be negotiated with the group as to how aspects of Stage 2 of the research (see below) might occur. The purpose of the videotape is to identify the speaker and to provide an opportunity for group members to be involved in a second session.

**Stage 2.** This second session will involve analyzing the content and emphases of the material discussed in Stage 1, through observing the video. The G.G. group will decide how this will be done and what they would like to focus on. Ideally, this second session would occur later on the same day as the original discussion. It is optional to take part in this stage of the research. Feedback from Stage 2 will be audio taped and any written notes will be included in the data analysis process. The anticipated time frame for this session is 2-2.5 hours.

**Stage 3.** Members of the G.G. group are requested to consider devoting one of their own professional supervision sessions to discuss the research question with their supervisor. If they are agreeable, G.G. members are asked to discuss their participation in the research with their supervisor, and ask the supervisor if they would be interested in discussing the research question in a supervision session. If the supervisor agrees to take part, information sheets and consent forms will be made available to them. This session would be audio taped and facilitated by the G.G. group member. The "researcher" will only be directly involved with Stage 3 of the research with her own supervisor. Financial reimbursement for this session can be made available.

**Stage 4.** G.G. group members will be given a copy of the research findings and asked to discuss together the implications of the research findings for their future practice. It is anticipated that this session will occur approximately 6 months after Stage 1, as part of one of the usual group meetings and take 1.5-2 hours. It is optional to take part in this stage of the research.

Before audio taped sessions there will be discussion around how confidentiality will be preserved in the transcripts, that is, through the choice of pseudonyms.

Debriefing will occur after each stage of the research.

All participants will be asked to complete a baseline biographical information sheet, which will provide general descriptive and non-identifying information about characteristics relevant to the research topic (Attachment Four)

Publication of the key research findings may occur in *ANZASW Social Work Review*.



## What will participants have to do?

### G.G. group members

- ❖ Participate in a 1.5-2 hour discussion with other group members on how you experience and express spirituality in supervision.
- ❖ Observe the video of above discussion and share your reflections with the group (2-2.5 hours)
- ❖ Discuss the research question in supervision with your supervisor (1 hour)
- ❖ Discuss the implications of the research findings in the group (1.5-2 hours)

### G.G. members professional supervisors

- ❖ Discuss the research question "how is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?" with your supervisee in an audio taped supervision session (1 hour).

## What can participants expect from the researcher?

- ❖ All participants will be treated with respect and confidentiality will be assured regarding their participation in the research.
- ❖ To receive clarification on any matter relating to the research.
- ❖ The information collected will only be used for research purposes.
- ❖ Data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work during the research and will be stored for 5 years before being destroyed.
- ❖ To receive a summary of research findings on completion of the research.

## Participant's Rights

*You are under no obligation to accept this invitation. If you decide to participate, you have the right to:*

- *decline to engage in any particular aspect of the discussion;*
- *decline to engage in any segment of the research process;*
- *withdraw from the study prior to the completion of data collection;*
- *ask for the audio/video tape to be turned off at any time during the discussions;*
- *ask any further questions about the study at any time during participation;*
- *provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission to the researcher t*
- *be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.*
- *be assured that all raw material, including audio and videotapes, will be destroyed at the completion of 5 years having been stored in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work Massey University.*

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Massey University Human Ethics Committee, PN Application 04/91. If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Professor Sylvia V Rumball, Chair, Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee: Palmerston North, telephone 06 350 5249, email [humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicspn@massey.ac.nz).

## **Spirituality in Supervision**

### **Discussion Guides for the Professional Development Group and their supervisors.**

How is spirituality experienced and expressed in supervision?

Sub questions that may assist in the exploration process:

What is spirituality? How is it defined?

Is spirituality relevant in supervision? In what way?

Has it a role in supervision? If so, what?

Does it feature in supervision? If so, how?

Does spirituality benefit supervision? If so, how?

What, if anything, is it about this point in time that influences the experience and expression of spirituality in supervision?

What of your own spiritual formation and journey influences how spirituality is experienced and expressed in supervision?

Does spirituality in supervision make a difference to how you live your life?

## Spirituality in Supervision

### Biographical Details

Non-identifying statistical information

Years of clinical experience

Years of supervision experience

Are you providing internal or external supervision?

Are you able to choose your own supervisor?

Do your supervisees have a choice of supervisor?

Do you have any training as a supervisor?

If yes, please specify:

Key details of your own spiritual formation and journey that you deem relevant to this inquiry:

Ethnicity:

Age:

Gender:

***Attachment Four***

# APPENDIX FOUR

## Format for Participant Consent Form

A Consent Form is the equivalent of a legal document that has been signed by the participants agreeing to participate in the research as described in the Information Sheet. This is an important legal protection for the researcher and Massey University as well as for participants. The researcher is responsible for the safe keeping of this document. The Consent Form should be separate from the Information Sheet.

Safekeeping, confidentiality and eventual disposal of Consent Forms are the responsibility of the researcher. Signed Consent Forms should be retained for a minimum of five (5) years from when the research has been completed and a report has been published, after which shredding is in order.

Consent Forms associated with teaching programmes should be kept indefinitely.

Where the consent is being given for the participation of some other person in a research project (e.g. parent/guardian consenting to a child's participation), this should be made clear in the wording of the Consent Form. The name of the participant and their relationship to the person giving consent should be clearly stated.

Note: if the use of a Consent Form is considered inappropriate in the particular circumstances of a research project, then the reasons must be presented to a Massey University Campus Human Ethics Committee.

**Prepare your Participant Consent Form based on the format on the next page.**

# ***Spirituality in Supervision***

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM Group Discussion (STAGE 1)**

**For professional development group members.**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time.

I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of the data collection and to decline to be involved in any particular part of the discussion.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is confidential to the group participants.

I agree/do not agree to participate in Stage 1 of this study

I agree/do not agree to the discussion in Stage 1 being audio taped.

I agree/do not agree to the discussion in Stage 1 being video taped.

I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the research project.

I agree to have data placed in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University for 5 years

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

.....

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

# ***Spirituality in Supervision***

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM Supervision Session (Stage 3). For professional supervisors.**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection and to decline to be involved in any particular part of the discussion.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is confidential to the research. I agree/do not agree to participate in Stage 3 of this study.

I agree/do not agree to the Supervision session being audio taped.

I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the Supervision Session.

I agree to have data placed in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University for 5 years

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

# *Spirituality in Supervision*

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM Video Analysis (STAGE 2)**

**For professional development group members.**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection and to decline to be involved in any particular part of the discussion.

I agree/do not agree to participate in Stage 2 of this study

I agree/do not agree to the discussion in Stage 2 being audio taped.

I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the research project.

I agree to have data placed in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University for 5 years

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:** .....

**Date:** .....

**Full Name - printed** .....



# ***Spirituality in Supervision***

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM Supervision Session (STAGE 3)**

**For professional development group members.**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection and to decline to be involved in any particular part of the discussion.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is confidential to the research.

I agree/do not agree to participate in Stage 3 of this study

I agree/do not agree to the discussion in Stage 3 being audio taped.

I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the research project.

I agree to have data placed in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work for 5 years

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

.....

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....

# ***Spirituality in Supervision***

## **PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM Implications for practice (STAGE 4)**

**For professional development group members.**

**This consent form will be held for a period of five (5) years**

I have read the Information Sheet and have had the details of the study explained to me. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I understand that I may ask further questions at any time. I also understand that I am free to withdraw from the study at any time prior to the completion of data collection and to decline to be involved in any particular part of the discussion.

I agree to provide information to the researcher on the understanding that it is confidential to the group.

I agree/do not agree to participate in Stage 4 of this study

I agree/do not agree to the discussion in Stage 4 being audio taped.

I agree to not disclose anything discussed in the research project.

I agree to have data placed in a locked filing cabinet in the School of Sociology, Social Policy and Social Work, Massey University for 5 years

I agree to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Sheet.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

**Full Name - printed**

# APPENDIX FIVE

## ***Spirituality in Supervision*** **AUTHORITY FOR THE RELEASE OF TAPE TRANSCRIPTS**

This form will be held for a period of five (5) years

I confirm that I have had the opportunity to read and amend the transcript of the interview/s conducted with me.

I agree that the edited transcript and extracts from this may be used by the researcher, [*Helen Simmons*], in reports and publications arising from the research.

**Signature:**

**Date:**

.....

**Full Name - printed**

.....