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MULTIPLE HOLDING:
Clinical Supervision in the
Context of Trauma and Abuse

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Multiple Holding

Clinical Supervision in the Context of Trauma and Abuse

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the supervision relationship in the context of trauma and abuse. Interviews with supervisors and supervisees were conducted with supervisees and supervisors not in a supervision relationship with each other. Ten interviews were conducted, including two pilot interviews. At the end of the individual interviews, the researcher facilitated two focus groups with participants. A qualitative methodology, grounded theory, was adopted because it is well suited for researching areas where little or no previous research has been undertaken.

The findings of this study are that supervision cannot meet all the needs of supervisees working in the context of trauma. The core category that emerged is that of multiple holding. Multiple holding is a theoretical construct that describes supervisees accessing resources outside the supervision relationship as well as within it to support and hold them in their work with trauma. The supervisors also identified a 'chain of holding' that is a sub set of multiple holding supporting supervision practice. Multiple holding is fully explored in the study.

The recommendations from the research are that training is needed for supervisors providing supervision in the context of trauma. Finally, the research supported the supervisee's autonomy in choosing a supervisor.

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